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ICANN86 Seville | PF – SSAC Work Session (2 of 3)  
Tuesday, June 09, 2026 – 11:45 to 13:15 CEST

KATHY SCHNITT

Hello and welcome to the 2 of 3 SSAC Work Sessions. My name is Kathy, and I'm the participation manager for this session. Please be advised that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

Regarding participation today, this session is designed for the internal work and discussion of SSAC members. Observers are welcome to watch the work party conduct its work, but this session is not open for observer participation. For SSAC members, all members have been promoted to panelist status in Zoom.

To join the speaking queue, raise the Raise Hand feature, even if you are physically present in the room. When called upon, please state your name for the record. You may use the Zoom chat with one another, but please note that this is visible to observers in real time. The speaking queue is limited to SSAC members, and observer chat has been disabled for this reason. I will now hand the floor over to Robert Guerra and Suzanne Woolf.

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SUZANNE WOOLF

Okay, welcome, everybody. This is certainly a quick view of work in progress, but there are a couple of things at the current stage of the Review of Reviews work that it's the right time for us to weigh in on a couple of things. We're going to quickly go over the current status. I know a bunch of people have been following across the last couple of ICANN meetings, the status milestones. So that'll be quick. Then there's a set of discussion questions that the Review of Reviews Working Group is looking for specific input on within the context of the draft document.

The quick agenda is just we're not going to spend a whole lot of time on the overview, but we want people to know how the moving parts fit together. Then we can discuss where feedback from SSAC, from our specific point of view, might be most useful. Where we're at now in the last week or so, there's a complete working draft of the new reviews framework document.

This is the first chance for the community to see how everything fits together among the different -- basically, it's a complete revamp of the system of reviews that has been in the ICANN bylaws for many years. It makes sense, if you're interested, to look over the document. But we'll be going into a couple of specific areas where SSAC input -- we've been advised and reminded that SSAC input would be particularly helpful.

But for right now, there's a complete working draft sent out last week. It's in our mailbox. I think it was forwarded on June 4th, if you're looking for that. There was a discussion session yesterday

morning. And what was good about that, people are starting to see and critique how all of the moving parts fit together, and where there might be gaps in the larger sense of how it's all supposed to work. This week, the Review of Reviews CCG is continuing to discuss and integrate the feedback.

We'll also be working on revisions during the week based on what we're hearing and continued discussions, integrating feedback. Hoping to open a public comment period on the revised draft, end of June. I think the date that is on the official timeline is June 28th, but there's always a little bit of give and take. We're going to go into specifics, but the high-level questions that Robert and I are here to ask for consideration: Does the framework, overall, now that it's all in one document, make sense how the pieces fit together?

And there are some new distinctions, some new terminology to be aware of. For instance, the proposed framework includes some reviews that are cadenced and will happen on regular intervals, others that are "on-demand," which means that a critical mass of the community feels that it's time to do a particular review with a particular scope and timeline and resource commitment.

There's also a very new -- rather than have each review group figure out its own charter and scope, there's a scoping team. If we're going to do this as one function separate from staffing and running each review, it needs to have the right composition. It needs to have the right idea of its own role. So we need to provide

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appropriate guidance as to how the scoping team is going to work and how that's going to feed into what individual reviews do. Also, and I think we're hoping to spend most of the time on -- we're SSAC, so we have a special role with regards to SSR.

In particular, for the new review framework, does it protect appropriate levels of attention to the transparency and quality of the ICANN community's engagement on SSR? In other words, is there a way under the new framework that there is an adequate set of mechanisms for making sure that if ICANN is falling short on its SSR commitments, that there's a way to catch that and there's a way to assess it and remedy it in an appropriate period of time. Those are the important pieces. Does the framework overall make sense? And in particular, on SSR, do we provide adequate oversight, if you will, adequate community engagement on whether those commitments are being met?

ROBERT GUERRA

Well, I'll continue some of the comments. This is really based, and following up on the in-depth overview we gave in Mumbai, I think what's happened compared to then to now is there's just been some collapsing of -- I think there were five pillars and now there's three. But the same things are there. They're just under different umbrellas. I think, as Suzanne is saying, different communities are starting to react and comment to stress what's important. There's an identification of those who haven't been active at all, some of the challenges that they're seeing, and commenting.

Before I go through the different discussion points and the way we've structured them, is for each the key areas that the Review of Reviews has set up. What are some key questions or discussions we'd like for the SSAC?

I think our aim is your representatives, delegates on the Review of Reviews is because an official comment period is going to open. This is a key aspect, is one in our opinion, I think SSAC will need to contribute to the process, whether saying it's fine or there are particular issues or particular areas that want to make sure to get focused on, like security and stability, and other aspects. If there are any specific comments that we want to stress, perhaps that help our point to try to raise some of the issues that we do because other community members are going to put things as well.

This is going to be a discussion, and we're going to focus it on some of the key areas that I'm going to -- right now, we went from a five-pillar structure to a three-pillar structure, which is Accountability & Transparency Review, Structural Review of ICANN, and On-Demand, as Suzanne mentioned.

For the On-Demand, there'll be a process set up where community members will be able to, if a demand is needed and then there's not only a scoping like we do for a charter for a work party, to charter the reviews that take place, but because there will be a submission of -- this be reviewed, it's also the group that will decide, okay, how many SO/ACs concur with that and whether

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that's going to proceed or not. So it's creating a process that all SO/ACs are going to have to be involved in.

It's an additional community effort that SSAC as a whole needs to be involved in. Jim, did you want to comment a little bit about that? Because we just had a conversation. Did I get it right? Yes. And the other aspect, too, is that in some of the other points as well, is that because this -- in the remit for ICANN, it's a security and stability of the unique identifier system. But security and stability is a key thing that's always mentioned to ICANN. Do we want to put in any comment that when reviews take place, we try to keep ICANN on its -- because reviews might be able to come on any topic, that it stays focused on security and stability aspects?

