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ICANN67 | Virtual Community Forum – GNSO - RySG BRG Open Community Session  
Monday, March 09, 2020 – 15:30 to 17:00 CUN

MARTIN SUTTON:

Thank you. Thank you, everyone, for joining us for this BRG Community Session. A little bit different with the virtual meetings in play this time around. For those that don't ordinarily have the opportunity to join us at previous ICANN meetings, this is a regular session that we hold from the Brand Registry Group to help share news and trends that are across the dotBrand landscape.

So just to give you a bit of background, for many brands, the ICANN and the domain industry is not their entire priority. As you can imagine, they have very many other business priorities ahead of this, and as dotBrand operators, they don't necessarily need to promote their domains, they're not selling them to third parties, it's very much about controlling their own Internet space. In that respect, it means that they don't tend to sort of [frequent] ICANN and talk widely about their own dotBrands. They'll be quietly working away at developing and integrating their dotBrand operation just for broader business strategies and initiatives.

So these sessions are essentially to provide an opportunity to highlight some of the trends that we're seeing across the dotBrand landscape and some indications of use cases, and then hopefully that gives the community an appreciation of how dotBrands are being used. Otherwise, there would be a sense overall that they are not

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particularly active. And that's quite a different story which I think we'll be able to go through today.

We do have an agenda. Let me just give some structure to this session. For those again that are unfamiliar with the dotBrands and the Brand Registry Group, we'll be able to provide some explanations behind all that. Then we'll dive in to some of the trends that we're seeing with dotBrands and highlight some specific use cases. So this is where we invite members to highlight some particular aspects that they've found of interest and would like to share with the wider community. We'll also touch upon what we think may be happening in subsequent procedures, particularly in respect to dotBrands and we'll be able to highlight some other events that are intended during the course of 2020.

Now, we do have a spot at the end for Q&A but we're quite happy to have this as an interactive session, so I will monitor the chat and hands raised as we go along. So if there's anything that you'd like to clarify or raise during the course of the presentation, please feel free to do so. If not, we do have that item at the end to catch-all if you've got any questions at the end of that.

It is scheduled on the ICANN schedule for 90 minutes. I think it's going to be closer to 60 minutes, just to manage your expectations there depending on the level of interactions from you, the audience, the participants. So I will move on to the next slide.

Let's talk a little bit further about dotBrands. As I mentioned earlier, the intent there is not to sell and distribute masses of domain names

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at second level, far from it. It's very much a controlled and purposeful environment that is being created by brands. And by operating these types of TLDs, the organization that controls it controls an entire branded corner, essentially, of the Internet, creating their own digital ecosystem that they have better ownership and control of. This can allow them to register any domains they like, so it's very flexible. So they can use it in very, very different ways with the potential to infuse more innovation, creativity, and security into their domain names and digital strategy. So there's some sort of value-adds that it brings above and beyond the ordinary second-level domains that they would normally have to target across the existing open commercial landscape. With that, so the dotBrand has complete control of that space. So there's a big incentive for brands to run that.

I think from the flexibility side, some examples, they can quickly spin up microsites, register and delete domains at their will. So there's no need ... so there's good housekeeping rules that they can apply. They can set up very quickly domains for their latest campaigns and be confident that they have a great pool of choices and options to use from as those domains will be available within their own TLD. Whereas, they may be competing for various terms and names that they'd like to choose in the existing commercial, open TLDs. That's all down to the fact that they own their own namespace.

I'm thinking about it from a customer perspective. The brand and the dotBrand is important for your customer journey, so using the brand to the right of the dot makes it more authoritative and gives confidence to the end users. And a simple way of looking at it is that

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anyone can have a second-level domain and run a website but only approved applicants can have a dotBrand. There is a distinct process that you would go through and there's additional specifications that apply to contract terms with ICANN to progress an application and run your own dotBrand.

Other aspects are it offers additional security for you and your customers. Having ownership of that whole namespace, you can decide on who uses the domains within your organization or trademark licenses, but ensuring that the brand registry itself remains free from cyber criminals, phishing sites, and scams. So it's easier for customers in that sense to spot and avoid e-mails, for instance, from fake accounts. That is often the case that we see as a threat for consumers.

It also reassures customers of the authenticity of the site that they are visiting or the e-mails that they may be receiving. Those are the sort of, again, value-adds that brands can see in utilizing this new ability to run from the dotBrand.

Other aspects include operating the TLD. It means that the brand actually has access to much more rich data or set of richer data that they previously didn't have access to, and was only available, really, to the TLD operators of legacy, commercial, and ccTLD registries. Again, that can be helpful for brands to gather more valuable insights service to user behaviors and, for example, identifies customers that may be navigating to non-existent domains and gives you ability to rectify that point users into the right places for the services, the information that

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they're looking for. In essence, it's data that also enhances your ability to improve the customer journey and overall brand experience.

Finally, the expansion of the Internet was bigger than expected probably this last round in 2012, and now we've got over 1,500 top-level domains in operation. That's set to increase, so it gets ever harder to protect your brand amongst these growing expansive TLDs. But however, operating your own dotBrand gives you a bit more confidence and ability to direct your attention and your users to a trusted space. Therefore, you may depend less on buying up lots of domain names purely for protected purposes. So you may then instead concentrate more on tools that just help monitor and enforce activities in the wider landscape but focus on bringing customers into your dotBrand Internet space and environment. Those are some of the aspects of dotBrands.

The one thing that is important to note is that the domains, in terms of volumes of domains – and I'll speak to that in a bit more detail as we go through some of the trends – it's not a particularly significant measure for dotBrands for the fact that they are not looking at taking second-level domain registrations for speculative purposes and other things or just for defensive registrations. Domains registered in these spaces will typically be for a purpose, whether it's to test out some new products and services behind the scenes or to fully utilize it as product and service offerings and e-mails that are more visible to end users.

