ICANN Transcription

New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Working Group

Thursday 29, August 2019 at 2000 UTC

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JULIE BISLAND: Alright. Welcome, everyone. Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. Welcome to the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Working Group call on Thursday, the 29th of August 2019.

In the interest of time, there will be no roll call. Attendance will be taken by the Zoom room. I know we have Donna Austin on audio only today. Is anyone else joining on the audio bridge only? I just want to remind everyone to please state your name before speaking for transcription purposes, and please keep your phones and microphones on mute when not speaking to avoid any background noise. And with this, I'll turn it over to Jeff Neuman. Thank you. You can begin, Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thank you, Julie. Welcome, everyone. The agenda is pretty straightforward for today. We're moving on to the next subject

area which is Internationalized Domain Names, and then if we have time, we'll move on to the subject after that which is security and stability.

I want to first thank everyone for – it has been some really good conversation on the e-mail list especially on the topic of exclusive access or closed generics, whatever you want to call it. Just ask that if we could move all that discussion over to the smaller list so that we're not – there's well over 200 people subscribed to the full working group list and I'm not sure all 200 people want all these e-mails going back and forth. Of course, if you do want these e-mails and you do want to observe or participate, please do send a note to us to let us know that you want to be on the list.

Okay. So with that said, let me ask if there are any updates to any Statements of Interest? Okay, I'm not seeing any, so why don't we just move ahead with this IDN topic. While we're getting that ready, I'll admit, this is not one of my expert subject areas, so I'm going to rely on others on this call. Although I did just get a lesson from some people before this call on what some of the things meant, so hopefully if nobody else wants to do any talking, I hopefully can do a little bit but a lot of these does get highly technical or could get very highly technical if we get into the weeds. It can get very highly technical.

I appreciate that there are some experts on here. Sarmad is back. I think that was great, the participation from the call on Monday or actually it was on Tuesday this week. Okay, great.

With Internationalized Domain Names, most of this section really refers to variants, IDN principles from 2008. Most of it focuses on

those two issues but if we look back the 2007 principle B which was from the final report for the GNSO, we believe still is applicable although we modified the wordings slightly to make it more relevant for subsequent procedures. So, we now the policy goal states that some new generic top-level domains should be Internationalized Domain Name subject to the approval of IDNs being available in the root. Obviously, IDNs have been approved to be in the root so that policy still remains relevant in the high level – that's our policy goal. I mean look at high-level agreements with respect to IDNs at least for the questions that were within our initial report. From the comments and from discussions, from originally, it was Work Track 4, we believe that IDN should continue to be an integral part of the program going forward and it slides back to that principle B.

And then we get into some of the weeds here. The first one is compliance with the Root Zone Label Generation Rules – and those are the abbreviations for the different rules – along with any future Root Zone Label Generation Rule sets should be required for the generation of IDN TLDs and valid variant labels. The second high-level agreement, 1-Unicode character gTLDs may be allowed for the script/language combinations where a character is an ideograph or ideogram and do not introduce confusion risks that rise above commonplace similarities consistent with the SSAC and joint ccNSO GNSO IDN Working Group also known as the JIG reports.

So, basically, what that's saying is in the last round we banned any 1 character code whether it was ASCII or Internationalized Domain Name but we recognized that there are many

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Internationalized Domain Name phrases or words that consist of only one character and there were no real technical barriers as a whole to not allow 1-Unicode character domain. So now we're saying they should be allowed.

The next high-level agreement is that – it's not the last one, it's the last one on this page – to the extent possible, compliance with IDNA2008 and it cite the RFCs or its successors and applicable Root Zone Label Generation Rules be automated for future applicants. That seemed to get high-level agreement.

And then the last two. If an applicant is compliant with the IDN guidelines, essentially, IDNA2008 or its successors and applicable LGRs for the scripts it intends to support then Pre-Delegation Testing should be unnecessary for the relevant scripts.

And finally, IDN gTLDs deemed to be variants of already existing or applied for TLDs will be allowed provided: (1) they have the same registry operator implementing a policy of cross-variant TLD bundling and (2) The applicable Root Zone Label Generation Rule is already available at the time of application submission.

And you'll see that there's some comments on this last one in particular from the registries and we will certainly talk about that. Any questions on the high-level agreements? If can then scroll down to the outstanding items while that is being discussed. Okay, I'm not seeing any, which means that everybody has much better understanding of these than I did because I had a ton of questions as to what that meant. But I guess that's good.

So if we go now to the outstanding items, the first one is a new idea from the Registry Stakeholder Group which seems to counter a little bit the ICANN Org's concepts of what should happen but the registries state that where label scripts are not yet supported by Root Zone Label Generation Rules, the PDP Working Group in coordination with ICANN should create an alternative procedure until the script is supported by Root Zone Label Generation Rules. Regardless, the Root Zone Label Generation Rules should be used for all TLDs regardless of script, not just for validating IDNs. Further, guidance should note that Root Zone Label Generation Rules were developed to meet the unique requirements of the root and it should not automatically be extended to second level labels unless through a consensus policy.