Should there be a regular cycle that security and stability of the unique identifier system of or how security and stability is seen in the ICANN context needs to be reviewed to see if it's appropriate for where we are, where ICANN's role is in the system, or not. As I mentioned before, this process will now -- any community will be able to trigger an on-Demand process. So as long as there are two proposals and five supporters, that could trigger a process.

My issue that I flagged for the Review of Reviews is that if any community with some proposals can submit a process in, should there be any rate limiting? Should there be a maximum number that we can submit in a year? Because then we could have the well intention, the process perhaps could be gamed. That ad hoc process didn't exist before. We talked about this a little bit in

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Mumbai, but that's one of the challenges, and I'm going through it. Did you want to comment about ATR at all, Jim?

JAMES GALVIN

I mean, I have some color I might offer to some of this, but however you want to approach the conversation. Do you want to do this slide by slide, or do you want to do your presentation and then have an open discussion? That's up to you.

ROBERT GUERRA

Let's go through all of them. For the Accountability & Transparency Review, again, as I mentioned, when topics are put forward, possibly to be reviewed, because any topic can come up, the way the process is is kind of open-ended. Do we want to make sure that security and stability topics, perhaps, get prioritized and don't necessarily get vetted out? What are topics that we might want to submit for a larger review for accountability, for on-demand, or so? That's something that we need to think about as well. So that's something that we need to think about and discuss.

We have some of our suggestions as well, but for those who have followed the ATR process in the past, it'd be good to hear from them as well. The Structural Review, this is something that we've had a little bit of discussion. This is the overall review of the ICANN system to see whether it's meeting its commitments and its role. This is something that is currently thought to be put on a 15-year cycle. Some believe that it is a correct time. Some people think

that the pace of change of how the internet and technology are changing, maybe that cadence should be 10 years or so. I think if anyone has any thoughts in terms of what the appropriate time cycle would be.

Someone said, I think, it's just like everyone should experience a life cycle at least once to see how ICANN is being reviewed or not. But I think my view in some of the conversations has been pace of change is changing. You know, the global political system has changed a lot in the last two years. If you think about how the internet's changed in 15 years, let alone 10, maybe 15 years is too long just to see if ICANN is structurally set up to deal with its issues. I think that's good for now. I think this is the biggest issue as well. There are these three pillars, but the On-Demand Review is one that's getting a lot of attention. This is the ability of SO/ACs to suggest that a non-cadence review on a particular topic or issue area be put forward.

One of the challenges that exists, and this came up in the session that we had yesterday, is if one plays by the rules, we could say, well, some issues come up -- for example, DNS abuse or AI -- that's a new topic that's not part of a cadence, maybe there should be some review to see if the discussions and the structures and the way things are working are working properly.

But a bad actor might go, "I don't like how the process is going. Let's trigger a review to just try to slow everything down." And so the potential for abuse in terms of that could be an issue. How that

can be tweaked, or demand that perhaps an issue needs to have gone through a cycle properly before it gets reviewed, and not be used as a retaliatory measure to try to slow things down.

For example, it's like our DNS abuse discussions. If, let's say, an SSAC member didn't like the way that things are going before we've even finished and gotten to our work product. "Nope. I want to start a review." Some community members were saying that there needs to be at least some work products or some outputs before on-demand reviews get triggered. This is what I mentioned earlier. Are there specific issues that we see on SSR-related topics that we might want to suggest as On-Demand Reviews, whether it's AI or DNS abuse, or do we want to wait for existing work to conclude before we say, "Hey, did we get it right or not?" I think this would be good to get a conversation from both Jim and Suzanne.

One of the things as these discussions are going forward and it's putting, for lack of a better term, a burden on all the different SO/ACs, we traditionally have not been as active in this role, and this will create. Do we want to be on the scoping group that works on that? Do we want to have an official status? What type of status do we want to have? And again, what are people's thoughts on submitting an official comment to the public comment period? That will start probably later this month or early next.

And this, I think we discussed in Mumbai as well, is the potential for a great model in regards to reviews to potentially be abused. And do we want any comments in regards to safeguards, rate limiting in

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regards to the process? I believe that's it. Given that, comments? Jim, if you've got any comments, or Suzanne. And then comments from others would be most welcome.

JAMES GALVIN

I was going to say, Suzanne, first. It's your meeting there, and then I'll comment.

SUZANNE WOOLF

I think it's particularly useful for people to think about whether SSAC wants to be, because the original idea was more or less based on the empowered community, which we, of course, declined for perfectly good reasons to join. As the thinking evolved on how the Review Scoping Committee should work, the current proposal is that the scoping activity includes representatives from all across the community and that the scoping exercise not only includes what's going to be reviewed, but things like, is the resource commitment available? You know, is the money there? Is the staffing there?

So it would be good to have some thoughts on that. The other thing is, what else jumps out at people besides the Reviews Committee? Do we have adequate coverage of SSR matters? Do we feel there's adequate leeway to make sure, under this framework, that those are addressed? And overall, there are the usual overarching questions of, is this mechanism subject to capture? Is it possible to

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either over-prescribe or starve some process that needs to happen?  
All of those usual "How do the pieces fit together?"

But as far as what people are expecting from us as SSAC, I think a focus on, okay, do the things that were the guardian of our remit, do those things have an appropriate place in how this framework executes? I'll see if Jim has further thoughts on that. Hands raised are welcome.

ROBERT GUERRA

I'll just add, it's just that the reason we're mentioning Jim. Jim is the board liaison for this topic as well. He's been intimately involved as well.

JAMES GALVIN

Yes, I was going to open with that, actually, just in case people aren't aware and aren't tracking carefully. I am one of the two designated board participants in the committee, just as Suzanne and Robert are the SSAC participants. Normally, board members are only a liaison, but we get to be active voting participants in the meeting, which is interesting. Unique role to be in for the first time. And just as SSAC has a support team behind its group, I'll just put out there all together that you know, the board, we have the same thing. Board and Org, we have our own support team and coordination bodies, so we're careful to stay connected with all of that. And then I collaborate and coordinate with Robert and Suzanne on what they're doing.

