
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – ccNSO: Annual Strategy Review Discussion
Sunday, March 8, 2026 – 16:30 to 17:30 IST

CLAUDIA RUIZ

Community anti-harassment policy. Please observe the following guidelines to participate in this session. They will also be posted in the chat for your reference. During the session, questions or comments submitted in chat will be read aloud if put in the proper form as noted in the chat. If you would like to speak during the session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will unmute their microphone. Onsite participants will use a physical microphone to speak and should leave their Zoom microphone disconnected. For the benefit of other participants, please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. Thank you, and with that, I will now hand the floor over to Becky Nash of the ICANN planning team. Thank you.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much, Claudia. Hello, everyone. This is Becky Nash from ICANN Org Planning, and I am here with my colleague, Victoria Yang. We will be running this session as an open dialogue and discussion for ICANN's annual strategy review. If we could go to the next slide.

The goal of the session is to surface insights, challenge assumptions, and identify areas that may require deeper discussion and follow-up. The session is not intended to revise the

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current strategic plan or resolve problems at this stage. This is a step midway through the cycle of strategic planning to evaluate if there are any emerging trends that warrant further investigation, discussion, and review that the board should consider regarding impact on the current strategic plan for FY26 through 30.

The session instructions are that we should stay at the strategy level. This is strategic thinking and looking at our strategy. This is not intended to be a discussion about operational activities or the execution of the strategy, but how the FY26 through 30 strategy is impacted by any ongoing, current, or future impacts on a longer-term horizon. We recommend that we make space for different perspectives and maintain a dialogue so that we listen to everyone. The most important thing is to have diverse input and insights into any emerging trends.

The focus is on strategic implications from a longer-term horizon. This means keeping the pulse on emerging trends or identifying what is on the horizon to evaluate the adequacy of our current strategic plan. We want to identify if there are any changes emerging that we should pay more attention to and bring to the attention of the board for an evaluation on whether anything needs to change in the strategic plan.

We are going to run the session by presenting five topics and asking for volunteers to share their perspectives. We would like everyone to ask each other questions in an open dialogue. We are taking notes and will help facilitate this.

We will jump in and first talk about the first external environmental trend and assumptions. A key trend as it relates to technological developments, security, and trust in the unique identifier systems is that these systems continue to be influenced and impacted by technological developments. On the one hand, some technological advances may present opportunities to strengthen the security and resilience of the unique identifier systems. On the other hand, some may fragment trust or challenge the universality of the systems.

Guided questions for reflection include: where are you seeing evidence of technological developments that impact the unique identifier systems? What challenges or constraints might ICANN be underestimating in this area? What early signals of this trend should we be paying more attention to? What would surprise us most if this trend or factor accelerated? If we were wrong about this trend, what would it most likely be?

We would love to hear perspectives about technological advancements and what may present opportunities to strengthen the security and resilience of the unique identifier systems, or conversely, what may fragment trust or challenge the universality of the unique identifier systems.

BECKY NASH

Any perspectives?

VICTORIA YANG

If I may add, look at the big picture for five to ten years from now regarding how technological development is going to impact DNS. How do you think the DNS is going to evolve? Do you see the trust of the DNS evolving over the next five to ten years? There is no right or wrong. It is more about looking forward and how things will evolve in that area. Yeah.

CHARLES NOIR

I will start for the record. This is an area that holds a lot of interest to me because of what I do outside of ICANN. It intersects with the unique identifier system we have. In fact, it is actually predicated on it in an entirely different way. Evidence that other people may see is something that we are actually doing right now.

We are using it very specifically in the concept of digital signatures and trust in a different way than what people are used to. People are used to PKI and forms of that, which in terms of trade or trade finance, is predicated on a photocopy process. When you are dealing with trade finance, that is not good enough. That is actually a recreation of the Xerox issue that originated in the 1950s where people could take trade documents, photocopy them, and go to different banks. We see that all the way up into 2020, where about three billion dollars worth of money was moved in Singapore because of that.

