



LACTLD Report on ICANN69

Virtual Meeting

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Lactld

Rambla República de México 6125
Montevideo, Uruguay
+598 2 604 22 22

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Introduction

The LACTLD Report on ICANN69 reviews the main sessions of interest to the ccTLD community, held at ICANN69 Virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM). The document also covers the Virtual ccTLD News Sessions organized by the ccNSO prior to the Public Meeting.

The ccNSO's agenda at ICANN69 focused on the governance of the ccNSO and the impact of COVID-19 on ccTLDs' registration levels and operations. In addition, ccNSO members had the opportunity to participate in three Q&A sessions with: ccNSO Council candidates, ICANN Board Seat 12 candidates, and ccTLD-related ICANN Board members.

At the ICANN 22nd Annual General Meeting, Patricio Poblete, director of NIC Chile and founding member of LACTLD, joined the ICANN Board of Directors. Patricio will serve at the ICANN Board Seat 11 for the 2020-2023 term.

Since the ccNSO Members Meeting at ICANN69 had a limited number of sessions, the Supporting Organization's Secretariat published a [newsletter](#) featuring the latest news from its Working Groups and Committees. In addition, the IANA update to the ccTLD community was shared in [written format](#).

Virtual ccTLD News Sessions

As in ICANN68, the ccNSO decided to organize its regular ccTLD News Session prior to the Virtual Annual General Meeting. The ccTLD community met in two Virtual News Sessions covering dispute resolution procedures, Universal Acceptance, the European Union's digital agenda, and other ccTLD news and developments.

During the first ccTLD News Session, there were two comprehensive presentations on dispute resolution procedures. First, Mira Fajriyah described the legal challenges of implementing the outcomes of the dispute resolution procedure developed by .id and the lack of regulation on the binding power of these outcomes. She argued that legislative harmonization needs to be achieved in the case of .id and that domain name procedures should be regulated more comprehensively. Finally, Mira Fajriyah discussed with ccNSO members whether their national legislation creates difficulties in the implementation of domain name dispute resolutions. Following .id's presentation, Svitlana Tkachenko explained how the .ua registry introduced the WIPO arbitration system to ensure trademark protection for registrants. Svitlana Tkachenko noted that the introduction process involved a trial period which was very helpful as it allowed them to inform and work with the registrars. Finally, she added that the implementation of the arbitration system has been progressing very well.

The .vu and .ru registries also participated in the first Virtual News Session. Andrew Molivuræ reported on the successful transition of the .vu management from Telecom Vanuatu to the Vanuatu Regulator's Office. Maria Kolesnikova spoke about the 10th anniversary of the Russian IDN ccTLD .РФ and the activities they have been carrying out to raise awareness about Universal Acceptance. She explained that they have been organizing talks for different stakeholders and have been working especially with technical audiences to facilitate access to information on technical standards and their proper implementation.

At the second ccTLD News Session, Polina Malaja (CENTR) gave a thorough presentation on the Digital Services Act and the Directive on security of network and information systems (NIS Directive) published by the European Commission. Polina Malaja stated that the NIS Directive aims to increase the resilience and cybersecurity of sectors critical to the functioning of society. She added that this Directive is significant since it is the first EU legislation that specifically identifies TLDs as “operators of essential services”.

Regarding the Digital Services Act, Polina Malaja explained that this regulation aims to clarify the liabilities of all digital services (including ccTLDs) related to illegal and potentially harmful content. She noted that, according to the European Commission's position, European domain name services are currently in a legal gap in terms of their actions aimed at removing content.

Given the impact the Digital Service Act could have on the European ccTLD community, CENTR recently participated in the public consultation on this reform. Polina Malaja indicated that [CENTR's response](#) was based primarily on [CENTR's paper on domain name registrations and online content](#). In addition, she reported that this response highlighted the role and importance of ccTLDs in maintaining critical Internet infrastructure, and also stressed the fact that content is not hosted nor transmitted through the infrastructure managed by ccTLDs. According to Polina Malaja, CENTR members also call for a legal framework that takes into account the differences in the role, size and technical capabilities of service providers and sets clear guidelines on the responsibilities of all stakeholders (including notifiers and competent public authorities).