So there's a bit of crossover in all that, which is good, and it's helpful. I think what I want to say, overarching, I mean, I could make some comments about all of the slides that are up here, but in thinking about it, I think I want to say the following. I like that Robert and Suzanne framed these questions in a somewhat provocative way to capture your attention and get you to think about things. I think I'll just leave it at that.

I'll just comment on two things and add two comments. On this issue of whether SSAC should be part of the system and be there, my assessment of all of this and the way this is, even though the board is thinking about this, it is important, if not essential, for all of the community to be involved in this process. So it's not really about SSAC seeking representation on the scoping team.

The question, really, I think, should be the opposite. The path I would say we're headed down is that everybody who's a stakeholder in these reviews, if you're going to be subject to reviews, you get a seat at the table, and you're obligated to be there.

The real question here is how you want to handle that obligation, I think. I just offer that particular bit of color to that one question that you have there. The current path that they're on in that respect is they want it to be the chairs of all the SOs and ACs. The board will pick somebody to represent them because they won't really put the chair in that position. But the key characteristic that they really want is it should be someone elected by the body.

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If you're going to be on the scoping team, you need to represent your group. And to represent your group, it should be someone elected by the group. It's either by default the chair or one other elected person in the group, or you need to create another role that you elect somebody to do this, as if we don't have enough roles that we put people in. So that's an important thing to keep in mind here in all of this.

The other adding color to this whole thing, I think what's hard and what I liked about the provocative comments is, one of the things about the review of review system that's here is you could make the argument that, well, it's different. Is it better or worse than what we had before? The important thing is it's different. The question is, does it really cover what we want from reviews?

From my side, from the board and Org side, we're generally supportive of everything that's out there and the way it's going. But I think it's important for SSAC to decide that too. I liked that they called out SSR because that's something important to SSAC, unique, and our significant role is about that. SSR is actually called out in the bylaws. If SSR is not going to be special, if it's just going to be a review among all the reviews, and then the question becomes, does this review system that's being proposed allow for a proper execution of SSR reviews?

You get to make that decision and talk about it. Because if this system were to come and be accepted across the board, then the SSR requirement would, of course, come out of the bylaws. There'd

be a whole bylaws adjustment process to happen here. But since this system is a little different than what's there, there'll be some bylaws work to fix all of that. It's important to keep that in mind, that SSR is in the bylaws now. Do you believe that what's being proposed here is going to provide a mechanism for that?

And so it's hard to, I will acknowledge, I think it's hard to answer these questions. I'll end on this point, just because you really have to take on board the whole system and appreciate it to know whether it's going to work or not. These provocative questions here are really good. Because it makes you think about how this thing works. And we should decide whether we think it's going to work for us in SSAC. I think rather than be specific, I'll just leave it at that and call it out that way for you. I hope that's okay. Thanks.

ROBERT GUERRA

Thank you, Jim. Tara, you were attending the meeting yesterday, so if you want to maybe share some reflections in terms of how you thought that went or any comments you had out of that, and then we'll just open it up. A couple of hands as well, but we'll check as you were there as well.

TARA WHALEN

I was. Now I'm coming into the conversation midway. There definitely was a lot of, I'm going to call it, concern from the people on the floor. A lot of things about, some of them are points that you've raised here. I think particularly around scoping, concerns

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around scoping, concerns around, if not quite gatekeeping, but again, who gets to decide what things are handled and how they're prioritized. Definitely was of concern. We had people there who have been in many different processes before and are also concerned about -- we had some comments about this process seems very complex. Maybe people are thinking, is it overblown? Is it going to be productive?

So if I just want to say what I was feeling from comments from the floor was a lot of concern in general. People seemed thoughtful, I would say. The comments they were getting were concerned, but not -- they weren't inflammatory, I would say, for the most part, just this is a lot of change. I think people want to be hopeful that it's a big lift. They're worried that the work will go in and we won't be any further ahead, or we'll make decisions that will bog us down rather than improve things.

So, I get the sense again people are engaged in that sense, or they wouldn't be coming to make comments, but people are a little worried about what the outcome would be, I would say. I hope that maybe reflects somewhat of what you were hearing in the room as well.

JAMES GALVIN

Before I react, Suzanne mentioned there were other hands in the Zoom room.

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MAARTEN AERTSEN

I liked your phrasing of provocative, and then you made what, to me, was a pretty provocative statement about the obligation to participate in scoping. I think it might be hard enough to do all the stuff we are already doing, and then this would clearly add to that. And I'm assuming, but this is from someone who has only a very partial view of this, that a lot of review activity that would be going on is not SSR.

I just wonder if we, as a group, recruit members to do this work, how attractive filling that role would be. Now, certainly, there will always be a part of this group that is here because their day job is in the middle of the industry. And then there is maybe a better overlap of what the review is about.

But for those of us who are maybe from the research or from other parts, this sounds very unattractive in terms of -- that made it provocative, and also, I'm really happy that you brought it up. This was just a response. I also had a question, and I'll put it out there.

On Slide 9, I think, there is this question about who would be a peer to bring up an SSR On-Demand Review and also caps. I was just wondering how we would feel as a group, or how we would feel about the system as a whole, if SSR On-Demand Review would start without us bringing it up? I'm not sure what the answer is, just wanted to pile on another question I had.

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JAMES GALVIN

I'll leave Robert and Suzanne to answer your questions. But since you were commenting on what I was saying, just a little point of clarity here. The obligation for us to participate is in the scoping team. The scoping team's job is just to set the charter for what you're looking for and everything that goes with that. Whether or not we participate in an actual review team is a totally separate thing. Like any PDP and any other activity here, we get to make that choice separately. But we do have an obligation to be part of the chartering process, is really what's there. So that's something that would have to happen. I'll leave them to answer your question.

ROBERT GUERRA

I will add a little bit of nuance. If I'm not mistaken, that chartering group, every SO/AC can submit "these are the issues" they would like to be reviewed. That group also looks at the list to see, okay, and then tries to prioritize it. So if there are 10, what are the top 2? Or whatever. So it's like a review, but they don't do the review. But as I was trying to say earlier, for lack of a better term, it's an additional responsibility, and then it depends, it may be on a topic that we're familiar with, it may be not. It's different than a NomCom, but it's the same thing.