The unique identifier system that we use here presents an incredible opportunity that allows for command and control of that type of document within an ecosystem that right now is worth

about 143 trillion dollars a year in trade. That is growing slowly, but it is growing with other companies as well. That will have a fundamental change in how companies and online marketplaces are interacting with each other. In terms of the ccTLD space, it could potentially provide an opportunity for ccTLDs to assist the United Nations in tracking and monitoring the movement of goods through territories. I do not know that for sure, but it is a potential. I am looking at it from a positive point of view.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much for your perspective and insights.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

One thing that comes to mind is a technological advancement that may represent opportunities to strengthen security, which would be DNSSEC. DNSSEC has the ability to improve the security and resilience of the DNS. However, it may represent some difficulties for individuals who do not have the technological know-how to handle it properly. It is relatively easy to make mistakes that can cause tremendous problems, such as knocking down the entire zone. This has been holding some people back from adopting DNSSEC. Even though it works, it may discourage adoption.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

Sure.

BECKY NASH

Great. Thank you very much. Yes, Andreas.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Andreas Musielak, representing NIC.at. From a strategic point of view, I think concentration is an issue. We can see that concentration in the DNS layer can be a problem. It is not the ccTLD community per se, but companies rely on Cloudflare very much, creating a huge concentration. If there is an outage, you have really big problems. There have been outages twice in recent days.

We need to convince people to use trustworthy parties even if they are more expensive than Cloudflare. I understand they have the economy of scale and Cloudflare is cheaper, but concentration is an issue. Therefore, they should always have redundancies. From my strategic point of view, that is an important part for the whole industry. Thank you.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much for your comments. Any other perspectives or questions for those that have spoken up? Any other challenges or constraints that ICANN may be underestimating?

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

Thank you for the opportunity. This is Pablo for the record. As a result of the challenge of using DNSSEC, I have come across people

proposing different approaches, such as blockchain. That could be a form of fragmenting trust and challenging the universal use of the DNS. In the future, others could say that the architecture of the DNS should be changed to something else. I have already heard proponents of blockchain and other systems.

BECKY NASH

Yes, thank you.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

It is Andreas for the record again. I do not know if it is appropriate here, but I think artificial intelligence will have an impact, particularly regarding zero-click rates. If you do not use websites anymore, it will impact the community. Ridiculously, you need to feed the AI, but it will impact things somehow.

It is important for ICANN and the community to monitor the usage of websites. If usage goes down because people are not visiting websites directly, it is a trend we should take into consideration without fearing it.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much for your perspective. Our next trend includes AI, so let us keep that in mind. Please, go ahead.

CHARLES NOIR This is Charles for CIRA. I was going to talk about AI and was not sure if it was relevant here, so I will wait because it is coming. We also touched a bit on—

VICTORIA YANG Please go ahead. We are moving into the next trend, which is the AI impact on the unique identifier system.

CHARLES NOIR Are you covering quantum anywhere?

VICTORIA YANG Sorry?

CHARLES NOIR Are you covering quantum?

VICTORIA YANG Yes, you can mention it. Please feel free to do so.

CHARLES NOIR In addition to AI, and going back to the unique identifier system and cryptography, there are breakthroughs with quantum computing happening more quickly than anticipated. There was an article in Security Week recently published on this. It needs to be verified, but quantum could have a severe impact on cryptography and the

architectures of trust. If we are moving to AI, we can talk specifically about that in a minute.

BECKY NASH

Would you like us to do a quick introduction here, and then we will ask everyone to jump in? Victoria, please.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you. In general, the content summarized here is very high level as a conversation starter. AI can operate at a much higher speed, and how will that impact the multi-stakeholder model of ICANN? If we think about AI as a tool, it makes it possible to generate public comments, draft policy language, and respond to mailing lists.

Will bad actor abuse of ICANN's multi-stakeholder model and the consensus-based process with AI assistance impact the legitimacy of the system? There are both good and negative impacts because of AI. We would like to hear your observations, insights, and perspectives about the impact of AI on ICANN and the unique identifier system.