What I've learned since looking at this is that a lot of the rules were for the root have aired on the side of being very conservative because it applies – because it could impact users globally. Whereas, if certain things are not necessarily followed within a TLD, meaning for second level domains then there are those with a philosophy of, if you don't like the way it's being run in an individual TLD then nobody's forcing you to use that TLD. And so, it's basically the only harm is actually being caused by the registry itself on its own users and that can then – registrants then have a choice and can use other TLDs.

Sarmad puts a note into the chat which states there are 28 scripts identified for Root Zone Label Generation at this time of which 18 have completed their proposals. So, my guess is that there will not be too many of the more used scripts in the world that will not have Root Zone Label Generation Rules. But there is a little bit of

a difference where I think what the SSAC, ccNSO and others have stated is that unless there are label generation rules, we should not be delegating or unless and until and that was originally a concern because there at that time there were not as many label generation rules sets that were developed but now as you see from the comment from Sarmad, there's a lot more process so the reality is or the chances are that the label generation rules for most of the scripts will actually be available by the time we launch this program. Sarmad, please. Sarmad, are you on mute?

JULIE BISLAND: Sarmad, you might be double muted.

JEFF NEUMAN: Okay. Let's look into that if we can. Give one more second. Sarmad, are you double muted? Okay. We will definitely come back to you. Let's try in a minute. Is there anyone else in the queue?

Okay. Let's go on to what ICANN Org says as their new idea. ICANN org would like to make the PDP Working Group aware of the questions being raised by the Root Zone Label Generation study group, for example, the role of DNS Stability panel after using the Root Zone Label Generation Rule filter, dealing with scripts not integrated in Root Zone Label Generation Rules at the time of the application. There's a link there to that document.

The PDP might want to consider these questions as well as their answers, and how to integrate recommendations from the study

group into its ongoing deliberations on this topic. Additionally, the preliminary recommendation suggests the Root Zone Label Generation Rules will be used for determining the valid IDN labels as well as their variant labels. The PDP Group might want to consider clarifying that the Root Zone Label Generation Rules will also be used for determining the disposition of the variant labels whether a variant label is blocked or able to be allocated. Let me see if I can go back to Sarmad. Are you able to jump in?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Can you hear me now?

JEFF NEUMAN: Yes. Thank you, Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Okay. Thank you. Sorry about that. I just wanted to share that there's actually currently a study group which is working on the technical application of Root Zone LGR. This study group is comprised of volunteers from SOs and ACs and Internet Architecture Board from on the request of the ICANN Board and they've actually suggested some recommendations. If you may recall that these were presented for public comment. I've shared the link in the chat. The study group now almost finalized their recommendations on the Root Zone LGR technical application of Root Zone LGR, which are going to be published soon. So, in one of those recommendations, I guess referring back to the first comment from RySG, they have suggested that one of the options it is actually recommending is that if a script is not integrated into

the Root Zone LGR, the application should wait rather than be processed and until the generation panel for that particular script has actually developed a proposal for Root Zone LGR. So, that's a slightly different recommendation from what is currently recommended from RySG which is suggesting for an alternate procedure. So, the study group is actually recommending waiting for processing rather than taking it through an alternative procedure. I just wanted to point that out. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah. Thanks, Sarmad. I see that as well. By the time that we actually are starting the application round – so let's assume 2021-2022 – I'm anticipating that most of the Label Generation Rules for most of the scripts that we actually think are likely to be used should be developed by then or how big of an issue do you think this will be when we actually launch?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: It obviously depends on the community developing the Root Zone LGR proposals. However, we do foresee most of the scripts would be done except perhaps maybe two or three scripts. Currently, the work has not started for Tibetan script and Thaana script, [inaudible] in the Maldives, and Tibetan is used obviously in parts of China and Bhutan and India. But in any case, beyond those two scripts, all the other generation panels are actually active, most of them in advanced stages where they've finished already. So we do anticipate the work to close at least for other scripts hopefully within next year or so. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah. Thanks. That makes sense. It sounds like it's not going to be too big of an issue. So the question then is – and I think it gets to Paul's question in the chat – which is, do we say that they shouldn't even be able to apply for it or that they could apply for it? If they get it, they need to wait to be delegated until the applicable Root Zone Label Generation Rules are put in place before they can be delegated. Or do we say, they shouldn't even apply?

Paul saying, "We probably should let them apply, get processed and then not allow delegation until the Root Zone Label Generation Rules are in place. To me, that makes a lot of sense. Sarmad, please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Yes. There was some discussion around this in the study group as well, and of course eventually it is GNSO's call to decide on that. However, some of the discussion inside the study group was that since these rounds are happen once in a few years then if we don't allow people to apply, they lose out on the opportunity for until the next round. And then if there Root Zone LGR proposal has been developed, it gets developed soon after the round, they would not be able to get the benefit of it until the next round comes along.