We want to make sure that if SSR is there, that the topic's -- as an example, DNS abuse or AI and the DNS system, or something like that, were to come up, we may have a particular angle. "You know what, this is going to impact the system. Maybe it's something to

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prioritize on a list or not.” Or it may be another topic altogether about, is the NomCom working properly that needs to be reviewed?

And we may have participated in that process, but from the inside, it may be like, you know what, that doesn't need to be prioritized because it's working well. So it's just going to add something else. That's the worry that I have. We'd have to elect someone. We're going to have to allocate some time. How does the knowledge stay if that person changes every so often? And things like that.

And so do we want to put any comments into this? So one of the comments we may want to put in is that the SSAC already finds it challenging to participate in a lot of the systems, and this needs to be as lightweight a system as possible. So that may be a comment, which is a proper comment. That's a comment we can put in. That's where the public comment is. If we have that concern, that's something that we could say in the public comment period, that if we're being overburdened, probably other SO/ACs are as well. And so, it needs to be as lightweight as possible. It may be overengineered. Go ahead.

RICK WILHELM

I think, Robert, that's a very good point. I think one of the things that the SSAC has -- especially in a couple of things recently -- been doing better is making sure that the opinions reflected in these activities are reflective of the SSAC as opposed to the people that

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are just showing up, and that they are carrying the SSAC's position as opposed to, like in this case, just your and Suzanne's positions.

You're checking in, you're gathering input, and you're careful how you weigh in. I'm not sure that in some of these review processes that all of the other groups are gathering their own group's feedback. It's truly a group, and SO/AC position, as opposed to just the individuals who show up and go to them, and they bring their own personal bias as opposed to the SO/AC group position into the meeting. So I think you bring up a very good point.

HADIA ELMINIAW

Thank you. Two main points here are being discussed, the scoping as well as the reviews, and specifically the SSR. Let's start, why did this Review of Reviews come up in the first place? Well, it did come up because what was happening before was not working. We had recommendations coming up, never implemented too many of them, actually. That made it impossible to implement. It was not a working system. I think we all needed to go through this cycle to know that this does not work in order to evolve it into something that would work.

Now we have those buckets: the Accountability & Transparency, Structure Reviews, and On-Demand. And please correct me here, because those are my understanding, I could be totally wrong. The Structural Review is something new that did not exist as is before.

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The Accountability & Transparency, as I see it now, the first bucket, my understanding of it, that it is not a replacement of what was in the bylaws before. In the bylaws before, we had those specific reviews where ATRT was one of them. Then we had the SSR, the RDS, and the CCT. This Accountability & Transparency was just one of four specific reviews. My understanding that this bucket existing here is not a replacement of the SSR that previously existed. It's a new bucket that you can put new stuff under it.

And here comes my question. If this is a new bucket, for example, if you're saying, "We don't see the SSR anymore," why don't we explicitly have this under this bucket? Why should it be under the On-Demand bucket? And that might apply to other things. This is just a thought. As for the scoping team, I have a question related to that.

I was wondering if this scoping team will be a permanent scoping team or it's on-call scoping team? Like, when it's time to make a review, we'll have a scoping team, or it's a permanent scoping team that's there, maybe even when this team thinks. Then again, here we do have timings, which could say that this scoping team will be -- this is again an unclear area for me regarding the scoping team. Thank you.

ROBERT GUERRA

For the ATR part, there's a cadence to it. It's not 15 years, it's shorter, five. And then the on demand is just, it can happen anytime. Not necessarily every five years but if a new issue comes

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up. I think for the scoping team, if I recall correctly, they will meet at least once a year. It's a standing thing, so it won't be spun up; it'll just be set up, and then a certain period in the year, it'll come up that people have to get together to do that. Whether it's, probably could be virtual, I'm not sure. The scope of that still has to be defined. So one of the comments we may want to put into our comments is there needs to be more definition on that.

SUZANNE WOOLF

These are very good questions. Thank you. You have understood, particularly with regard to the Scoping Committee. It is envisioned currently as a standing committee. You know, those of you reading along at home can find discussion under Section 4, Subsection 2, Review Scoping Committee, focus. Go ahead.

ROD RASMUSSEN

I'm looking at this from a perspective of my past chairmanship, and it looks like they're trying to default this to the chairs of each of the SO/ACs. I'm not in the room now, but that sounds like a terrible idea to me because there's so much work. And we have one of the easier ones. The GNSO chair is really tight. I don't even like the concept of it being in there as a default, unless this is something that has been discussed by the SO/AC chairs and they are high on doing this.

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SUZANNE WOOLF

Just to clarify, the idea is that it's the SO/AC chairs and various representation from other parts of the community. But yes, it's important to make that clear. It's important also to know what was said in the meeting that the RoR chairs had with the SO/AC chairs. We are running out of time. Go ahead if Ram has a comment, and then I'm going to try to wrap this up with a focusing question.

RAM MOHAN

I'll be brief. In the SO/AC chair's room, we've said we're not keen on taking on that kind of role. We're not there representing the community. We don't have a mandate to go and do anything or decide anything. We're there to be able to organize ourselves and put our thoughts together. We might be able to provide some guidance on, hey, we think this may fly, we think you may have trouble here, etc. But nothing more informal than that. So that's been the extent of it. There has not been great consensus on "must have that power." There's no desire.

SUZANNE WOOLF

Those of you who have heard my commentary on the SO/AC chairs have heard now many times, they're not a thing until there's a charter and there are requirements to do things like document meetings. So I'm completely on board with approaching this very cautiously.

At the same time, it's an attempt to have an alternative to having the review teams write their own scoping, which has been

demonstrated to have its own challenges and its own weaknesses. It is, as Hadia said, we're trying to replace or extend things where there are known issues with how we were doing things over the last, I guess, this mostly came out of the end of the IANA contract. So, 10 years.