During the second Virtual News Session, Bruce Tonkin offered a presentation on the critical infrastructure laws that could soon be approved in Australia and the potential impact they could have on the ccTLD .au. The session also featured a presentation by Edith Udeagu on policy updates and activities in the ccTLD .ng during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, the second News Session closed with a presentation by Romina Auletta Guirado on the release of .ar second level domains. Romina Auletta Guirado reported that as of September 15, 2020, .ar domains are available to all registrants and described some of the advantages and benefits offered by second-level

domains. She also reported that the release has achieved a very high number of registrations over its first few weeks.

[Session recordings and slides](#)

ccNSO Members Meeting

Governance session

The session on the governance of the ccNSO shed light on which ccNSO procedures need to be revised and updated in order to match the current scenario of the ccNSO. Also, discussions by ccNSO members raised some concerns about the rationale and clarity of certain practices.

ccNSO Chair Katrina Sasaki provided an overview of the rules and mechanisms that guide the operation of the ccNSO: the 2004 Rules of the ccNSO, the guidelines, and a series of undocumented practices. She explained that currently some of the rules defined in 2004 no longer apply or are too complex to implement due to the changes the ccNSO has had over the past 16 years. In those years, there have been changes in the ICANN Bylaws, the number of members of the ccNSO has grown and the working methods have evolved with the incorporation of ccNSO Committees and Working Groups. Therefore, Katrina Sasaki stated that the rules should be reviewed and updated in order to match the current scenario of the ccNSO.

Katrina Sasaki raised two questions to the ccNSO members to find out their opinions on the possible changes that should be implemented in the ccNSO guidelines. First, according to the Rules of the ccNSO, 10% of its members may object to a Council resolution and request a membership vote to ratify or veto the related decision. During the session, ccNSO members were asked whether the 10% membership threshold for requesting a vote is too low, too high, or just right. Second, ccNSO members were asked whether to limit the number of consecutive terms a Councillor can serve on the ccNSO Council, as recommended in the latest ccNSO review.

ccNSO members shared different views on the term limits for Councillors or, in other words, the introduction of a “compulsory break” from the ccNSO Council. Many were in favor of implementing term limits as a membership control mechanism and as good governance practice. In contrast, some ccNSO members expressed concern about the need to find enough volunteers (especially in the North America region). Another concern raised was the loss of experience and competence within the ccNSO Council.

During the discussion, some ccNSO members questioned the need for procedural guidelines and the lack of an accountability or recourse mechanism for Council

actions. They also argued that the procedures for developing guidelines should be clear. The ccNSO Secretariat explained that the 2004 Rules of the ccNSO can only be modified by a vote from the full membership. Instead, ccNSO guidelines are more situational and can be changed by the Council subject to ratification by ccNSO members.

At the end of the session, members were able to express their opinions in a poll facilitated by the ccNSO Secretariat. The results of the poll showed that 58% supported revising the 10% threshold required to request a vote. While 42% believe that this percentage should not be revised. On the other hand, 85% of the ccNSO members think that the introduction of term limits should be taken into consideration, while 15% believe that the ccNSO should not review this issue.

Katrina Sataki reported that the input received during the session will be used by the Guidelines Review Committee to review and develop new proposals for rules and guidelines to be presented to the community for discussion. Additionally, she informed that the Guidelines Review Committee is working on a draft Director Removal Guideline. It is expected that this draft will be presented at ICANN70.

[Session recording](#)

Q&A with the ccNSO Council candidates

The seven candidates for the ccNSO Council participated in the Q&A session with the ccTLD community: Hadji Mmadi Ali (.km) for the African region; Jenifer Lopez (.pa) for the Latin American and Caribbean region; Sean Copeland (.vi) for the North American region; Irina Danelia (.ru) for the European region; and Anil Kumar Jain (.in), Boyoung Kim (.kr), and Jiankang Yao (.cn) for the Asia-Pacific region. The session addressed key issues for the ccNSO and was moderated by Biyi Oladipo (.ng).