CHARLES NOIR

Charles again for the record. I am going to start on the optimistic side. There is a great deal of optimism regarding our ability to comprehend and distill critical aspects of multi-stakeholderism. Think about the amount of paperwork ICANN produces, even within the ccNSO. The board produces packages of hundreds of

pages. Using AI to get through that more quickly and distill aspects on the human side is a source of optimism.

However, there is also the serious vulnerability that there will be a lot of misinformation and 'slop.' How we sift through that is going to be important. It is here and it is moving quickly, so it is not something we can get away from.

ONDREJ FILIP

I think it is implicitly mentioned in the question. AI will definitely affect the public comments part. We will probably need some kind of identification for who is raising which issue. I have seen instances in other bodies where one source generates many comments, making it look like a huge issue when it is just one entity.

We have to develop a better identification system for public commenting because otherwise our decision-making on public comments might be vulnerable. Ondrej Filip for the record.

JORDAN CARTER

Jordan here from auDA for the record. I have a specific example involving fellowship applications. We ran an Internet Governance Academy 15 months apart, and the number of applications doubled from 100 to 200. In the first round, half of the applications were evidently from AI users, with frequent use of the word pivotal and many dashes.

This was even more evident in the next round. One consequence is the increased workload for these programs, though AI could be used to assist the assessment. As Ram Mohan mentioned at a recent ICANN meeting, while DNS abuse is being accelerated by these technologies, so are the defenses. Both sides are speeding up, and we must ensure our side speeds up faster.

BECKY NASH

Very good insights. Does anyone else have a perspective on this as an emerging trend? Charles?

CHARLES NOIR

One more point regarding the positives. While we will see more AI-driven DNS abuse, we will hopefully see mitigation improve because of artificial intelligence. It is early days. The concerns from the Canadian government about expanding DNS abuse due to AI are not promising, but there will be mitigation opportunities that we need to stay ahead of.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Andreas for the record. A positive perspective is that multi-stakeholderism includes checks and balances. Having that balance spread across many shoulders helps secure the system itself. The system of multi-stakeholderism protects ICANN from misuse. That is the benefit and beauty of it.

BECKY NASH

Go ahead, Irina. Thank you.

IRINA DANELIA

Irina. It occurred to me that we may expect not only public comments generated by AI, but also grant applications. The challenge is to maintain a critical assessment of the results AI gives us when we use this powerful tool. Thank you.

BECKY NASH

Thank you. We definitely heard both opportunities and risks regarding AI. While it can enhance efficiencies, there are accompanying risks. Is there any perspective on the impact of AI on the IANA function? No? Okay, let us move to the next slide.

Another external environmental factor is related to the DNS marketplace. There is uncertainty about the success or failure of certain new gTLDs, as some participants in the 2012 round faced challenges with user adoption and limited demand. The 2026 round may bring further challenges or show significant opportunities like stronger branding, inclusivity of other languages, and innovation in digital identity.

Additionally, evolving user preferences, such as the popularity of apps and AI, could change how society uses domain names, impacting demand. The rise of alternative name systems also raises strategic questions about user experience and trust.

We must consider how governance, stability, and clarity can be maintained during these evolutions. We have already touched on

blockchain. Does anyone have perspectives on emerging trends related to the DNS marketplace?

PETER KOCH

Hi, this is Peter Koch from DENIC. An indirect influence that disrupts the market involves domain investors who depend on advertisement parking. If that revenue decreases, registration numbers and the attractiveness of certain TLDs may change.

Another change involves certificate lifetimes, which may influence the attractiveness of running websites and, indirectly, the number of domain registrations. Foresight needs to look further into the future and be broader to predict these indirect issues. Thank you.

BECKY NASH

Thank you for your perspective. Any other insights or dialogue about the DNS marketplace and key trends?

IRINA DANELIA

Irina for the record. Concentration and centralization are ongoing trends in many areas and could lead to less stability and resiliency.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Andreas for the record. We should take the aging population in the western world into consideration, as it will change domain name usage. Educating people is part of our responsibility and ICANN strategy. We should not underestimate this trend.

BECKY NASH Andreas, do you mean how the next generation uses domains?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK Exactly.