But just to wrap up, if that's okay, just to keep a little bit of focus, we've heard some really useful feedback here that we can take into additional discussions this week. But there are a couple of things. First, we do need to decide if we're going to prepare something for the public comment period and how we want to frame that. The other thing is that there's an "away from the microphones" conversation that I'd like to bring to the microphone.

As technical people, a lot of us in the room hear these questions about "How would this work?" and "How would that work?" We hear a tabletop exercise. We hear a case study and use case identification. If people think it would be useful as part of our approach to the public comment period, think about whether we want to have one or more examples, one or more scenarios we can think of where we can either run through the proposed framework and say, "Yeah, okay, this would work," or say, "No, there seems to be a gap where this wouldn't work."

If you have specific concerns or you have questions that you think the review team, the RRI, needs, "Okay, here's what I mean." Think about specific illustrations, think about use cases. Anybody else? I guess we get the last word. Thanks very much for your time. This

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is not the most exciting thing going on by any stretch of the imagination, but it does matter in terms of SAC's role in the community. So, thanks very much for your time and attention.

KATHY SCHNITT

Thanks. I guess we now hand it off to the next. Laurin, are you ready to start your work party? Do we have to stop and restart recordings for the meetings, or do we just keep going? Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

In this session, we'll essentially revisit some of the topics where we had smaller groups within the work group look at specific issues, essentially, thinking a little bit about scoping, thinking about, what are relevant elements of the stack and the environment that we may be interested in, and thinking about, where are we and what are our next steps?

With that, we have beautiful slides, and we can immediately go to the next one. Essentially, our agenda is the introduction that I'm just doing. But then, in this later discussion, we'll be looking at the Underlying (DNS) Infrastructure and the impact of AI, Registration and Management, Resolution, and DNS-End User Interaction.

As you can see, we have Zone and Authoritative in gray as well as DNS-Underpinned Security. The reason for that is that we haven't looked at those yet. So one of the key things we want to do with this exercise is to look at these things, see is there something that matters? Is there something interesting there?

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But also, very importantly, what of these is in scope for us, is of interest for us, and what actions can we take as SSAC to deal with whatever issues, problems, strengths, weaknesses, whatever we might be identifying here. I think with that, we can probably move into talking about these layers.

Just to remind everyone, the work party aims to look into what's the impact of AI on the SSR of the DNS ecosystem. So we want to look at technologies and use cases, and figure out what is there and how can we deal with it with a specific focus on AI being an enabler for attackers and AI as a defensive tool. It seems Registration and Management is first. Billy, go ahead. That's yours. One last note, we have 45 minutes. If you have done a lot of work, try to keep it to five minutes or so, so we can have a little bit of discussion and then move through the groups.

VASYL "BILLY" BRATCHENKO

Just like other groups, we conducted an analysis of offensive and defensive utilization of AI. However, as we work on the intersection of registrant, registrar, and registry, we tried our best to define the distinctive features of this area and AI. What did we come up with? The first one is thanks to a real example of Gabriel. Now we know that, unlike in other areas, AI is already used both for malicious registrations and as a defensive measure against them, and we have the real examples of that. In other areas, we just suppose that it can be used, but we do not have actual evidence.

Also, we mentioned growing risks for registrars and registries, staff, and security systems, because personalized social engineering attempts can be utilized to get unauthorized access. Also, AI is used for synthetic identity creation, as well as to detect and defend against those attempts. Another point is that the impact of AI usage, both for defense and offense, is not even for large and small businesses. For example, larger registrars have more resources to implement defensive AI features than small registrars. Also, we did some analysis of implications in the registration and management area.

One of the, I think, important conclusions is that AI has an impact not only on operations, but also on the economics of DNS abuse and its mitigation. Also, we see the effect on traditional trust and verification models, which means know your customer, how often we have to conduct it, in which way we have conducted it, and so on. And certain risks of over-reliance on AI in defenses because AI can be biased, it can show more false positives that may result in a negative effect on resilience and stability. So we think that this also should be considered.

Next steps or what else is needed right now? We need to finalize the scope of the subcategory because it is hard to define the exact ages when the registration and management end, and other areas begin. Also, I want to discuss within the group, preventing turning it into bad actors' playbook. We probably don't need to be very detailed in this to avoid sharing some ideas that probably were not

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invented before. However, it's not rocket science, I realized it. So we need to find the balance here. Thank you. That's all from me.

LAURIN WEISSINGE

I will open to questions and comments from the room for this part of the presentation. The slides are currently out because Dan is re-enabling them right now. Layal, go ahead.

LAYAL JEBRAN

Hi, Layal for the record. Billy, this one's for you. How were you able to identify it's an AI-initiated attack? So you mentioned Gabe's study.

VASYL "BILLY" BRATCHENKO

It was not me. It was a real example provided by Gabriel. It was about identifying high-value domain names with high search engine optimization. It was done in bulk, and malicious websites were used to deliver ransomware to victims because they were searching in the search engine and received top results, which were already malicious websites. I do not have knowledge about the exact way they detected that this was AI, but the provided example was commented as we detected that this is AI. But this is a good question: how we should be sure that it is AI?

LAURIN WEISSINGE

I think Matthias was next, and then I saw Ram and Nabil.

MATTHIAS HUDOBNIK

Hey, guys. Thanks, Billy, for the presentation. Basically, it's more of a comment than a question, and it's also a bit related to Layal's questions. I think it's important that we are definitely able to make some references to the examples. It would be cool if we can use a reference of Gabe, like maybe some report, or I don't know if it's a public resource, but I think it would be helpful. Because then we can even make it stronger than just make the assumption of. That's from my side. Thanks a lot.

LAURIN WEISSINGE

One note from Danielle here. Please use the Zoom room for hands. I think, Ram, you were the first in-room hand without Zoom. We'll allow it this time, and then I'll hand over to Danielle to manage.

RAM MOHAN

Sorry to be the rogue. Well, at least I'm glad I have some company then. Sorry, Danielle. I think for all of these areas, but Laurin and Matthias, particularly in this area, it feels to me that all we're trying to do in this paper is to provide findings and observations. This is what we observe, this is what we see, but not drive it to any necessary next path, particularly because it's an evolving area, and by the time we finish writing it, it's already obsolete.