Council candidates had the opportunity to introduce themselves and describe their experience, background, role in their ccTLD and how they have been involved and participated in ICANN and the ccNSO. They then answered various questions posed by the audience about barriers to participation in the ccNSO (including language), attracting new members, participation and active involvement in Committees and Working Groups, ccTLDs financial contributions, and capacity building. ccNSO members were able to address their questions directly to the candidates from their region to expand the session's discussion.

Jenifer Lopez (.pa), the ccNSO Council candidate from the Latin America and Caribbean region, stated that she aims to contribute positively to the global ccTLD community and support the ccNSO processes. She added that she intends to serve the community by supporting mentoring and capacity building programs within ICANN, and working to increase participation and engagement in the ccNSO.

Since only one candidate has been nominated and seconded for the African, North American, European and Latin American and Caribbean Council seats, there will be no election for these regions. Therefore, the nominated candidates from these four regions will serve on the ccNSO Council beginning in March 2021. ccNSO members from Asia-Pacific will be required to participate in an election to decide which of the three nominated candidates will serve as the ccNSO Council for this region.

[Session recording](#)

The impact of COVID-19: the ccTLD experience

The session on the impact of COVID-19 revealed the growth trends in the ccTLD community. Also, ccTLD managers from different regions shared the business approaches they have taken to assist registrants and registrars. During the second part of the session, the discussion among ccNSO members covered lessons learned and expected trends in the upcoming months.

Part I

Patrick Myles (CENTR) offered insightful data on trends in the European and global domain name market. According to his analysis, the data obtained during recent months shows that the pandemic has had a positive impact on the level of registrations despite the challenges it has posed. He reported that overall market year-over-year growth for April 2020 has been 3.1% and median growth for the 100 largest TLDs globally (ccTLD and gTLD) has been 3.6%. The data analyzed allowed him to infer a high correlation between lockdown measures and increased registrations.

In the same vein, Patrick Myles informed that the growth rates of the European market increased driven by the new registrations during the pandemic. In addition, the levels of deleted domains were stable and slightly down, and there was a slight decrease in the average sales price. As reported and discussed at ICANN68, he stated that the number of 'COVID' themed domain names was very low across European ccTLDs. Still, he added that registries continue to monitor 'COVID' themed registrations, check registration details, share domain lists with authorities and CERTs, and conduct manual content checks.

Finally, Patrick Myles explained that the latest September figures suggest that this uptrend may not be over. He added that this growth is especially relevant for ccTLDs because of the localized nature of the businesses that have brought their activities online. Such factors offer an interesting opportunity for the ccTLD community.

Following Patrick Myles' presentation, four ccTLD managers from Africa, Europe, Asia-Pacific and LAC shared their trends in domain name registration over the past few months and explained what actions they had taken to respond to the

challenges of the pandemic. Overall, speakers from Africa, Europe and the LAC region agreed that they have had high growth in registration numbers since April 2020.

Regarding assistance plans, .sn, .ie and .gt managers described what actions they have implemented to support registrants and registrars. Alex Corenthin reported that the .sn ccTLD worked on improving its resilience and promoted the importance of digital identity within its community. In addition, .sn offered free registrations to registrants involved in the fight against COVID-19 and during Independence Day in Senegal.

David Curtin explained that the .ie registry adopted several actions focused on registrars: price discounts during Q2; refunded of renewal fees (to help registrar customers who faced financial difficulties); and co-funded marketing. Additionally, the ccTLD activated a registrar service failure protocol designed to protect the .ie reputation in case a registrar failed financially, and set up a landing page with information and advice for SMEs.

The assistance plan implemented in .gt was also presented by Alejandra Reynoso. The Guatemalan registry extended the expiration dates (although they reported receiving very few requests for extensions) and launched a promotion aimed at offering one year of free registration to their customers.

Unlike the cases of .sn, .ie, and .gt, Ai-Chin Lu reported that the pandemic has not had a significant impact on the .tw registry. She explained that registrations, renewals, and deletions have been consistent compared to the months prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as the past year.