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One of the things that was interesting from an event that we hosted at the end of last year called Brands & Domains, which we held in Montreal in November, is things like DNS traffic as another indicator of activities across that space. Very much thanks to Roland LaPlante who has done a regular sort of review of DNS traffic that he was able to obtain from the data that's fed back to ICANN from each of the TLDs, and that's helped to give another dimension to the traffic that is seen amongst all new gTLDs. Of which in that alone, despite the low level of domain volumes in perspective of open commercial TLDs, they themselves are still generating 15% or more of DNS traffic amongst that landscape.

Bearing in mind some of the points that I've raised already on our control and security, we can expect that in future dotBrands will be a significant contributor towards the safety for end users, especially as that Internet space continues to grow. So I'll close that in terms of background for what dotBrands are and can do, just as a high-level perspective.

What I'd like to do is turn to Cole Quinn who is a Principal Program Manager for Microsoft, covering their corporate domains DNS and various registry operations. Cole looks after a number of dotBrands for Microsoft. He's also – I'm lucky to say – our President for the Brand Registry Group organization. So he leads the board of directors, all of whom are elected from our member companies. I'm pleased to ask Cole to provide a bit more background information about our distinct association. And we'll be happy to hand over to you, Cole, if I may.

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COLE QUINN: Thanks, Martin. Are you able to hear me okay?

MARTIN SUTTON: Perfectly. Thank you, Cole.

COLE QUINN: Okay. Thanks for everyone listening to this session. I'd like to take just a few minutes here to let you know about the Brand Registry Group as there may be some folks that may not be aware of who we are and what our purpose and focus is.

The BRG was formed in 2013 when a number of major corporations recognize the need to work collaboratively within the domain industry to support the specific requirements and needs of brands arising through the new TLD application process. Since that time, we've grown to about 40 members representing over 70 new top-level domains. These members, like Microsoft, they come from around the globe. You can see the logos on the slide there that represent a lot of Brand Registry Group members. These brands are roughly half from Europe, about a third are from North America, and about a fifth are from Asia. In addition to our regular members that have delegated their dotBrand TLD, we've recently created an associate member status for those companies that don't have their dotBrand TLD yet but intend to apply for one in the next round.

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The requirements to become a BRG member are pretty straightforward. All of our members have a trademark that matches their TLD or their proposed intended TLD, and as Martin mentioned, they have no intention to sell the domains to the public. That's not the business model. In addition, our members' main operational interest is outside the domain name industry. This is an important key concept when the BRG was forming its bylaws, as the organization felt it was important to carve out a space within the industry that would be representative of our unique common interest while also avoiding contention with those that have other vested interests.

Thanks for forwarding the slide. I want to talk just a little bit about the BRG's purpose and the way that we're structured here and what our focus is. The BRG's purpose primarily is to support the collective interests of the members and help them drive maximum value from their respective dotBrand TLD investments. We do this in two fundamental ways. The first is advocating for our members within the ICANN community, and secondly, informing and educating our members so that they feel confident and able to engage with their own organizations.

Now, in terms of advocacy, it's vital that we provide a collective voice. It's not just Microsoft or HSBC or Sky or any of the individual brands out there saying things and doing things on their own. The things that we do and say as a trade association have much more effect in momentum when we do them as a group we found. So our members can have as much or as little direct engagement in the BRG's activities as they wish individually, but the overall effect of the BRG is greater

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than the sum of our parts. So regardless of how much direct availability that they have in their cycles to contribute or participate directly, the BRG is working on their behalf to deliver value consistently and providing insights and advocacy for their collective interests, even if they don't have the bandwidth to participate much directly.

Informing and educating our members is also really important. The world of ICANN as you know can be difficult to navigate if you're not used to it, and many of our members aren't. They just simply aren't. It's not their core charter to be plugged into a policy machine like ICANN. So one of the primary benefits of the Brand Registry Group is that we provide a set of quick guides and other materials to help explain the basics of what's required from dotBrand TLDs. Even if members outsource aspects of their operations like the frontend or the backend, they're actually still on the hook. They have an agreement with ICANN and we want to help them understand their essential role and responsibilities as a registry operator, understand the things that they're not able to outsource and share best practices for managing those accountabilities, and again, driving maximum return on the investment.

Now in my own personal experience, I've observed that the individuals that do participate in the BRG, they gain specific subject matter expertise that has helped position them within their own organizations to help influence strategy around their digital namespace, and this goes across their domain portfolio. It's not just limited to their dotBrand registry but the expertise and the best

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practices that are shared within the community find their way back up to these members into their organizations. I've seen a lot of benefits being derived that way.

I'd be happy to speak in more detail about the Brand Registry Group and some of the membership opportunities and things that we're working on and the things that are in our pipeline to deliver. I invite anyone to reach out to me or Martin at [info@brandregistrygroup.org](mailto:info@brandregistrygroup.org). Thanks.

MARTIN SUTTON:

Thank you very much, Cole. That was really helpful just to give a broad overview of Brand Registry Group, which, from an ICANN perspective, we also work within the Registry Stakeholder Group. We're an associate membership member of the Registry Stakeholder Group where we're able to engage particularly at policy level efforts within the Registry Stakeholder Group as well as outside of that.

What I thought would be useful now is just to have a look at what trends we've seen over the last year for dotBrand overall. So let's move on to the next one here where we can start to see that are changes still continuing in this space and expected going forward as well.