When I read on this slide that says "Finalize the scope of the subcategory," but more than that, "Discuss preventing turning into a bad actors' playbook," we're not going to be writing about a

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playbook. We're going to be saying, "This is what's happening." The only reason why we know it's happening is because bad actors have done it. So, it's already their playbook. That's one thing. The second thing is the audience for this, like Billy was saying, the audience for this section, anyway, I would imagine, are the registrars, registries who are not paying attention to this area, rather than those who are. Awareness raising is the primary reason for this section.

Therefore, I think the scope of it, we should bound it to anecdotal examples or maybe ask registries, registrars, if they're seeing something, and include things it is quite difficult to, or it may become difficult to distinguish what is abuse driven by AI versus just vanilla abuse. But I think we should limit our energy to just findings and observations, rather than anything more.

NABIL BENAMAR

This is Nabil for the record. I totally agree with you, Ram, on this. Personally, when I was looking for evidence of attacks that have been driven by AI, AI-driven attacks, there is no clear evidence on this. For example, in academia, for research papers published so far, you will find a lot of papers dedicated for defense, not for attacks. Because attackers, at the end of the day, don't publish their work or their attacks.

So you will find a lot of papers targeted toward how we can combat, how we can defend. But when it comes to attacks, we can just say that because of the amount, the velocity, the volume, the speed of

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the attacks, this might be AI-sided. But there is no clear evidence on this. And this is a positive point in the report that we are preparing, because we want to make a positive note that we can combat this by using AI itself. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you. I raised my hand in order to support what Nabil and Ram are saying. We need to step away from trying to say whether this is a DNS attack supported by AI or not. We might never know that this is a DNS attack supported by AI. But what we can do is say, this is how AI can be used in DNS attacks. This is how AI can be used in defending. And we can also use the use cases that have been published, that say that AI has been used in those specific DNS attacks. We do have material like that available, very particular cases that have been identified and published. We can use those published cases. Apart from that, we needn't care about whether this was an AI attack or not.

LAYAL JEBRAN

Layal here again, so in the ICANN observations on AI-driven DNS traffic changes, they wrote a blog post called Artificial Intelligence and the Work of ICANN in March 2026. They mentioned that AI and specifically LLMs and agentic systems interact with the internet

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differently than humans and that it's producing distinct query patterns in volume, frequency, and distribution, and that this is reshaping how DNS traffic functions overall.

Given that the DNS was created for growth, AI introduces new scales of machine-generated queries that would warrant monitoring. This literally ties into ICANN's role in tracking authoritative data and potential integrity impacts. I'm not negating Nabil, Hadia, and Ram here, but I'm saying that I believe that we can be a little bit more flexible on the work that we're doing within this. Just a proposition, because ICANN mentioned this in March 2026. If you guys want the link, I can find it for you.

RICK WILHELM

I'll try to be brief. I think it's going to continue to get harder to draw the boundaries around this because, as Nabil said, what isn't AI is going to get harder and harder to define. It's not that it's not been hard to define before, but it's going to continue to get harder. For example, if I use Claude Code to write something and then run it, is that AI or not? As a rhetorical question not to be answered.

To a certain extent, this notion of defining whether or not AI is or is not involved in attacks is almost as curious as well, the cloud is or is not involved in attacks, or something like that. We're thinking about this in terms of technology and such, which is difficult. This is just going to get murkier the more we work on it. Thank you.

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MATTHIAS HUDOBNIK

Basically, my suggestion would be, as I said before, that we raise awareness. We already use resources, for example, there was the Akamai State of the Internet report, which had the AI bot traffic search per 300% year over year. It was last year. And I think it would make sense to use some state-of-the-art reports from industry sources where we say, in our opinion, if this makes sense, we can also reference to them and bring this into the paper. I think it's also useful. I mean, it makes it stronger, I would say.

This doesn't mean that we just need to do that. But I think it makes sense also to look at some industry reports, bring them in, and then -- because I agree with Rick, definitely in the point, it's very hard to draw the line. I mean, what is AI and what not? And then it depends. How much have I used something or not? I mean, we need to be careful.

That's why I would just focus more on the impact and also highlight some examples where we think this makes sense for us and bring it to the table, reference it, and then raise also the awareness for our community and say, look, these are the things we are seeing, we are referring to these industry resources also. I think this makes sense. We can, on top of that, also bring some other examples where we would think this makes sense. This would be my understanding. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Thank you all. Moving on to the next space we explored, and that is Resolution. A quick question, and feel free to do it via chat to

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Hadia and Matthias. If I remember correctly, the studies you were mentioning, and I might be very wrong, were more on the resolution side than they were on authoritative. So if you could just let me know, because it's still relevant. It would be more relevant to resolution, depending on how that data was created. And with that, to Nabil.

NABIL BENAMAR

Thank you very much, Nabil, for the record again. We are still brainstorming this part in the document. I started with a long list with possible AI-driven attacks related to DNS resolution, but finally I decided to shortlist it because there is no clear evidence that they have been AI-driven. I kept only some cases that have been reported in reports published in 2005 that have been directly linked to AI. Not necessarily AI-driven, but linked to AI.

One of them, for example, fast flux networks, which is not new. It's not a new attack, but the fact that we have no AI the evading takedowns through rapid IP rotation can be escalated by AI. AI amplifies this by automating IP cycling at unprecedented speed.

Again, the speed, velocity, and volume are a clear signature of AI being used there. The next one would be the DNS tunneling as an AI sandbox escape. This is related to one case that has been reported about ChatGPT. The ChatGPT code execution sandbox was designed to block all outbound internet traffic, but left DNS resolution open. This might lead to some attacks based on this. The single malicious prompt could exploit this by encoding

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sensitive user data into DNS queries, silently sending it to an attacker-controlled server, bypassing all visible guard lines. This is because DNS is a trust protocol, generally.