So the suggestion was that they apply but the application doesn't get processed until the Root Zone LGR is updated and it goes into a wait stage. So that was some of the discussion in that group,

just narrating it. Obviously, this is something we surely to decide on how to proceed. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah. Thanks, Sarmad. I would say a little bit different than the way you said it, but mostly the same impact. I think the application should be processed because otherwise the entire – if it were in the contention set then none of the applications could for something similar could be processed. So in order to avoid that, we basically allow the application to be processed. We allow it to go through a contention resolution and objections and everything else. We just don't allow the delegation until such time as the Root Zone Label Generation Rules are developed. That would still seem to be on line with the study group recommendation. Does that make sense?

Then Sarmad has posted the status of different scripts which we should probably put in our report. Questions, comments, does anyone disagree with that approach? Martin, please.

MARTIN SUTTON: Hi, Jeff. It's Martin Sutton here. I'm just trying to think also as a byproduct of this type of approach. Would it also be positive in a way of prioritizing some of the activities then that might come about, say if certain scripts are applied for in more numbers than others? Would that help prioritize that effort as well? If it does then I think it would be helpful to reference that in the output as well.

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JEFF NEUMAN:	Thanks, Martin. The hope is that by the time we launch this round, 95% of the scripts that are most used will actually have these Label Generation Rules. But it would seem to me that if we didn't have those rules by that time and they saw that there were applications for something in that script, that probably would give them a good kick or, as Paul says, put pressure on them to get the rules written. So, it could have that impact.

Okay. Well, that seems to have support, so I think we can move on. On the automation component, the Registry Stakeholder Group expressed some concerns stating or had the following questions. Who is going to be responsible for operationalizing the automation of the Root Zone Label Generation Rules? How can future applicants and other users of the Root Zone Label Generation Rules be assured that the validation and calculation of the operationalized Root Zone Label Generation Rules follow the specifications? Who would manage that? Would it be ICANN Org or a third-party PDT provider?

Sarmad, if you've talked about this internally at ICANN … and there you go. Root Zone Label Generation tool is currently available online. How long has that been online for, Sarmad?

SARMAD HUSSAIN:	It's been online for almost I guess more than one year. I would say almost one and a half to two years.

JEFF NEUMAN: Okay. Well, awesome. Alright. Well, I think anyone from the registries have a question on that or does that resolve the stakeholder group concerns? We'll have to go back – oops, sorry.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: I've shared the link for the tool in the chat.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah. Thank you, Sarmad. So what we'll do is if we can follow up with the stakeholder group and see if this addresses their concern. My hunch is it does, but again I'm not 100% expert on this. And as Jim said, it's specialized, so we'll go back to the group.

The next comment is an ICANN Org comment which I think we already covered. In fact, I think the ALAC comment which says that there needs to be some manual validation – oh no, manual validation/invalidation is unlikely to occur. And then, RySG says that in RFC 5893 Section 4, describes some script/language combinations that might have issues with the then-applicable RFC 3454 framework, now defined in the new RFC 8264. If those are allowed by the Root Zone Label Generation Rules, we believe those to be possible candidates for manual analysis.

Sarmad, do you have any thoughts on this one because again this one's a little above my understanding here.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: I am not clear but if they're talking about script mixing in certain cases that those cases which should allow for script mixing are

already integrated into the Root Zone LGR. The proposals are developed accordingly. So, for example, in Japanese LGR proposal being developed, it allows for mixing Katakana, Hiragana, and Kanji which is the hand script or Chinese script. So those kind of mixing is already built into the Root Zone LGR where it is needed. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Okay. Thanks for that and we'll confirm with the stakeholder group as well if that resolves that comment. Okay. Then with respect to pre-delegation testing. ICANN Org states that the IDNA2008 poses some constraints and therefore any additional constraints should be imposed by the registries. For example, some additional constraints are identified by the IDN guidelines for second level labels, pre-delegation testing allows for checking for the constraints put by the IDN2008 and additional guidelines by reviewing the proposed IDN tables for the second level labels which is needed to ensure secure and stable implementation of the TLDs.

Thoughts on this one? Under the principle that we talked about before where certainly as IDNs are entered into the root, this is something that should be checked at the TLD level and compliance is extremely important. We need to be very conservative. But I think the situation may be a little bit different at the second level domain and I know there are some registries that don't believe that there should necessarily be testing of the second level domains. And I'm hoping that someone with much deeper knowledge than I do from the registries can explain that.

That's just what I have been told and from reading the comments and so I'm trying to make sure that we address it. Sarmad, please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Just to clarify further I think. From what I recall, the original recommendation said that pre-delegation testing is not perhaps needed because there is compliance to IDNA2008. Let me actually read that again.

