ccNSO strategy workshop

June 2010

At the ICANN Brussels meeting, the ccNSO held a panel discussion and workshop as part of its preparation for contributions to the ICANN Strategic Plan.

The panellists were Lesley Cowley, Sabine Dolderer, Fahid Batayneh from the ccNSO, and Alexa Raad and Rob Hall (to provide an outside perspective).

The questions that were addressed in the discussion were:

1. What are the important drivers of change in the DNS over the next five years?
2. What are the most important political factors that will affect the ccNSO over the next five years?
3. What are the most important things for the ccNSO to be working on?
4. What are the most important things for ICANN to be working on?

The discussion was robust and free flowing. Contributions were taken from the floor and well as from the panel. The intention was to raise issues and discuss perspectives rather than to reach consensus. The major points covered in the discussion were:

Important drivers of change:

- Growth of the non-English spaces on the Internet brought about by IDN ccTLDs and IDN TLDs and other new TLDs. The introduction of these new TLDs means that hundreds or possibly thousands TLD's. will be added to the namespace.
  - o We may see a change in the model of at least some Registrars whereby the Registrars will be looking for shelf space fees from Registries to promote TLDs. Registrars will be driven by profit and so some will be focused on the total cost of having a TLD on their list, including the cost of customer service. Because of the diverse individual policy requirements of ccTLDs, customer service costs are higher and this may disadvantage ccTLDs in a crowded market.
  - o TLDs could become commoditised. It may be necessary to create a brand image for a TLD to create end user demand in a cluttered market.
  - o These factors could play out to the advantage of ccTLDs who already have the trust of their local communities.
  - o There may be new TLDs that will fail. This could have a negative impact on community trust, although it is likely that other members of the Internet community would step in to maintain registrations (ie keep the system running)

- The rapid growth of numbers of Registries in the ICANN community may have an impact on how ICANN operates.
- Names are becoming less important as a navigation aid.
  - Search is becoming increasingly important.
  - However, TLDs matter once you get search results as a way of deciding which links to trust.
  - Apps (eg iPhone) are more common as a way of navigating the Internet.
  - The semantic web will also impact navigation.
- There are a number of technical issues that will impact ccTLDs:
  - IPv6
  - DNSSEC
  - Technical aspects of IDNs and new TLDs, including browsers, email and other services
- As more and more aspects of every day life depend on the DNS, Governments will be increasingly likely to see the DNS as critical infrastructure. Some governments will believe that they should be more in control of this critical infrastructure. Governments will be more demanding of Registries (especially cc Registries).

What issues should the cc community be working on?

- How do we integrate IDN ccTLDs into the community?
- How do we foster diversity? How can we be more inclusive?
- How can the ccNSO improve the way that it works internally and with the rest of ICANN?
- How can we increase engagement across the cc community?
- How can we implement DNSSEC?
- How do we brand ccTLDs in local communities?
- How can we help each other thnk about the future?
- How can we support each other to reduce the risk of an ITU take over?
- How can we support each other with best practice?
- How can ccTLDs cope effectively with being perceived as critical infrastructure?