This is not directly linked to AI, but because of generative AI and all these platforms that we have, like ChatGPT and others, we are witnessing some new DNS attacks. The last one would be dangling DNS plus AI agent. Again, this is not new. What is new is what happens when AI agents encounter this. An AI agent blindly trusting DNS resolution will then connect to the attacker and act on their content autonomously. In this case, no human click is needed. This is just brainstorming that we can talk about. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Hands? Comments? Questions? Not seeing any. Okay, so we're catching up then. All right, I think we can make a quick note that essentially on the resolution side, that's one where we do have the studies that were already mentioned. There are new patterns, different patterns. There's also a significant increase in DNS requests, especially from chatbots and stuff like that. Because they browse, if you will, very, very differently than humans. It's much faster, yada, yada, yada. So this is something we can definitely look at, and then we have to figure out how to deal with this.

So, we looked at the Underlying (DNS) Infrastructure. What did we talk about? So you see Mythos being mentioned here, and it is used as the placeholder for Mythos and a lot of other models that are good for finding vulnerabilities. So please see it as a shorthand for

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that. We have definitely seen that overall, models being very good in finding vulnerabilities in code.

But Mythos is a little bit of a special case where there's a lot of marketing, there's a lot of hush-hush around it. But if you read around, you know there are other places that do this, and that often do a human-machine tuning approach for this, and they're also very, very efficient as well as effective in finding vulnerabilities. So there's a lot happening here.

We do see that in the open-source community overall, the Linux kernel, et cetera, et cetera. There is no reason to believe that the typical pieces of software, be they closed source or open source, that are used in the DNS ecosystem, will see similar outcomes once you start poking. And there have been some security patches that have not been attributed to AI, but they have been very recent.

Probably what we're seeing now won't be special in two years, we believe. This will just grow and become more relevant. Yet. There is speed and scale in finding these vulnerabilities that is beyond what might be possible to maintain, especially from the open-source software side. So that's one of the things we want to focus on.

Also, as a quick note, I had a brief chat with Maarten on this as well. Even though we might be talking to the same people and reading the same sources, the signals from open-source maintainers are mixed. There was a lot of talk on slop, you know, just bad vulnerability reports. Now we're also hearing, oh, it's AI-supported,

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but it's actually useful, it's well-explained, they're proper bugs and vulnerabilities. I see Maarten's hand is up. Do you want to go now, Maarten, or when I'm done with the slides? I'll let you go.

MAARTEN AERTSEN

To me, this is not DNS abuse, and reading the charter, it's also not very in the charter. If it were me, I would not yet cover this topic.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Yes. Exactly. While we think this is important and relevant to what's happening in the DNS ecosystem, a lot of this is out of scope for us. We do not maintain these code bases. This is not our world. Nevertheless, there is possible impact here and possible importance. It might be relevant to flag this to the community because there are people who should probably be looking at their patching and stuff like that.

So the question is, how do we do this? To not go outside of our scope and not go outside of our realm of expertise. The question to the group is, how can we tackle this? Because I agree with Maarten. This is not something that should be a large part of the report, but there is something that matters. I see Warren has just sat down, so you could probably support me on this as well. Maarten, is this new?

MAARTEN AERTSEN

Yes.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

I think there have been talks at RIPE, at OARC, at things the maintainers are seeing, and the points they want to get across from the operator community. I think if they want SSAC to do something, we'll hear about it. And at that point, we can decide on some minimal course. I would strongly advise to just carve this out and not do it because it will save you work. Also, I think the more targeted effort, the more likely you can achieve an outcome that you're going for. I'm not sure if just referencing that things are happening is worth your time. But that's just me.

PETER THOMASSEN

I fully second Maarten. That's it.

MATTHIAS HUDOBNIK

Basically, Laurin, maybe it would make sense. Also, show them the table. Because as we discussed, I mean, my understanding would be also to say, we look at the different layers and say, does it make sense to make a command to this layer or not? And also, particular to this question, I would also say DNS infrastructure, I would just make this little error we had here, and say, this is not relevant, and we are not looking more into it because it's not really the focus. This would be my suggestion.

Then, also related to the other layers in the table we discussed last week, I think here again, the idea would be that we look into the layers and say, does it make sense to say something because it's

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worthwhile, or just say, no, we just mentioned it, and we say this is not relevant. With this kind of exercise, we will be very brief, and we would focus on the things we want to focus on. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

I have Hadia, and after her is Warren.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

I just raised my hand to support Maarten. I do agree that this is not within the scope of this working group. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Excellent, I'm seeing a rough consensus emerge. Warren.

WARREN KUMARI

I think I agree with Maarten and pretty much everyone else. This is out of scope, but it might be without just putting a single sentence in, noticing that probably there's going to be an evolution in how quickly software is released. Because if we don't, I think we're going to have the same discussion again. I also think, unless we get something published really, really, really soon, it's all going to be OBE.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

So I think what I'm hearing is, we'll try for one sentence, maybe we'll be two or three, but make a statement about it, cover it that way, and essentially then move to the other parts. Nabil?

NABIL BENAMAR

One comment, please. I just want to mention here that we need to keep an eye on what Mythos is doing, because there will be a Mythos moment, like we said yesterday, about a ChatGPT moment. Because they are not dealing the same way, if we compare between vulnerability reports they are publishing about commercial staff or proprietary staff and open source. There is a big gap there, and this might lead to a huge vulnerability for open source. They will not find time enough to fix the issues. So we need to keep an eye on this. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Thanks, Nabil. I think with that, we're up to the next topic. So far, we're on time. I'm very impressed. DNS-End User Interaction.

LAYAL JEBRAN

Layal, again. So far, we've framed this as a user-centric section in the report. As Laurin mentioned, we are trying to find our legs on how to walk on this subject. End users are directly impacted when they receive AI-crafted phishing emails or land on convincing lookalike brand-impersonating sites, including IDN homographic text, and how Warren likes to call it, bit flips. Their security tools often fail to detect these malicious domains due to AI advancements. Basically, they need a lot of help, and they actually reach out to people like us and ICANN to help them with this. That's mainly on the offensive side.