So in 2018 – let's go back a couple of years – I think the growth then was beyond 50% in domain registrations, which took it to about 15,500 domains across a dotBrand landscape. As I said earlier, these are not significantly high volumes when you compare to the rest of the

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open commercial TLDs, but you can recognize some of the changes and indicators here far from just the domain level of the [inaudible].

Cole, I think you're still on speaker. Thank you. Okay.

So that was in 2018. That growth has continued steadily, so 20% more growth was seen during 2019. So now we've got close to 19,000. It's actually surpassed that in January, I think, as we've seen more added across those TLDs. But certainly looking at 2019, that's a good, consistent growth that we're seeing across these TLDs.

Again, remember that these are not for speculative registrations or land grabs in any way. These are all typically registered for a purpose, so a single domain can generate high volumes of DNS traffic, especially when you look at some of these that are set up for business to consumer services and for e-mail, etc. So within last year as well, we saw maybe two-thirds of dotBrand now activating their TLDs. So again, good increase in that. These can be all different ways and strategies that they're deploying to suit their business according to their strategies and business requirements, and we would expect this growth to continue and evolve.

From a visible use case scenario, that's probably the easiest that we can do and there are various folks out there that monitor domain name usage and it's good to get an idea of this. But this is very much what does the domain resolve to any live sites that have been created, or does it redirect to existing legacy domain content, or has it just been registered and it's in waiting for doing something else, or perhaps use behind the scenes which is not what we can actually

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visibly identify for these stats. But I think it's useful just to bear that in mind as we go through the stats here.

When we look at redirects, these continue probably to be the most prolific use of dotBrands second-level domains. Obviously, a lot of these tend to help drill down to information that may be buried in layers and layers of websites that have been created over many years, and so it's easy then for selling a second-level domain which is clear, understandable, and intuitive. That it means that users can identify that pretty quickly and go to the data that they're really looking for.

So within 2019, we saw a growth of 20% in redirects to around about 9,500 domains. For those that are going to new content generated for domains registered in dotBrands, that's gone up to over 3,000. That again was an increase of around about 15% on the previous year. So again, all good signals that things are progressing at a constant and measured way within the dotBrand landscape.

I know these stats focused in on 2019, but there has already been some jumps in the first couple of months of 2020, including where we see batches of domains registered by individual brands. So it's indicating that they're applying some kind of implementation for a purpose despite the fact that they may not be resolving to anything at this stage. The majority of those were added by Audi. I think over 600 were added in the first month of the year, and that really expands the number of domains that are reflective of the dealerships for Audi, not just within Germany but now outside of Germany. So they're building up a vast portfolio of domain names that are linked to their

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dealerships, providing the opportunity to create very consistent facing online websites for the public to see and feel confident with every time they're visiting any of those dealership sites. Probably it also gives them the ability – for consistency across those sites – to police the internal compliance requirements that the business sets.

[Aquarelle], a French retailer also put in a batch of about 40 domains, which were a mixture of corporate-related or product-related terms that they applied. Another example was DHL. They added a batch in one day of 30 domains, which were a mixture of business and service terms, locations, and also celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Then there was a couple of financial institutions, state bank and SPI, both registered about 25-30 domains in one day. One state bank was focused on geolocations, a mixture of two and three character codes for those locations. SPI was very much more about putting in domains that are related to their products and services out to their customers.

Those are interesting insights to look at but they are being registered so it's seeing then what happens with those domains at a future state but certainly a lot of preparation work going across a lot of these domains and that just highlights a few examples.

COLE QUINN:

Griffin had a question about that 64% metric and the definition of “in use.” A TLD that just props up with [NIC] page to meet the minimum requirements, does that qualify as in use according to your measurement there?

MARTIN SUTTON:

Thanks for picking that up, Cole, and thanks for the question, Griffin. Excellent question. The typical point here is that it's beyond the [NIC] page, so it's beyond the basic requirements that are needed to at least be live with a dotBrand. So this is typically then about adding further domains on to that. That's our indicator is beyond the [NIC] dotBrand domain that's registered.

Thanks for that. Okay, let me move on. Thanks, Cole. If there's any more that come in, please do feel free to jump in in case I've not noticed them.

Drilling down a bit more on volume of domains, this is looking at the total volumes as of the end of the year for these brands. These are the top 10 by volume. I think this again provides a useful metric to monitoring changes of which there isn't substantive changes in the top tier domains registered. Here's the list of the top 10 brands. As you can see, it's dominated last year by the automotive industry with .audi, .seat, .mini, and .lamborghini, and they're all sitting in the top 10. But overall, .dvag, which is a financial service provider, leads overall by volume. Just looking at .dvag, what is it that they tend to register? You'll notice it at the second level that most of their domains relate to the names of their agents that they use so it redirects to a webpage that confirms the affiliation of that agent with .dvag. I assume that that provides a lot more confidence to users that they are dealing with an authorized person within .dvag.

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The rest of this list that you can see shows a reasonable spread of business sectors as well – across financial services, automotive, IT, retail, and industrial as well. A good mix. So you can just within the top 10 buy volume of domains.

In the right-hand corner there, we've got a shorter list of five brands just picked out in terms of percentage growth in 2019 to see which ones are starting to kick off with a bit more activity. So this is percentage growth. Again, this is not going to necessarily translate to high volumes of domains but indicates where others are starting to become more active and implement the strategies for their dotBrand. So here we see ABBVIE, VISA, APPLE, CBS, and JPMORGAN emerging 2019. So again, just an indicator that below all of these higher volume domains, others are springing up in the course of 2019.

Let's have a look now at which TLDs tend to be the most with domains that resolve to new content. They take the opportunity here to create new domains and fresh spaces. This sort of slices the data now by content resolving by domain names registered in the dotBrands. Unsurprisingly, we see the car manufacturers playing a significant part here as we did in the first run of data.