BECKY NASH For example, using more apps or AI rather than typing in domain names?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK Exactly. This is important. It is not just domain names for email, but using them for business entrance. That might change if the new generation skips using them because they are not used to it. While email remains important, a domain name should always be a primary part of a business.

BECKY NASH Do you see any behavior changes in data from the ccTLD space regarding how people use domain names?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK On a central level, we try to analyze usage instead of just the number of registrations. Usage is important for the life cycle of a domain name. It is a bit early to be definitive. I know some ccTLDs are reducing the age requirement for registering domain names to

educate people early. I do not know if it is successful yet, but we are at a starting point in terms of information.

BECKY NASH

I understand. Thank you for sharing. In strategic thinking, we may not have all the data yet, but it is good to monitor these signals.

CHARLES NOIR

I wanted to piggyback on what Andreas said. For a business, a domain name is critical for existing to the rest of the world. You do not get that with alternate domain name systems. That is unique to ICANN and something we must protect.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you. Does anyone else want to share observations about the domain name market? Okay.

BART BOSWINKEL

Maybe just one advertisement for a ccNSO session. On Tuesday afternoon, there will be a trend exercise with two blocks. One covers registration trends across the globe, and the second covers strategies ccTLDs are using to deal with these trends. This may provide insights on what to look for. That is Tuesday afternoon.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you. That is a very interesting topic.

BART BOSWINKEL

We only do interesting things.

VICTORIA YANG

All right, let us move on to internal trends. By internal, we mean the ICANN ecosystem: the board, the community, and the entire ecosystem. This is about the multi-stakeholder model, community growth, and structure.

We want to highlight two points. First, while we recognize the benefit of experienced veterans in PDPs and community-led work, it is important to encourage knowledge transfer and cultivate the next generation of leaders. They should not just inherit the model, but grow and strengthen it.

Second, we face a challenge in transferring interest into active participation. Data shows we can generate interest in what ICANN does, but sustaining and transferring that into active volunteering is difficult. This is different for various stakeholders. How do we maintain the legitimacy of the multi-stakeholder model?

IRINA DANELIA

Irina for the record. I see a big challenge here with the new generation. Watching my kids, I realize they will be leading the world in ten years, and they are very different. I see no way to convince generation Z or Alpha to read fifty or a hundred pages of a document. They will never do it.

I also see no way to convince them to spend hours developing a policy that might not touch their personal experience. We need to learn to speak their language rather than trying to convince them to speak ours.

CHARLES NOIR

You made me smile. Charles for the record from CIRA. We have always talked about the speed of ICANN compared to governments. In a world of increasing geopolitical tension, governments are likely to move much more quickly.

For legitimacy, ICANN needs to stay on top of this. I fear governments may become impatient depending on the level of crisis we face over the next five years, particularly regarding conflict. If we move into more significant global conflict, governments might address issues unilaterally if ICANN is not responding.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

I would like to synthesize what we are hearing. If we want to retain and increase participation, ICANN must identify what is in it for the participants. At the end of the day, it is about what is in it for them. ICANN must provide services, knowledge, and know-how.

In my opinion, the ccNSO provides networking where participants can exchange ideas and find solutions to their problems. ICANN has to be cognizant of what its members need as those needs change

over time. As technology changes, we must consider if blockchain or apps challenge our model.

Look at what happened with SSLs. In the past, we had to buy them from organizations like VeriSign, but now we can generate our own. These are the things we need to keep in mind to bring people here and keep them engaged.

VICTORIA YANG

Great point. Please go ahead, Andreas.

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This is quite interesting. I just came out of a session with the Fellows. One question asked was why they should get involved in multi-stakeholder discussions when there are more exciting technologies out there. We need to think about how to make it exciting for the new generation and be intentional about attracting them.

In the ccNSO, we have tried to see how we can bring new people in. Sometimes you have to voluntell people. We need to be intentional and ask how we make it exciting. As Irina said, the new generation won't read fifty pages. We need to ensure we have exciting processes that still serve the multi-stakeholder model.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you. Victoria Yang for the record. What is in it for me is the key question. We want to understand what motivates volunteers.