I think that assumption that if something's compliant to what IDNA2008 then there should not be any pre-delegation testing, is I guess not quite complete because IDNA2008 itself says that compliance to itself is not sufficient and registries should take further I guess steps to address, for example, the confusability of labels and so on. So, just compliance with IDNA2008 in itself as I said is not sufficient and the comment from ICANN Org actually is also saying the same, that as far as second level IDNs are concerned that pre-delegation testing actually assumes IDNA2008 compliance or requires IDNA2008 compliance. But actually, checks additional constraints not just checking for IDNA2008. So, taking away the pre-delegation testing from this particular process then I guess the question is, how do we determine whether that those additional requirements for second level are addressed beyond the requirement of IDN in 2008. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks. I guess the response would be just from looking at the comments that you shouldn't have to necessarily check whether second levels are compliant because that is the business of the

registry and if it wants to shoot itself in the foot, it can. But that's only the registry harming itself. That is the response from the registries. But again, it would be great from someone from the registries to expand on that. Since we have none on here that can expand on it, we'll certainly make sure – oh, Sarmad, please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Right. I think one of the reasons for this is basically to address end user confusability and then user security issues which as SSAC's SAC089 document is concerned, that suggest that this end user security also is relevant for their discussion of security and stability as a whole. So there is that particular I guess concern beyond actually just the registry. So registry is not the only stakeholder here. There are end users who eventually get impacted as well. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Okay, thanks, Sarmad. Unless anyone from the registries has got some other information or can respond, it seems to make sense. Justine says, "Should the second last high-level agreement point be clarified or even taken out?"

Let's look at the second one. Can we go back up to the high-level agreements? No, the second to the last one. There we go.

"Compliance with the Root Zone Label Generation should be required for the generation of IDN TLDs and valid variants labels." Oh, the second to last one. Sorry.

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"If an applicant is compliant with IDNA and applicable Label Generation Rules for the scripts it intends to support, Pre-Delegation Testing should be unnecessary."

ICANN Org says that we need to test that. We need to go back to the registries. So it is possible, Justine. And unfortunately, Rubens is not on the call because he probably could have an explanation, a better one, as to why that would be a high-level agreement. But conditionally, we should highlight that and just get the response back from the registries to see what they were thinking behind it.

Okay. Done looking at the allocation variants. So this is a different issue which I'm hoping we could be aligned on. So the registries recommend that we should clarify that variant TLDs need to be operated by the same backend registry service provider, not just that they have the same registry operator, not only in the initial delegation/launch but further as a consideration when business transactions impact particular IDN TLDs.

I'm going to ask a question and I don't know the answer to it. But let me ask and see if there are people – is it possible for one registry operator to have two different registry service providers that do different things with the variants? In other words, can you have one registry service provider, let's say Service 1 Japanese script for a particular TLD and then have another registry services provider provide the service with respect to a variant of that Japanese script. I think technically, you can. Whether we want to or not is a whole another question, but technically it cannot happen.

Jim is saying, "You have portfolio operators with different backends." Yes, but what I'm saying here is before this round, all variants were blocked. So if someone has a TLD then no one else could – or even that same operator couldn't have the variant TLD. But we're talking about in the future allowing variants to be delegated or bundled. There are a couple of different options. But with the registries and others is saying is that the registry operator for both of those TLDs from a confusion standpoint, they should be handled on the rules of one registry operator. But this goes a step further and says not only does the registry operator, the one that's under contract with ICANN, the one that sets the policies be the same. This says that the backend service provider has to be the same as well. I'm just trying to figure out why that would be or has to be the case. Sarmad, please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Just pointing out that there are recommendations on managing IDN variant TLDs which were approved by the Board and sent to GNSO and ccNSO for the consideration in the policy development process. And Recommendation #7, I shared the link of the document as well. It says that same registry service provider for IDN variant TLDs practically, the registry provider can be different as you were saying, but I guess currently the recommendation is this way because this is in a way the first time IDN variant TLDs are actually being delegated or will be delegated. And there is very limited experience in the industry to manage them at the top-level like this. So the idea is that we start with the conservative place where the same registry service provider is managing the variants for top-level domains. Then as their industry gains more

experience with managing them then maybe alternate mechanisms can be considered in the future. That's a motivation at least. Actually, there are more discussions in the report. Thank you .

JEFF NEUMAN: Thank you, Sarmad. That gives us something easy to fall back on, which is that recommendation. So, unless anyone could think of a good reason why we should not follow a recommendation that's been approved by the Board, my guess is that Registries Stakeholder comment should be incorporated as a recommendation or at least a recommendation to follow those guidelines which includes that concept. Steve, please.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Jeff. There is a note added to the top of this page, if you don't mind me scrolling back to it. Just to provide – I guess make you all aware that the council has convened a scoping team. Mostly it's in reaction to what the Board adopted in terms of the IDN implementation guidelines. What that small team on the council is doing, it's not just councilors but It's also some informed industry folks.

What they're intending to do is to try to understand that the scope of what needs to be worked on in regards to IDNs. So they're actually trying to take a more holistic look at IDN, which includes the IDN Implementation Guidelines version 4.0 as you can see here. But also the IDN variant TLD implementation, recommendations that Sarmad linked to. So where they are at this

point, it's a scoping exercise to really to try to understand what needs to be done. So that could involve additional research and analysis. There's already been extensive amount done by staff already, which you can see in these reports. But there could be the possibility that additional research is needed.