Then across a section of industries are also taking advantage of creating this fresh new content under their dotBrands. Again, good to see that this differs as you slice the content differently.

Under industry sectors, if you aggregate all of the activity on the dotBrands, again probably not surprisingly, but it's good to start seeing this on an aggregated perspective. And we see the financial

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services and automotive industry are quite high up on the list here again. Again, you can start to see some of the activities in other areas from media, manufacturing, pharmaceutical and health that don't particularly appear on any of the other individual brand list up above.

If we slice it again by country metrics ... this is another view based again on more aggregated data. The first column looks at fastest growth amongst dotBrands. This is where we say by country, it's where the entity operating the TLD is registered. So, for instance, the fastest growth countries there highlights Australia had some good changes in the last year. The types of brands located there are AusPost or AFL, the Football League. Then Switzerland also makes an appearance here where you've got brands like CERN and ABB operating in Switzerland. Then Germany, as we've seen before, you'd expect that with the automotive companies continuing increase in their domain space, but it also includes other brands here. So think of little [man] and ACO on that, that those start to come into play when you look at fastest growth by country.

The middle column here is focused on by country for the most redirects. Again, we've covered some of the examples here for Germany, which is top of the list here. But it's followed here by France and those types of TLDs or brands would be .weber, .leclerc, [.aquarelle] – we talked about briefly – and .total as examples.

COLE QUINN:

Speaking of Germany, our friend, Martin Kuechenthal, has a question for you. "I'm wondering if we have an indication of how many brands

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have shifted their main website from a legacy generic like .com to their .brand?”

MARTIN SUTTON:

Good question, Martin. We did see some of that happen last year with the likes of KPMG, so we are beginning to see that. But we haven't got a definitive number here where there's been a full transition from a .com landscape into .brand. That I think for many will be something over a longer period of time to look at, but what we do tend to see is the majority work hand in hand with both and not just .com because many will have their distribution network across ccTLDs for day to day business, something that we commonly see in Europe at least. So we wouldn't expect those to close off completely as those are tend to be very well used and have inherent search capabilities results. So SEO is important factors for these when considering the move across to .brand. But those are becoming a reality and we see some of those happening, so it's interesting to watch and to learn and certainly within the BRG we try to share some of those experiences to see if there were experiences that highlight some of the problems that can occur and how to overcome those problems or avoid them in the first place, or some of the unusual things that have come out above and beyond what the expectations were for those changes. That will be a good thing to track as we go along.

Let me just turn to some of the other questions that we've got in here. We've got Mark Datysgeld: “How do the brands feel in terms of finding clearer avenues to cooperate with the Universal Acceptance initiative?”

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We would like to see more of you working together with us for our common goal.” Mark, good point. I think Universal Acceptance continues to be observed a lot within the Brand Registry Group. I think that as more of the dotBrands become active, especially probably IDN-related ones, that comes to the fore as what are the issues that we need to address, how we make sure that users are not adversely affected by it.

Then Paulo: “It would be nice to use this data in order to update ICANN’s new gTLDs channels, such as Twitter and the website.” Okay, good idea, Paulo. Thanks for that. Noted.

Right. I’ll just continue on the middle column here on the redirects. We’ve got US, and essentially the final column, the kind of brands that contribute to those sorts of levels are .abbott, .neustar, [.reit], and .google for instance. Again, mixtures of types of organizations. The aggregate of those put them in third list for both these columns.

In that last column, again Germany is flying ahead. What we see here is Spain coming to the equation. They have brands like .seat and .sena that contribute to the total here. Again, it just looks at the data slightly differently in an aggregated manner and from sort of a country level for where these are based.

I’ll close off this section. Just by way of saying that a lot of this information that we gather is made available via makeway.world, so we’re able to monitor the changes, especially as adoption grows in this space. There are other areas that we get our insights and visibility of dotBrands activities in use cases. For instance,

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observatory.domains is another resource, as well as what I alluded to earlier which is where our members themselves share a lot of information amongst themselves within the BRG which is one of the benefits of having this association where they feel comfortable and confident to talk with one another. That kind of leads me to the point here that we've got the ability to call upon some of our members to talk about those experiences.

I'm very pleased to welcome Nisha Parkash from Sky. Nisha is the Online Compliance and Brand Protection Manager for Sky and another long-standing member of the Brand Registry Group and strong advocate for dotBrands. So we've got Dawn Shackleton, you may know that sits on the board. Nisha and Dawn worked closely on all of these activities, in dotBrands specifically. Nisha and colleagues have already implemented various use cases on the dotSky.

So what we've ask Nisha to do today is just to illustrate some of the background of specific types of use case and highlight what they've learned and experienced through that process. Nisha, I am really pleased to welcome you. You can take over control if you like. I'll move the slides. Just tell me when, and over to you.

NISHA PARKASH:

No worries. Thank you very much. Hi, everyone. Thank you, Martin. Cole, for inviting me to knowledge share today. I'm really excited to give a perspective on what Sky are doing.

Have you given me control on this or do you move the slide for me?

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I've highlighted this slide keeping customers safe because I feel like that's exactly what running a registry and owning a registry simply does. We'll move on to my use case, which is around actually creating e-mails for third parties to send e-mails on our behalf. I'll explain that in a second.

I just want to start by saying, my title, as it ends more than just vanity is quite key in this, for me anyway and definitely for Dawn as well, based on how we've grown our dotSky portfolio, what we've done in the past and actually our vision going forward. For me, that's why it creates this more than just vanity saying.