The current veterans are very committed, but the next generation sees things differently. What conversations are happening in your circles? My kids will not even watch a twenty-second video because it is too long.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

Sometimes news media focuses on a particular point, but if it is not of interest to us, it just generates more viewers for them. At some point, it is like raining on a wet surface. Topics might be important to the organization, but are they as beneficial to the members?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

Andreas for the record. We need to inspire people. Not just attract them, but inspire them. That is the message we need to convey.

DAVID FOWLER

Just to inject a positive note, this is David from CIRA. This is my second ICANN, but I have worked for years in the digital rights space. There is so much energy and enthusiasm among young people for a free and open internet.

The gap is that young people do not always understand the vital role ICANN plays in preserving that interoperable internet. It is an accessibility challenge. We should build linkages with groups like Youth IGF and national IGFs. Making ICANN's work more accessible is genuinely inspiring once it is explained.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

David, I just—

BART BOSWINKEL

May I follow up with David for a moment?

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

The same for me.

BART BOSWINKEL

Because you entered this environment from another one, do you think it is a matter of maturity? You mentioned grasping the importance, which implies maturity and connecting the dots. Is that an issue?

DAVID FOWLER

Possibly, but digital rights folks back home are often young. When I explain the work on WSIS+20, they get it and see the importance. We need to operationalize that channel to turn that energy into a pipeline for the next generation.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK

The new generation takes this all for granted. As long as things work, they assume nothing will happen. That is a challenge. They will step in if there is a tipping point, but for now, they take it for granted.

VICTORIA YANG

Are we not creating a sense of urgency?

DAVID FOWLER

Urgency comes when there is a threat. When net neutrality is under threat, people mobilize. It is difficult to get people involved on a sustained, long-term basis, which may involve a matter of maturity.

CHARLES NOIR

Charles for the record. At CIRA, we look to fund various policy initiatives grown from the community. Youth and university students are actually quite interested in discussing digital aspects. We see applications from young people for community initiatives that we fund.

They do get interested and start thinking in different terms. We need to give young people the opportunity to participate in something engaging and fun, rather than just sitting through a ccNSO meeting.

ALI

Thank you, Ali for the record. A long time ago, the community did not know ICANN. Now, people want to take part in sessions, which means there is trust. We must maintain that confidence from the community to allow the new generation to continue this work, while not forgetting the role of AI. Trust is a factor in maintaining ICANN activities.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much. We only have five more minutes. We advanced the slide to the last trend, though we want to hear other topics as well. If we cannot cover it all today, there is a public session on Tuesday afternoon. You can also email us at planning@icann.org.

We transitioned into ICANN ecosystem processes and procedures, including complexity and the heavy nature of the process. Broadening participation strengthens legitimacy, but complexity can slow progress. Any additional observations? Pablo?

PABLO RODRIGUEZ

This is Pablo for the record. Computer science students often do not know ICANN exists. We have had three ICANN meetings in Puerto Rico, yet people still do not know what ICANN is. The same happened with the PR.

We need to engage more with universities to integrate ICANN into the curriculum of political science and computer science. This knowledge could answer what is in it for me. Genesis of some form of curriculum for universities might make a difference. Thanks.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you, Pablo. Raising awareness early will help the next generation. Any other insights?

BART BOSWINKEL

May I be provocative? I support the Customer Standing Committee, which reviews IANA performance. A former chair said, Boring is good. You want the core identifier system to be boring. So how do you interest people if boring is good? This is squaring the circle.

VICTORIA YANG

There might be people who like to be boring, so you still need to attract them.

BART BOSWINKEL

But what do you want to change if boring is good? Ten years ago, during the transition, it was not boring and many new people got involved. It was critical for the direction of the model. If boring is good, you do not want to break it.

VICTORIA YANG

All right, it is 05:30 PM. Thank you for sharing your insights. We have a session on Tuesday, or you can email us at planning@icann.org.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much for your participation.

VICTORIA YANG

Thank you.

BECKY NASH

Thank you. Recording stopped.

BART BOSWINKEL I hope I was not too provocative.

BECKY NASH No, that was great.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ Absolutely, you were.

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