Part II

During the second part of the session, Patrick Myles (CENTR), Alex Corenthin (.sn), David Curtin (.ie), Ai-Chin Lu (.tw), and Alejandra Reynoso (.gt) participated in a discussion about future trends and lessons learned from the recent months of the pandemic.

Panelists agreed that the upward trend in the number of registrations will continue in the coming months. They explained that the second wave of COVID-19 cases and the ongoing lockdown measures in some countries may contribute to steady growth.

Session participants also discussed promotions and price discounts on registrations. On the one hand, it was argued that promotions were introduced to assist registrants and reduce barriers to accessing domain names. On the other hand, Patrick Myles maintained that discounts on domain name registrations are not a sustainable strategy in the long term because price savings may not make a difference in the decision to register a domain name and may attract bad faith registrations increasing the risks for the ccTLD.

At the end of the session, speakers discussed the lessons learned over the past few months. Participants agreed that they would have worked previously on communication and awareness raising with their communities, especially with SMEs. Some ccTLD managers reported that they are currently working on promotional and educational materials about online presence with other actors and organizations. Finally, Patrick Myles highlighted the opportunity the pandemic creates for ccTLDs as they reflect the locally oriented nature of many SMEs that are taking their activities online.

[Session recording: Part I](#)

[Session recording: Part II](#)

Q&A with the ICANN Board Seat 12 candidates

The session originally scheduled with the [two nominated candidates](#) for ICANN Board Seat 12 had a change of plans before it began. As the session's moderator, Byron Holland reported that shortly before the session started Nigel Roberts –current ICANN Director appointed by the ccNSO– had sent a letter to the ccNSO mailing lists informing that he was withdrawing his candidacy from the election.

After this announcement, the Q&A session proceeded with its initial objective. ICANN Board candidate Katrina Sasaki was able to answer the questions posed by the session moderator and ccNSO members. First, she spoke about her professional skills and explained how she could bring the ccTLD perspectives to the table while fulfilling the responsibilities and duties of ICANN Board members. Katrina Sasaki argued that while Board members must act in ICANN's best interests, ccTLD perspectives are vital to ICANN Board's work and mission.

During the Q&A session, Katrina Sasaki also offered her views on the challenges of the multistakeholder model and the most relevant issues currently facing the ICANN Board. She stated that the processes of the Empowered Community need to be simplified in order to lower the barriers to volunteer participation and thus improve the efficiency of the multistakeholder model. In addition, she noted that work prioritization and communication of ICANN Board decisions are central issues for the community. Finally, she declared that one of the most important challenges for ICANN is to maintain its relevance and continue to evolve over time.

[Session recording](#)

Q&A session with the ccTLD-related ICANN Board members

The Q&A session featured Becky Burr, Danko Jevtovic, Rafael Lito Ibarra, Chris Disspain, Nigel Roberts, and Patricio Poblete (who started his term as ICANN Director at the conclusion of ICANN69). ICANN Board members answered

questions from the community in an interactive discussion moderated by Jordan Carter (.nz).

Peter Van Roste (CENTR) raised the need to address the confusion around ccTLDs and gTLDs, and the applicability of policies developed by the ICANN community in each case. According to Peter Van Roste, the difference between ccTLDs and gTLDs is not clear to stakeholders outside ICANN, such as regulators, authorities, among others. He argued that all those involved with ccTLDs (including regional organizations) should be very careful with this distinction and should inform that ICANN does not set policy for ccTLDs. Lastly, Peter Van Roste invited ICANN Board members to take a leading role in this issue and to emphasize the distinction between ccTLDs and gTLDs.

ICANN Board members shared their thoughts on the difference between ccTLD and gTLD policy development processes. Nigel Roberts agreed that ICANN Directors appointed by the ccNSO should continue to emphasize the advisory nature of the policies developed by ccTLDs within ICANN. In addition, Patricio Poblete and Lito Ibarra stated that the policies developed by the GNSO and by the ccNSO can be useful and contribute to the practices adopted by gTLDs and ccTLDs, regardless of the applicability that such policies have on each of them.