Firstly, I mean, as points raised before by Martin, only a brand can own their dotBrand TLD at this point anyway, or the application that we were successful in. So ultimately, only Sky can own dotSky, we're not going to resell it. We are dotSky. I think it's important to understand that the changes to GDPR means it is definitely harder now to gauge the ownership of domain names as stated in the slide. So just simply owning your dotBrand is telling the customer that you are receiving something from Sky. If it is e-mail, as my case studies going to proceed to, but even if it is just visiting a website, because it's Sky people that can own that. So it's that reassurance. It's almost like giving yourself a passport of identification in the toolbar without anyone having to seek the legitimacy of that website by going to a public who is, for example, the toolbar itself is going to tell you that this is the company that you're visiting.

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I've read a lot about it and I've read up a lot about the start of the application process. Website personalization was something that was used a lot and I think that's exactly what owning your registry does and having your dotBrand does. It literally personalizes your website. So as the consumer becomes more familiar with that, it is going to be apparent that actually owning your dotBrand nowadays is just going to be really key. For me, it's just more than being on brand and it is more than creating that vanity.

There are other points I haven't highlighted in this slide but I think one of the really important things that I'm finding now is it allows us to not be exploited, like our buying potential is not exploited when it comes to domains that are owned by other people. So dot-com is always going to be king. I think that any stakeholder that we work with is always going to be under the impression that when they're launching a big product, we need to go and find the dot-com. But as the years have passed, again, as we're moving into a different time in the online space, there are a lot of the dot-coms that we can't obtain now, and that's just a simple fact. The word "sky," although in the IP world is very much referenced to a media company, it is a dictionary word for us and it is a generic word.

So some of our big brands, some of our big launches and brand strings, we cannot obtain as a dot-com. Unless we're going to pay probably a significant price, it's becoming impossible from a monetary aspect. But I also believe that actually owning your registry allows you to have that leverage that your buying potential is not exploited because the domain owner will think twice about whether he's going

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to push that negotiation. So we kind of come in – and we do do our acquisitions anonymously but we’re going to come in at our price. And because we own a registry, we may say, “No, that is our final price.” And if we don’t get the dot-com, that’s fine, we’ll move to the dotSky.

So I think that that’s something to think about for how you work with your portfolio. Because the more you start utilizing it, the more you will be making quite a bold statement to the outside world that you’re not afraid to move away from the stigma that dot-com is king and that your business are going to become more familiar with website personalization.

I think there’s definitely more to it than just having this registry that allows you to add and remove domains, even though that is definitely one of the biggest reasons that you should have your registry. Definitely there’s more to it behind the scenes. I think if you are in a position of registering domain names often, you’ll start seeing that value very quickly. As a company, obviously, we have the dotSky and as again stated in the slide, it is more than just aesthetically pleasing and it is supporting what I’ve just said.

So the use case that we found that I’m presenting today is around how Sky as a business basically sends e-mail communication. Now, businesses all operate differently, of course. Sky, genuinely, promotes the creativity of creative agencies. So they will go off and put their natural flair and what their creative mind is to developing a website. And that’s not in-house, a lot of the time that is externally. Now, the reason why they’re probably creating a website is through a

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transactional website or there's going to be a competition or something where a customer must have to receive something in return. Maybe it's a product, maybe they're trying to buy a new remote control. So they're going to visit this website that's very savvy and they're going to buy a remote control, and then off the back of that, they're going to have to receive an e-mail to say that they've done so.

The third party is managing that e-mail on our behalf. It's not coming in-house, but Sky, their policy itself doesn't allow for companies to spoof our e-mails. So I'll go into that in a second but I just want to end this slide by saying exactly what I stated there. The reason why we've done this is because we do not want anybody to be questioning the authenticity of the e-mails they're receiving. Martin, if you want to move to the next slide. Thank you.

How has dotSky helped with this part of the business? As I stated, we do not allow third parties to spoof our e-mails. And we did find this to be a really big challenge when we didn't have a dotSky registry. The reason for that is sky.com itself is the most recognized domain that we have. Anybody can agree to that. But we actually used sky.com for e-mails for customers. So if they were a Sky customer, they actually got themselves an e-mail address. Just like @gmail.com, we had @sky.com. So we couldn't use sky.com for mass communication on like, "Come to an event that Sky is doing," or you've just bought a remote control and we couldn't use it for Sky stuff. @sky.uk, so sky.uk is reserved for corporate mail only. We could not use that. Again, we can't use that domain and create a subdomain. Then anything else just sounded like it would be phishing. Like e-mailsky.com or

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contactsky.com. You know, because the dot-com, it can be registered by anybody. So it just did not look like it would have been a legitimate domain.

Even though it would have been, it was just that level of questioning that we didn't want. We didn't want that perception, basically. So we didn't want somebody to have that level of doubt, check it out or without checking it, sending us an e-mail saying, "I think this is totally fake." And it just creates a bad impression. Reputational damage is probably the biggest thing there because dot-com is fully available to anybody. So anybody could have registered that domain string, you can make up a domain name in your mind and register dot-com. Anybody can do that.

The dotSky name has allowed us to provide peace of mind to our customers, again, because we are the only people that can own that. So if they're going to receive an e-mail from us at dotSky, it's coming from Sky. So what we did, we thought about the best possible domain name, keeping it short, of course, because on the back of the root domain, we were going to create subdomains to then create these e-mails. So we registered contact.sky and it flows nicely, it is and that's exactly what we want to achieve from this. So it's the primary domain name, and then we'd set up relevant subdomains within this zone.

Now, the reason why we find this a lot more manageable than potentially a dot-com is because ... we can do what we want, in any case, with the zone file, because if it's on your servers, you can do what you want. But in this particular instance, it was just really clean.