Then also they are trying to examine what the problems might be, which could be related to the process for updating the IDN implementation guidelines. It could be other aspects. So, at the end of the day, what they're intended to do is try to recommend a mechanism to resolve the issues that they identify. So that recommendation will go to the council for their consideration. That all said, they're aware that there's already work underway within this PDP on IDNs. At some point, the two efforts will need to be reconciled and what the small group might end up recommended could of course be that the SubPro PDP just continues addressing the IDN issues.

So, that's not completed. The met a couple of times, but they do intend to wrap up their work, the scoping and mechanism suggestion work by ICANN66. Thanks.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks, Steve. I think there have been some policy issues that aren't necessarily implementation that I think we could and should be tackling now. For example, the issue of at least with respect to the same registry operator operating the variants I think is more of a policy issue than a technical issue or than a group studying a smaller group. So for me, making at least the recommendation of the same registry operator operating the variants makes sense

because that is more of a policy decision than something we've extensively looked at.

Now getting down to level of RSP, that sounds to me more of the implementation because I don't see whether the same registry service provider necessarily has an impact on the policy or the end users, but certainly operating being a registry operator for both TLDs would. So I do see a distinction there.

I have both Steve and Sarmad in the queue. Steve?

STEVE CHAN: Thanks. Just to clarify, this small team what they are going to recommend is the mechanism to address the policy development. So what that could be is that parts of it are farmed out to this PDP or I guess, in this case, maintained by this PDP for the policy development. Then to the extent there is impact on RPMs may be that part it has farmed out to RPMs. It could also be another mechanism to address the policy development is actually a new PDP that's initiated or perhaps an EPDP – I guess the community and the council believes that the requisite issue scoping is already completed. Without trying to prejudge what they determined as policy development or not, that's the idea is that they're trying to understand what needs to be addressed and then where it needs to be addressed, which of course could include this PDP. Thanks. I hope that helps.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yes and no, but I'll let Sarmad go first.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. I just wanted to point out that the Recommendations document for managing IDN variant TLDs, for which I've also shared the link, also has some additional recommendations which are at least at this time not covered here. So I just wanted to point out that and suggest that the group also look at those as you finalize the policy. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks, Sarmad. Steve, our Charter still has in there, "Determine and address policy guidance needed for the implementation of IDN variant TLDs." So until and unless the GNSO Council tells us that's no longer within our scope and because we've done a lot of the work, I think we still have to move forward with what we've been doing. And I think it's incumbent upon the new smaller group to look at what we're doing and work off of that or, alternatively, go to the council and say that they should be doing it. I mean it is part of our Charter, so from my perspective, I think at least from the purely policy items such as should we have one registry operator for variants, I think that is a policy issue. So I think we'll still move forward with it.

Again, this was something as you know, Steve, that about a month ago or over a month ago we appeared before the GNSO Council – actually, it was in Marrakech or before Marrakech – and we brought this up as one of the issues asking them to make sure that they were keeping track of all the different groups that were doing these types of issues and they haven't gotten back to us on that, but this would be probably one of those things.

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So, I understand what you're saying, Steve. You're saying the small team is not developing policy but it's developing a recommendation based on who they think should be doing the policy. And I guess what I'm saying is this is already within our Charter. So from our perspective, we're going to keep doing it regardless of whether this small group says we should or shouldn't unless the GNSO Council takes it out of our Charter, which is also fine and within their discretion. So I hope that makes sense.

Donna is saying, "I'm trying to understand why one entity would engage two different providers to operate an IDN and its variant." Donna, it's possible that one RSP may not have the ability to operate both versions or both variants. I don't think we should necessarily question why they would want to, we should just be determining whether there's a necessity – and by "we" I mean the community – should be determining whether there's a necessity or a good security stability reason why it should be the same provider on the backend as opposed to just saying it should be the same one. So, I hear what you're saying, Donna. And again, I'm not the expert in this issue. There are probably many others that could give it a better explanation.

Okay, moving on to the next part which is the ICANN Org recommendation: "Encourages the PDP Working Group to consider and provide feedback on these recommendations…" That's what Sarmad was talking about. "Including any proposed solutions for implementing IDN variant TLDs in subsequent procedures. From that analysis, it is recommended that IDN variant TLDs must be allocated to the same entity," which I think

what is in line with our recommendation. Then ICANN is also saying, "The registry service providers must be the same for IDN variant TLDs," which again what I'm saying here is because it's a recommendation that's been adopted by the Board, I think unless we have a good reason not to, it just makes sense to be in line with the recommendation.

Then the IPC states that, "IDN TLDs which are variants of registered trademarks should be subject to Legal Rights Objections." Anyone have any thoughts on that? I wouldn't see why they wouldn't be subject to all types of objections. So I don't know if we need to single that out. But is there any reason why variant TLDs should be treated differently and not be subject to all objections?

Sorry, Justine. It says, "Because the comment comes from IPC?" The IPC is restating that they just want to make sure that you could make a Legal Rights Objection or not making is to be able to object on any basis, not just legal rights, so we should just make sure that applications for IDN TLDs which are variants should be subject to all forms of objections.

Anne is saying, "There is no reason IDNs should be exempted from any Objection process." Okay, good.