The Q&A session also covered the main risks to ICANN and to the proper functioning of the DNS. Board members offered different views on this issue. On the one hand, Lito Ibarra argued that DNS threats, and especially attacks targeting root servers, are one of the greatest risks to the ICANN community. He added that we must be vigilant and take all possible measures to prevent and mitigate these types of attacks. On the other hand, Patricio Poblete and Danko Jevtovic agreed that Internet fragmentation is another major risk. According to Danko Jevtovic, currently the pressure on content regulation can have important technical consequences, therefore, the ccTLD community must take a central role to safeguard the technical Internet governance. Finally, Chris Disspain drew attention to the conversations that have taken place about expanding ICANN's mission. He argued that we need to be very careful and aware of the potential risks associated with such an expansion.

At the end of the session, ccNSO members especially thanked Chris Disspain, who completed his third term as an ICANN Board member. Participants honored Chris' work not only as an ICANN Director but also as a founding member of the ccNSO.

[Session recording](#)

Joint Meeting: ICANN Board and ccNSO Council

ICANN Board members and ccNSO Councillors discussed two key issues regarding ICANN's future: how to achieve sustainability and how to enhance the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model.

At the beginning of the Joint Meeting, ICANN Board members talked about the mechanisms and practices they have implemented to tackle the challenges posed by the lack of face-to-face interaction and the difficulties in coordinating the Board's activities across different time zones. ICANN Directors explained that they have had to find and adopt new ways of meeting and working in the COVID-19 context.

ICANN President & CEO Göran Marby talked about the future of ICANN Public Meetings and the current challenges of ICANN org. He explained that ICANN org has been able to advance its work and has managed to facilitate the work of the multistakeholder community, but has had difficulties innovating.

Regarding upcoming ICANN meetings, Göran Marby reported that the regional communities and the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees will soon be consulted on how to best proceed in the future. This feedback will then be presented in a public consultation to the community before the ICANN Board can make a decision. ICANN President & CEO stressed that community participation is key and this decision process should be carried out with a bottom-up approach.

The effectiveness of the multistakeholder model was also discussed at the Joint Meeting. ICANN Board members and ccNSO Councillors shared different ideas about prioritization, streamlining and scoping. ccNSO Chair Katrina Sasaki argued that prioritization is a complex issue on which there is no common agreement within ICANN. Furthermore, she stated that the Empowered Community has had to resolve the complexities of prioritizing work and, especially, implementing the provisions established in Annex D of the ICANN Bylaws (approval actions, rejection actions, removal of Directors or the ICANN Board, etc.).

ICANN Directors explained how they have been prioritizing the work and reports submitted by the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees. In addition, they emphasized that the policy work of the ccNSO and the GNSO are equally important and that recommendations made by the ccNSO in its reports will receive the full attention and consideration of the ICANN Board.

At the end of the Joint Meeting, Xavier Calvez, ICANN Senior Vice President, Planning and Chief Financial Officer, commented on what ICANN org has been doing to plan and prioritize its work. He reported that ICANN has created two new departments to organize, prioritize and implement the recommendations developed by the community and approved by the ICANN Board. According to

Xavier Calvez, these departments will also allow for increased transparency in the planning processes and decision making.

[Session recording](#)

Joint meeting: ccNSO & GNSO Councils

The ccNSO and GNSO Councils discussed the need for coordination and collaboration on a number of key issues for both communities. First, as requested by the ICANN Board, the ccNSO and GNSO Councillors addressed the coordination and cross-participation work in the policy development processes that each Supporting Organization is undertaking on IDNs and especially on variant management. Also, ccNSO and GNSO members talked about their review and comments on ICANN's FY22 Operating Plan and Budget.

During the Joint Meeting, Katrina Sataki raised the need to have clear and efficient mechanisms that allow the ccNSO and GNSO as decision participants to perform the functions of the Empowered Community as defined in Annex D of the ICANN Bylaws. She argued that while the Empowered Community may not have to exercise the rights to remove an ICANN Director or to recall the entire Board, the complexity and strict timelines of the mechanisms in place require collaboration among Supporting Organizations.