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It was super clean, it was just a really easy domain name. I put a protocol in place that if we created, say, marketing.contact.sky, only that person was allowed it. That particular department in marketing was allowed that. We wouldn't allow another third party to then use marketing. Although that's technically possible, you can have several subdomains set up differently with .txt going out to different third parties. I just put a straight protocol that once the subdomain has been used, it will not be used by anybody else. The reason for that is because if we had any issues, I could isolate the incident so I knew straight away where that problem lied. And I didn't have to question whether what agency or what third party had probably caused the problem. Usually, the problem would be that somebody is trying to change the SPF and DKIM records. Again, I'll move on to that in a second because it's further down in my slide. So we create this very clean zone file, and we build anything we need in that zone file, any department that requires a third party sending an e-mail on our behalf.

So the DNS records are restricted. There is no point in you trying to achieve this and then creating delegation records because you're going to then lose complete control over that domain name and that is completely defeating the object. The forbidden records are NS and CNAME. Now in any DNS, anybody that understands DNS and anybody that doesn't understand DNS, a quick DNS master class, NS and CNAME are ... Well, CNAME is king in DNS, it will take the control away from you. So whatever you do, you're basically saying, "I'm going to, let's say, sky.com be a CNAME delegation out to a third party," you've

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allowed that party to have absolute full control over your root domain, and even if it was a subdomain. So you would never want to set a CNAME to your root domain ever because you will never be able to build a subdomain records off the back of that.

NS, again, it's a slightly different way of looking at server delegation. So you'd put the root domain on your server and then you would get create an NS record to then give it to a different set of servers. But then usually you want to do that at subdomain level because it wouldn't make sense at root domain because that would be at the registrar that you do that. So you wouldn't do this in this instance, and we would not allow it.

So for anybody who wants to come to me and say, "I need an e-mail but I want a CNAME because my mail provider is only going to do this via CNAME," I will just flat out say no. That's not the purpose. You're not going to achieve what you're going to achieve if it's CNAME and I will 100% stand by that and there are no exceptions.

So you want to create SPF and DKIM records, they're the mail provider records. They'll come in the form of txt. Then Sky and your business will have a DMARC record, and usually managed out of their messaging team to authenticate the SPF and DKIM. So the DMARC record that we're providing will basically support the SPF and DKIM and we'll see if any changes are trying to be made to the SPF and DKIM.

I've highlighted something really important. I'm not techie. I'm not a DNS tech, I just understand DNS but I find things like this interesting

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because it gives you different perspective on how to manage these things correctly. Our messaging team long time ago would say, “Nisha, you can’t you end a txt and tilde all because it’s a wild card, essentially.” So the more that was kind of drummed into me, the more I understood that I could never say yes to a tilde, and now I can say that straight away. I can look at it and say, “No, you cannot implement txt with tilde. It has to be [dash all] because then that means only that IP is authorized to send out mail for that domain. So that particular IP range that’s sitting with that third party has got control to send that e-mail. Again, that’s a very strict rule that we apply and there are no exceptions.

As it ends, the DMARC record is an e-mail authentication protocol, so it’s designed to give the e-mail owners the ability to protect their domain from unauthorized use. That’s usually what we know as e-mail spoofing. So just to highlight that, we will never allow ... and we did at one point, believe it or not. I’ll tell you why this became so key for us, because the third party would use their domain name because they have domain names, but it would be branded on their company. Then they were sending out e-mails to our customers saying, “Hey, you haven’t checked out your remote control in the shopping cart.” Naturally then, you’re going to get somebody say, “Hold up. That is definitely cybercriminal,” when actually it really wasn’t, it was a legitimate company that we were working with. However, we never had the right protocols in place. Again, then that perception of Sky can’t manage their customer safety well enough by allowing that to happen was causing problems massively. Then we just did not know

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when people – when I say people, third parties – were sending e-mails on our behalf, there was just absolutely no control. So you can imagine the amount of senior people within Sky that would have been contacted by a miffed customer and it would actually be this little old ... I don't say little old lady if she's got an e-mail, I'm sure she does. That problematic e-mail or that concern would reach very senior people. I mean, CEOs. We were having all sorts of nightmares with senior people feeling like that this part was not managed and we found the solution via dotSky registry.

I'll move to the next slide, which just highlights the sort of things we've done. This is by no means the full list. This is what I felt would be really relevant to look at it from a snapshot perspective, and these are I feel some of the best subdomains we created.

So your basket is one of them. That's when you go to the shopping cart and you put something in and you left it in there. We'll send a prompt e-mail to say, "You've left something in the shopping cart. Did you mean to do that?" Products and services, we're always sending out notifications about new services. Corporate communications, this is out to journalists. It could be MPs, it could be even sometimes people at Sky. This is corporate comms rather than internal comms. This is the other side of the corporate where usually external people need to be contacted.

Cybersecurity, obviously massively important for any business, their cybersecurity team, especially at Sky anyway, we have more of a vision to keep in contact with our staff to let them know and to make

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them aware of phishing attacks. That will usually always happen via e-mail communications. So it's important that people who work for Sky and also contracts for Sky and ... remember that Sky is so big, we have so many suppliers, they work for Sky because they're contracting here or they're consulting but they don't necessarily work at Sky, so they wouldn't get a usual Sky e-mail. We've got cybersecurity. That's actually an internal one. We're starting to even use it moving away from third parties and we're creating it for internal use as well.

Tech desk, again, someone's going to get an e-mail from Sky going, "You need tech support." But again, that could obviously look like a phishing attack. Those are the probably main e-mails that people get where they're getting completely shafted, I guess, for some tech problem, and all of a sudden you have to pay somebody 1,200 pounds to get your tech sorted out. These are the things that are real problems. So we are trying to combat that in the best way possible.