Then when it comes to what do we do with variants? We've said that they should be with the same registry operator but then if you scroll down, the options are bundling at the second level. In other words, we're just leaving up to however the registry operator wants to – however they want to deal with it. Registry Stakeholder Group also said something very similar, which is you leave it to

the registry operator. So the best solution in the view of the target market can be chosen. Then they suggest that when the next procedure comes close to the beginning, Registries Stakeholder Group intends to discuss with the Registrars. Possibly in the tech ops groups per market based practices in order to have homogeneous customer experience in each market while being complaint with the consensus policies and IDN guidelines.

The registrars welcome standardization but is concerned that this could limit innovation and creates a moving target that will likely need to be modified, if adopted. It may be better to leave this up to the TLD operator.

The ALAC states that "The Same Entity Constraint should be enforced for all variants. Further, registrants may need to be educated…"

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: "…number and a brief message after the tone. I'll return your call as soon as possible."

JEFF NEUMAN: Oh, I wanted to leave a message for Anne. Come on, you should've let that run. That would've been fun.

Okay. It sounds like we're sort of on the same page.

ICANN Org: "Same label under IDN variant TLDs must be registered to the same entity." We talked about that. "Second-level IDN tables offered under IDN variant TLDs must be harmonized.

IDN variant label allocatable or activated under IDN variant TLDs may not necessarily be the same. Existing policies and associated procedures for TLDs must be updated to accommodate the recommendations for IDN variant TLDs. All remaining existing TLD policies must apply to IDN variant TLDs, unless otherwise identified."

LEMARIT states that – and I'll get to Sarmad – "Once domain name is effectively allocated all its variants should be blocked, the activation of the variants should be up to the registrants. This leads to more consumer protection and limited confusion."

Then I'll get into the SSAC but let me go to Sarmad.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Thank you. This ICANN Org comment basically pertains to solve the additional recommendations in the document which I was referring to earlier. It basically suggests that if the two variants for a particular TLD then if you go at second level for each of those top-level domain variants then it shouldn't be, for example, the case that there are two labels which are two second level labels which are variants under one TLD of top-level domain variant but they are, for example, unique labels under the second TLD variants. So, the second level variants need to be harmonized under the top-level domain variants. So their top-level recommendations basically suggest looking at that aspect as well.

JEFF NEUMAN:	Yeah, thanks. But what that's not saying though or what it does allow is that if a registry operator wanted to give two variants to two different registrants, that could still be possible.
SARMAD HUSSAIN:	Let me actually check.
JEFF NEUMAN:	Actually, you know, I didn't mean that. Actually, no. That's not the case, sorry. I meant the variants can both be used by the same registrant but for different purposes.
SARMAD HUSSAIN:	Yes. That's possible. Basically, the recommendation is that if you have a label under one TLD variant – so it's myname.TLD then myname dot variant of that TLD should also come to me. It shouldn't go to a different person. So that's one of the recommendations. That same label under the TLD variant should go to the same registrar. And then variants under one TLD and variants under the other TLD should also go to the same registrant. They're a couple of recommendations which actually suggest looking at the second level as well.
JEFF NEUMAN:	Right. Yes. But what's something that's not allowed currently is – like right now if there's a second level that's registered, its variant must be blocked under today's rules. But under the rules in the future, you could allocate both variants to the same registrant and

the registrant can use the two variants for two different purposes. Is that correct?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Yes, that's correct. In the future, at least the recommendations are suggesting that variants can be delegated at the second level. But if they're delegated, they should be given to the same registrant so as to avoid any possibility of end users give it.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah, okay. That makes sense. Okay, so let me move on to the SSAC concerns. I'll just try to jump to the meat of their recommendations. There was some work done on .NGO and .ONG through RSTEP request. Their finding in the RSTEP request as that "There is no indication that PIR will market the service as causing a pair of names from a bundle to 'be the same,' to 'act the same,' or other phrases that would cause more significant security and stability issues. However, it would be prudent to expect that registrars will perceive both names in the bundle to be the same because most EPP transactions on one name will automatically apply to the other. That is likely to pervade their thinking, both in terms of provisioning and engineering. This in turn is likely to trickle down into customer communications…" So there's an issue with just making sure registrars are able to handle variants being used in different ways, even if going to the same registrant.

So the SSAC urges us to adopt or refer to the findings of the RSTEP review. So, I think that makes sense.

EN

I'll just read. Paul asks if you use it for two different reasons. Sure. You can have – and this actually just came up – two different scripts of the same string or two variants of one string. One could be for recognizable for simplified Chinese, the other could be recognized by those in traditional Chinese but they look exactly the same, but because they are geared towards two different communities, if you will, they should be allowed to have two different uses. Or let's say the web content is different depending on which community is looking at that variant version of the label. So if people coming to it recognize the label as being traditional Chinese then the content on that could be geared towards those that speak traditional if those that are accessing the name are doing, so from the simplified version then they could be served up content that is in simplified Chinese. Hopefully that makes sense. Right now that can't be done. Hopefully I didn't lose everybody. Paul?