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On the defensive side, we're seeing promising AI-enabled user support and anti-abuse tools. Systematically, AI is accelerating shifts in how users interact with the DNS. One thing I wanted to mention is that there have been a lot of studies done about this. One of them is Cloudflare's AI adoption trend of this quarter, 2026. I know, Tara, you read it. They analyzed 67 million DNS queries per second and 81 million HTTP requests.

They found that using Cloudflare's quad one resolver data, they observed that there is a domain gold rush and TLD shift, and that speculative registration for AI-related domains led to measurable changes in query patterns. So .com TLD share dropped, for example, from 60.8% to 58.9%. Then, .ai growth went approximately 20% before partial reversal. The high rates of non-existent domains at 10.74% signal hype-driven probing. These are stuff to look for, and they do touch on the DNS.

Domains like ChatGPT showed massive query volumes ranking among top global domains early in the period. Then, some broader implications were that this AI hype translates into DNS layer speculations, and it's 6 to 12 months ahead of full adoption, and it alters traffic composition and anti-LD dynamics.

So this is considered one of the most direct large-scale empirical studies linking AI to systemic DNS pattern changes. If you haven't read it, read it please. I'll send the link if somebody wants it, but it's important. What is the work needed and the next steps on this item? So this includes flushing out concrete examples and

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analyzing failure modes, the current actual security tools, and exploring user awareness recommendations. I think user awareness is a very big point here.

And then some of the possible next steps are to draft, maybe, a short statement on associated risks, some similar to the underlying infrastructure example. Then identify gaps for SSAC recommendations to the board and consider open source or tooling implications. I did add this one, even though I wasn't asked to add it as part of this entire thing. Why is this relevant to the SSAC? We've been discussing this. I think this directly touches on DNS security and stability from the end-user perspective. This aligns well with our remit for upcoming advisory documents on AI-driven abuse.

Also, to quote Warren, we need to do this fast because things are evolving super, super quickly, and we need to be on top of publishing some things that are relevant to the time of publishing. That's it for me. Thanks. Questions?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

When this group -- and I'm part of it, of course -- when we first came up with this table, the first time I was not on the meeting, but then I reviewed the items there, and it wasn't back then DNS-End User Interaction. It was DNS User Interaction. It didn't have the End part. I added the End part, but when did I add the End part? After I went through the document, I thought before the meeting, when

we were saying DNS User Interaction, we were referring to the registrant and not to the end user.

If we were referring to the registrant, then what's happening here, what would be put here, is what we're saying also in the first item, which is about registrations. I contributed to the document as such. Then, in the meeting, I found all the stuff that I'm putting down there is up there in the first item because it's not about the registrant. So I added the word End and I deleted what I put. Now I don't know why we need this section, honestly speaking. This could be a little bit controversial because we were talking about registrations, and yes, registrations impact end users as well as they impact others.

If we're talking, for example, about awareness or material, how would this be different than any awareness or material that we will be handing out to end users anyway? Whether it's phishing or whatever is happening via an AI tool or a non-AI tool. Honestly speaking, I do not see much value in this section. I do not see it as much within the scope of the group. I do see that all of the items that we are listing here are going to be mentioned and discussed under the registration part. But again, if the group's consensus is to go ahead with this, that's fine as well.

TARA WHALEN

Thankfully, my point would apply to any kind of user in the system. Because I'm interested in human computer pieces, I'm also interested, I guess, in some of the ways in which more people are

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being asked to prove whether they're a person or not, and might be having to do this. From a customer service, there are also extra demands. Are you really a person? Are you really a person? And so anything that gets put in becomes now, how much more do I have to do?

I don't want to make the scope huge, but if there's some place talking about how much of the burden and different tools there are, so that people don't have to spend all the time proving humanity, then that might end up in the system as well. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Just noting, we have three and a half minutes left, and I will need 30 seconds to close. I'll give the floor to LJ. Matthias is in the queue as well. Probably after that, we'll have to close and then move some of this further. Rod will try to fit you in as well. LJ, go ahead. Matthias next, then.

MATTHIAS HUDOBNIK

Perfect. Thanks. Basically, maybe not all people are aware. We had a table with the different layers. This does not mean that we cannot put things together. I think also from an efficiency standpoint, we should definitely do that. That, as we had before, DNS User Interaction became DNS-End User Interaction. There are a lot of links to the whole, let's say, registration management. I would also see it like that if we draft that we maybe just put this in

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one pocket and that's it, because it makes no sense to blow it up more than needed. This is just my point of view. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Excellent. Thank you, Matthias. Rod, you will close us out today.

ROD RASMUSSEN

You can close us out. So the topic came up in a conversation yesterday that I don't know that we've covered here, and I'm not sure where it fits in. But I wanted to bring it up here, in that people are seeing a huge impact from scanning from training to the point where websites are coming down if they're not heavily provisioned.

I don't think this has a major impact on the DNS, but potentially it could. But mainly it's a digital divide issue, because the big providers, no problem. But if you're trying to do your own hobbyist thing or have limited bandwidth, etc., that may be an issue. Because we hadn't, I don't believe, talked about the training impact stuff, just flag that for maybe consideration. Thanks.

LAURIN WEISSINGER

Thank you. It's also something that I have in mind. We have two more things in our list that we had there, and we talked about maybe having a look at. That's Zone and Authoritative and DNS-Underpinned Security, especially the latter. Looks like it's going to be another one of a short statement piece, but we'll see about that.

Timeline-wise, I'm seeing that we might want to re-slice the way we present things in terms of the registration piece and the resolution and user interaction piece. I would propose, because we're nearly out of time -- I have something in my head how we might want to re-slice this and then discuss it on the next call. But it's not baked enough that I want to do this now, and also, there's not enough time.

In terms of the timeline update, I will provide this as a contribution for the next meeting, which will be the week after next, I believe. Yes. Then we'll talk about how we slice the report, and then move on, like writing. If I find some time, I'll try to provide some text for the intro piece as well. We'll see if I make that. And with that, we're at 10 seconds over time. Thank you all, and see you after lunch.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**