HR communication is another one where Sky staff are going to get payroll information, that could be exploited. I think a really interesting one was engineer rewards. Because our engineers are mobile, so they don't work in the office, but if they had done some really good work, they were getting e-mails with vouchers to maybe go and have lunch. It could have been like 5 pounds ... it could have been 5 pounds just to get a coffee or whatever. But the value of 5 pounds just seemed really bizarre. So when the engineers were getting these e-mails, they were not getting it from a legitimate Sky e-mail address or Sky domain name. They were just getting it from a third party who had been told to send out these e-mail communications. These engineers were

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sending us e-mails saying, you know, “Why have I been given 5 pounds?” and it was legit, they had genuinely been rewarded. So it just caused really crazy communication.

Then again, like mailroom deliveries, Sky, our massive organization in Osterley, our HQ has 10,000-15,000 people at a time on the campus. Everybody’s getting their deliveries to Sky. It got to the point where actually what happened was a third party is actually managing our mailroom and their e-mail addresses were starting to be ... they started looking like they were phishing and nobody understood that they had a delivery. So we had a problem in our mailroom where all the deliveries were piling up, because people didn’t know their deliveries had arrived and there was no space to receive more items, essentially.

We create skymailroom.contact.sky, which again means that all these e-mails are being delivered. I think that’s really an important factor. Because we are so tight on the DNS records, the DMARC is going to ensure that these e-mails are delivered. Now that is probably the biggest thing you want out of anything when you’re sending e-mail, is that your e-mails are definitely getting delivered. So we’re able to do that by managing the DNS in this way.

I hope that was helpful. And if anyone has any questions, please feel free to ask. If not, I hope you learned something new.

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MARTIN SUTTON:

Nisha, it's Martin. Thank you so much for that. It kind of brings it to life as well. We talked about number of domain names, but there's a whole world underneath all of that in subdomains where a lot of the activity can be sliced up in accordance with the use of requirement for your business. I think that's kind of a useful example of that as well.

Another point there was really trying to make sure that these e-mails do get delivered, number one objective, and that they are perceived and people can quickly and easily understand that they are legitimate and meaningful for whichever part of the organization they may be from or from your consumer base as well.

Thank you for that. We will pause just for a moment. If anybody's got any questions ... I'll look to any hands up. Let's just have a quick check. Lots of nice feedback. Thank you all. Okay. We'll round off them with just a few more points to raise on.

I thought it'd be useful to look at future rounds because there's always an appreciation that subsequent procedures will finally come to a close in the not-too-distant future. From dotBrands perspective, and in particular, new dotBrand applicants in the future is to understand that this is a particular area of interest for the Brand Registry Group where we certainly want to look at this as a priority area amongst all the other things that goes on at ICANN so that we can actually draw from all the learning points the last round and look to improve those for the future. Now that may well be existing dotBrands want to apply for more that suits their business and expand the brand portfolio, but it may be new entrants as well that want to acquire a dotBrand.

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These areas have been important to us. While subsequent procedures are still ongoing, there is some building up of the final reports that will be drawn out from the working group. I think it's important to recognize that bearing in mind, the BRG has been participant of subsequent procedures over the years, multi-year effort, it has been. Plus also its members themselves have been directly contributing to that work. I think there's some good indicators that progress is being made where in the future, they will recognize the distinct model that we talked about here for dotBrands that will be better understood and it'll be easier to go through an application process regarding a dotBrand, rather than all sort of post application problems that materialized out of the 2012 round.

We could be looking at removal of certain requirements for a dotBrand where the purpose of it was for registrant protection. An example of that would be the continued operational instrument. Because as we said right at the start, these dotBrands are not there to sell domain names to registrants, they are effectively the registrant for the second-level domains, these are not worth anything for a dotBrand to have to be obligated to do and perform.

Other areas that we're keen on helping out here is simplifying the background checks that are applied to organizations and many dotBrands and publicly listed companies and things such as name and addresses of all your directors, bearing in mind that this was personal address information, it's not something that should be asked for and provided to ICANN to store with all of the other information that it asked for in the first round.

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We, also as the Brand Registry Group, find that the pre-qualifying check for a registry service provider would be a value going forward and stop a lot of the repeated and unnecessarily costly processes occurring in the post-application processing. We do feel that the principle of cost recovery for the application phases is a suitable option to take forward. But overall, we want to improve predictability for applicants, in particular, of course for dotBrand applicants.

So there's a very brief rundown on some of the areas that we've focused in on subsequent procedures. We hope that that continues at a pace now to reach a conclusion as soon as possible and certainly before the year ends as targeted by Subsequent Procedures Working Group.

Okay. I'll move on now just to advise you of some of the events that we're looking to provide this year. First of all, we were hoping to create sort of a mini dotBrands and domains called dotBrands Masterclass to coincide with the GDD Summit in Paris. That is obviously subject to changes based on the problems with the virus and we've seen already having an impact on many countries, many people not being able to attend events and what we're seeing at the moment, lots of events are canceled in preference for remote participation or a postponement. So that's in-progress at the moment. We'll look to monitor the situation. But the idea behind that was to very much focus on active dotBrands and learnings from those dotBrands, specifically many of the ones that were based around Europe that you've probably seen on previous lists that we've gone through.

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Then based on the increasingly successful events of brands and domains, the last one that we held in November in Montreal, tied in with the ICANN meeting, we're looking to repeat that at the last ICANN meeting this year in Hamburg. This is slightly different in terms of the brands and domains event does cover broader topics for brands. So it's not just about dotBrands, but it's really about the impact of domain name as an industry as well. Based on the feedback that we had from last year, we feel it's important to keep this and grow it further. So these types of events are good to look out for the future and we will be circulating information to make sure that you're aware of what opportunities exist to come and see us and talk to us and enjoy these events.