PAUL MCGRADY: I get that part. The part I don't get – and I advocating for anything, I truly am trying to understand it – is if the end user gets one experience for simplified and one experience for traditional, why would they have to be by the same registrant? I guess what's the confusion we're saving them from if they're having two different experiences to begin with? Thanks.

JEFF NEUMAN: I started to answer, I didn't unmute myself. I think the answer to that is that an end user is not being given two different experiences. The end users are both coming from different angles

and they're two different end users being given two different experiences. The chance of one end user going to two different variants, you'd have to intentionally want to do that and seek that out. An ordinary end user who ordinarily speaks or uses the simplified script is going to approach the simplified variant. Whereas, the end user that uses traditional scripts is going to only hit the traditional script version.

Sarmad says, "Variants are, by definition, the same for the script community."

I'll give you this as an example. I know of a case now where a trademark owner purchased a .com name that was a variant of its company name or wanted through UDRP or one of those – I'm trying to remember which one – but it basically recovered a domain name that represented a variant of its trademark name. It went to the .com registry to say, "Hey, wait a minute. I don't really want this variant version. What I want is my variant version of that string." But unfortunately, because of the rules, that .com, Verisign or any registry couldn't tell them, "Okay, I could just give you this other variant and take back the other one." Because right now the rules are if you get one variant, you have to block every other one.

That's an actual case that happened where the company won its name back or bought the variants of its name back then wanted to substitute and use the real version that corresponds to its trademark name but couldn't because registries don't allow the allocation and/or use of the different variants.

Paul says yes. "We are preserving user preference." Yes. Christopher, please.

EN

CHRISTOPHER WILKINSON: Hi, good evening, everybody. Jeff, it's absolutely fascinating discussion. My main point actually was very similar to the example that you've just given. There seems to be a lack of symmetry in this discussion. We're discussing mainly IDN variants of presumably ASCII of TLDs. I think we should also address the question of ASCII variants of TLDs supported by trademarks or not in the other scripts. Sooner or later, people will apply primarily for the TLD in their own script.

Related to that is indeed the question of to what extent does the owner of a TLD in ASCII or in Script A have rights to control the use of the same word, concept, string, whatever in XYZ other scripts. For me, the discussion lacks the degree of multidimensional symmetry. I'll leave it at that because I've probably expressed myself badly, but the particular example that you just cited is indeed a concrete subset of the issue which I'm trying to get my head around. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thank, Christopher. I think, yeah, the examples we are using are certainly from one aspect, but I think these rules apply globally. So, yes, in the future we could find situations where this would occur with Spanish variants. I don't think there are variants in the English language but I could be wrong. But yes, this could occur in the reverse direction as well I think.

CHRISTOPHER WILKINSON: Well, there's the oddity of the American spelling. But –

JEFF NEUMAN: That's not a variant. That's just ignorance of our part – the American part. I'm joking for everyone. It's American. I'm American too. I love Americans and everyone else. I'm making fun of Americans and I'm allowed to. Anyway, cool.

Alright, either we put everybody else to sleep or we're making total sense here. I think we've taken into consideration the SSAC – so on the one character codes. I want to make sure we cover this.

The ALAC – it says qualified support for allowing the 1-character Unicode gTLDs. But they think there should be additional input from the CJK communities. From my perspective, this issue came up because of the CJK communities because they were the ones that were asking for this in the 2012 round, but it came up so late in the process that rules were already set and it was too late to go back.

So it's my understanding that this is supported by the CJK community and in fact, they were the ones that were pushing it. I know in talking to JPNIC and a bunch of others, Edmon Chung, they were certainly pushing for this in the last round. So I hope that addresses the ALAC concerns but obviously to the extent that CJK communities are frankly any language or script community wants to look at this and make comments they should.

ICANN wants us to make the definition of 1-Unicode character more clear. They say it's ambiguous. SSAC notes in SAC052 the term "single character" is easier to define for some scripts than for others. In particular, it does not correspond to "one Unicode code

point," as glyphs that would be recognized by users as "single characters" can arise from sequences of one or more Unicode code points." Further, it should be noted that ideographs may be used in many scripts. It may be useful to list the scripts in scope or the process to determine if a particular script is in scope for considering ideographic characters. It would also be useful if the PDP Working Group can explicitly point to relevant SSAC documents and also any particular sections which should be applicable to determine any additional constraints. For example, they look at the proposed guidelines in Section 6, item 6 of SAC052.

So what I would say there is I think these are very much down in the weeds implementation issues. I would prefer to just address the policy point that we, from a policy perspective, support the use of one Unicode characters where those characters clearly correspond to ideogram in ideographs and let the Implementation Team work out these very important details that ICANN Org points out because that presumably the Implementation Team will have experts in this area that have time and can delve into the weeds.

Does that make sense? Otherwise, we could be spending a lot of time and we're not the ones that have the expertise in this – or some of us are, myself included.