Finally, participants at the Joint Meeting discussed how to share information about DNS abuse levels across ccTLDs with the broader Internet community. Michele Neylon (Blacknight Solutions) suggested that it would be useful to know the number of complaints ccTLDs have received from law enforcement agencies, consumer protection agencies, etc., in order to properly inform some of the discussions that are taking place at ICANN.

[Session recording](#)

Other sessions of interest to the ccTLD community

Plenary Session:

DNS Abuse: A Consideration of the Issues

Discussions on DNS abuse continued at ICANN69. During the plenary session, members of the SSAC, GAC, Commercial Stakeholder Group, Contracted Parties House and ICANN org shared progress and statistics since the last ICANN Public Meeting and proposed different approaches to tackle DNS abuse.

The discussion covered a number of key issues. Some panelists stressed that DNS abuse directly undermines Internet trust and therefore requires a response from the entire ecosystem (not just ICANN stakeholders). On the other hand, the session revealed some disagreement on the evolution of DNS abuse levels in recent months. In addition, speakers shared different views about ICANN's role in this matter based on its mandate as defined in its Bylaws.

Speakers had the opportunity to share the perspectives of their respective communities and, during the final part of the session, participated in a panel discussion. David Conrad (ICANN org - OCTO) opened the round of interventions sharing statistics and trends on the evolution of DNS abuse in recent months. He reported that, according to the statistics collected and analyzed by OCTO, there have been decreases in phishing, malware and botnet but an increase in spam. He explained that over the past year the number of abusive domains increased by 12.91%, but the overall abuse rate was approximately the same.

Jeff Bedser (SSAC) announced that the SSAC DNS Abuse Work Party has produced a new report that will be published soon. He informed that the report intends to outline a strategy to address the methodologies, practices, and cooperation necessary for reducing DNS abuse. According to Jeff Bedser, some of the key points covered in this SSAC paper include: definitions of abuse, primary point of responsibility for abuse resolution, deployment of evidentiary standards, escalation paths, availability of contact information, and notifier programs.

Regarding mitigation approaches, Mason Cole (Commercial Stakeholder Group) argued that contracted parties need to be more proactive and determined in prevention and mitigation measures. In turn, James Bladel (Contracted Parties House) distinguished DNS abuse from other types of abuse and noted that the ability of a registry or registrar to mitigate abuse or abusive content is rather restricted. James Bladel also added that the industry has been working on this issue and has organized efforts and partnerships with other actors outside ICANN to tackle different types of abuse.

[Session recording](#)

DNSSEC and Security Workshop

The Workshop presentations covered a wide range of technical updates on DNSSEC. The Workshop also provided an opportunity to address other non-technical issues that are key to DNSSEC deployment.

Pablo Rodríguez (.pr) discussed his research on the perceptions of decision-makers on the use of DNSSEC in the Latin American and Caribbean region. He explained that he interviewed 24 ccTLDs in the region in order to understand which factors promote or prevent the adoption of DNSSEC. Based on the findings of these interviews, Pablo Rodríguez developed a series of

recommendations that would allow increasing the implementation of DNSSEC in ccTLD operators.

The main findings of his research revealed that a lack of budget and a series of concerns about misconfiguration are factors impeding DNSSEC implementation. Also, there is a significant lack of awareness about the importance of DNSSEC among decision-makers, especially those in charge of budget management. Finally, the research proved that operators' reputation is a major driver of technology adoption.

Building on the findings of his research, Pablo Rodriguez developed a series of recommendations to promote the adoption of DNSSEC. First, he recommended developing workshops that would: increase institutional support, adequately explain to ccTLD operators the costs of DNSSEC implementation and maintenance, and reduce implementation difficulties. In addition, he proposed the creation of interfaces to reduce the workload of corporate client's zone-signing with the ccTLD. Finally, he recommended integrating a warning system in all major web browsers that would notify visitors of DNSSEC presence (as implemented with SSL certificates).

[Session recording](#)