I think we've done pretty good for time. Actually, we do have time for any Q&A if anybody's got any questions that they'd like to raise. So I'll open it up for questions. If anybody's got anything, please raise your hand or post your comment in the chat.

From Griffin, "Would love to hear about dotBrand operators have motivated internal resources buy-in to actually deliver dotBrand use cases." I think the example today is a good one in terms of how it builds up recognition internally buy-in to dotSky in particular. We're hearing many of those types of stories across our members when we do our monthly meetings, we have an opportunity to share those experiences. We've even had brands and domains events where our members have presented on this particular topic. It's not always simple. You have very large organizations with very, very different priorities. Domains don't tend to get particularly high on those

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priorities, but there are some useful ways that some of our members found where they were able to promote dotBrands without effectively having to go around and tell anybody about them.

One, as an example, was the use of a dotBrand in URL shorteners for social media. That got picked up very quickly across the different entities of a particular brand globally, whether it was quick buy-in from marketing and actually different functions including security functions that wanted to leverage the dotBrand URL, they found it very much more convenient, authentic way to use their dotBrand and give the level of trust that it needed for people to actually click on those URL shorteners. By way of that, different mechanisms internally to use their dotBrand, they were able to actually get the message to senior executives across the organization very conveniently without, as I say, going in front of them and telling them what a dotBrand is and going through that whole process.

So those are things that we will bear in mind and we do try to bring those into the brands and domains events. Certainly we share that amongst our membership meetings that we have regularly. Thanks, Griffin. Anybody else?

NISHA PARKASH: Martin, I just wanted to .... This is Nisha again.

MARTIN SUTTON: Hi, Nisha.

NISHA PARKASH:

Hi. I just wanted to follow up on the point you made about the questions that Griffin asked, actually. I think a lot of what we're seeing are stakeholders that they they're actually quite excited about the use of dotSky. But from our perspective, it's what I mentioned before where we are unable to obtain the dot-com, stakeholders are more inclined to use the dotSky because the price tags that come with trying to obtain the dot-com, because we would do that anonymously. As soon as one department uses it, another department thinks it's a novelty, and they're like, "We want a dotSky too." A lot of it is down to the fact that dotSky for us as a generic word so we're going to find that a lot of domain names aren't available. Actually, we're not going to be bullied to have to buy them at high price tags now, because we have this registry that is proving really, really successful.

I think it's a case of setting precedents. I think a lot of people are frightened to move down the route of using their dotBrand. But if you don't make the change, change won't come. I think for us, some of our ... Well, the next two big launches actually are launching on dotSky because number one, the dot-com wasn't available. Specifically on one of the launches, I really encouraged the use of dotSky because it just worked really well and it just gave that level of website personalization. I think it's about having an advocate as well within the business and maybe looking at creating those kind of teams within the business that understand this from a branding aspect. As I said, from our perspective, the more that the dot-com isn't available, the more that we're going to move to the dotSky. It doesn't mean that we

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would forget the dot-com, we would probably still maybe try and go after at some point, but I will say that I have found that there are dot-coms that we haven't obtained that have turned into infringing sites. We were able to attain the dot-coms that way, but we had initially launched on the dotSky. I mean, there are definitely pros and cons but it's about having an advocate and it's about imposing change and being an advocate for change in the online space.

MARTIN SUTTON:

Thanks, Nisha. That's another good insight as well. What goes on in the real world is trying to acquire some of these spaces gets more and more difficult and expensive. So leveraging the dotBrand is a way to combat some of that and perhaps rely more so on monitoring and enforcement activities to pick up the pieces where you identify it. I think that's useful. Thank you.

I've got Brian in the queue. Please go ahead, Brian.

BRIAN KING:

Hey. Thanks, Martin. Actually, great question and great answer there, Griffin and Nisha. Thanks, Martin and Cole, for a good presentation today. My comment is around the Olympics that are hopefully going forward this summer in Tokyo. We've been monitoring and I've seen quite a few dotBrand uses and some other non-com, non-.JP uses of good domain names around companies and their promotions for the local Olympics in Tokyo. Our Tokyo office is really jazzed up and is keeping track of those kind of dotBrand use cases from our clients and

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others. I just wanted to encourage BRG members that when they see those in the wild, feel free to share those around with BRG colleagues, and certainly we'll be tracking the ones that we see.

Hopefully, the Olympics will go forward and we'll be able to have local television coverage, not just in Japan but in lots of countries that might expose some neat use cases. So I'm looking forward to seeing those. If anybody has any that are interesting to share, we'll certainly be compiling those. We could do that in conjunction with BRG or on our own. Feel free to send those our way. Thanks.

MARTIN SUTTON:

Thanks, Brian. Recent BRG member meetings have touched on this. It's very interesting to watch. I hope to see some clever use cases emerge, particularly around sort of Internet of Things, 5G related that this all ties in with. That's a good point to raise. Thanks very much.

Okay. Any more questions? No hands. If I missed anything in there. Comments? Okay. I see the comments there. We'll note it.

I'd like to thank those that have contributed to this. Nisha and Cole, that's been great. Behind the scenes as well to pull together some of the information here for updating you all. If you do want any further information about the Brand Registry Group, do feel free to contact us on [info@brandregistrygroup.org](mailto:info@brandregistrygroup.org). I'd be very happy to hear from you. Thank you very much. Enjoy the rest of your day, night, wherever you may be. Thanks very much. We can stop the recording.

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