SSAC concerns I think pretty much mirror the ICANN concerns because they say that "For ideographic scripts such as Han, not only can a single character represent a complete word or idea, but in some cases different single characters can represent the same word or idea. Were ICANN to delegate each such different single character as a TLD label, users would likely be subject to

confusion based on varying deployments of the single character. The problem of synchronization of TLDs has been studied previously and it is clear that there are no unified approaches."

This comment confused me a little bit because it was almost unlike variants where we're talking about – basically, the thing that looks the same but has different meanings in different scripts, we're talking about things that look different but have the same meaning and I don't think we've had any issues with that in the past. For example, we have a .CAR, .AUTO. And we've been talking about whether regulated strings we should apply certain rules to those if you have synonyms. But I look at this issue that the SSAC brings up as just having synonyms. Yes, you can have one character be the same word as other words, but I don't think we've had an issue with that. So am I misinterpreting that?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: In Chinese, the variants are semantic. They're not visual only. So I think that's what SSAC is referring to. So in most of the other scripts, many of the other scripts as you also said, the motivation of variants comes from visual. They're visually indistinguishable. But in Chinese, for example, the simplified and traditional Chinese writing visually in many cases are [totally] distinguishable. They're different but their meaning is the same. For the Chinese community, that still constitutes a variant. So the definition of variant is not limited to being visually the same. It can actually be different for different scripts. And in case of Chinese, it does include semantics.

JEFF NEUMAN: I think we're off of variants right now. This comment just seems to refer to one Unicode character gTLDs. But you're saying this is still the same as variants?

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Yes, I think you can have two different single characters of which can potentially be a variant's official writing that's where they're going [inaudible].

JEFF NEUMAN: Okay. Thanks. And then if that is the case, then wouldn't they be put into the same contention set?

While we're thinking about that one, going to the ALAC comment, "Among extant scripts, it is largely the Chinese family of scripts that are considered as ideograms. Further work on this aspect may only be needed if the respective language communities raise it explicitly."

The Registry Stakeholder Group states that "Scripts of the ISO 15924 standard, provided a single character in such script represents an idea, they have Unicode representation, are allowed in IDNA and in Root Zone Label Generation Rules. Specifically, the scripts 286, 500, 501 and 502 should be allowed, or single characters whose Unicode Script Property is Hangul or Han, and is allowed in IDNA." Way over my head on that one.

Then we have some notes on coordination efforts which seem to make sense. Whereas, to finalize with the IDN Variant TLD Implementation Framework work that's going on, the SSAC

believes Work Track should take into account – everyone is basically saying take into account IDN Variant Management Framework, which I think we are.

ICANN is saying that "Existing policies and associated procedures for TLDs must be updated to accommodate these recommendations." I think that makes sense.

Registry supports a harmonized framework.

So there we go. We are finished with IDNs and that was a lot, especially for a lot of us that are not experts in this and go through this every day. So rather than try to get people thinking about more subjects because their brains are probably as fried as mine, I think we'll start on the security subject next time for the next call. If you can then post the timing of our next call on Monday, which I think is now in September. Yes, Monday will be September. That time will be posted. Steve, how are the comments? Steve, please.

STEVE CHAN: Thanks, Jeff. I just want to point out in advance of the next meeting which starts talking about security and stability, we have partially covered one of the topics under this heading. We had gone over the delegation rates, but since that time, staff has added in the rest of the elements into this section. I'll just scroll down real quick. You can see that the elements that were already covered are just highlighting – gray to try to highlight or identify what has already been reviewed by this group. So I just want to make sure it was clear when they prep for the next meeting. Thanks.

EN

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks, Steve. So we'll start then on 2.7.6.2. Is that where we'll start then?

STEVE CHAN: I actually hadn't realized you had sort of .1 like that, Jeff. So I can further demarcate it and make it a .2. I'll make that happen. But I didn't realize you did that. Thanks.

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah, I did that just because I knew it wasn't the only subject in security and stability, so I added the .1 a while ago. Awesome. So we'll start at 2.7.6.2, which Steve will insert that number in.

Just to remind everyone – that's right, it's not Monday. It is on Tuesday, September 3 at this same time because Monday is a holiday in the U.S. So, thank you, everyone, for letting me have a holiday.

Jim's hand is up. Jim, please. Yeah, that was interesting. Jim, your voice is … Jim, is there a way you could type it in? Otherwise, I'm going to ask you to sing the chipmunk's song. Okay, "Will the topic cover the slides Steve circulated earlier this week?" Steve, can you refresh my recollection? Oh, RDDS failures, DNS failures? Thanks. I think that might be covered in that section. Is that true, Steve?

STEVE CHAN: I'm not entirely sure. Can we just get back to you on that, Jim?

JEFF NEUMAN: Yeah, okay. We can get back. Alright, thanks, everyone. Is there anyone else that has any comments? Alright, thank you, everyone. Have a great weekend. If you are in the United States, have a great holiday weekend. Even if you are not in the States, have a great weekend. Thanks, everyone.

JULIE BISLAND: Thanks, Jeff. Thank you, everyone. This meeting is adjourned. You can disconnect your lines and have a great rest of your day or night.

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