

Gaining traction in ICANN, GNSO and NCSG activities

ICANN 62 (24 – 28 June 2018) FELLOWSHIP REPORT



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ICANN 62 meeting in summary

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I. Executive Summary

ICANN 62 met my expectations as a second time fellow, this meetings always presents opportunities for networking, making new friends and meeting colleagues for the great good and health of the IG ecosystem and advancement of the interest of internet users and domain registrants. ICANN 62 proved to be very beneficial to my meaningful participation within NCSG and as a Finance Committee Chair of this stakeholder group. Amongst a list of networks made, old connections were rekindled with ISOC, ICANN Wiki and IGfSA representatives who attended ICANN 62.



The Mentor

Now coming to the actual business of the meeting, Stephanie Peering (GNSO Councilor, NCSG seasoned veteran) who was assigned to be my mentor during ICANN 62 managed to help me gain perspectives on NCSG activities while proving positive comment on new ideas put on the table, meetings with the mentor usually took place in the morning during

breakfast and lasted for an hour and a half. Another issues that was discussed is simplification of ICANN content and language which has potential to enable increased participation in community activities. Below is a summary of my activities during ICANN 62 in Panama.

Capacity building

2. NCUC/NPOC/NCSG Capacity Building workshop

This training that took place in Day 0 of ICANN 62 and was focused on building capacity in facilitation and negotiation skills for NCSG members and affiliated constituencies. The workshop was facilitated by David Kolb, who presented a very interactive and lively workshop with activities and group tasks that lasted around 7 hours. The workshop started with introductions where participants also had to mention what they thought was the, “ICANN challenge”, a challenge that ICANN needs to attend to as part of an ice breaker.

Topics covered in this workshop included, how to set group norms within working groups or committees, building confidence, different ways of building trust, collaboration approaches and active listening, all aimed to improving proficiency of members in PDP and community activities. The workshop covered several important topics like how to effectively participate within ICANN, consensus building and communicating with intention.

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NCUC/NPOC/NCSG capacity BUILDING WORKSHOP.....continued

The conflict resolution topic involved a role play where participants in groups of 5 had to assume the role of stakeholders: - an SO, AC, observer and/or mediator to resolve a policy issue in a pressurized environment. This exercise proved to be beneficial as it enabled me to understand challenges around WHIOS data and contentions between RSSAC and NCUC around issues of access and privacy of registrant's data for multiple reasons such as security and commercial use concerns by IP lawyers. Negotiation skills also presented ways on how to use different currencies in order to win during a negotiation process and concession principles. This workshop (Capacity building workshop) is one of my highlights for ICANN 62.



3. GNSO, board and NCSG meeting

This intense meeting that started at 09h00 was attended by the GNSO, ICANN board and the NCSG members and one of the main points that was raised was that the community is needed for development of policy on WHOIS and accountability within ICANN should be top-down according to Stephanie Perring. Personally, I also agree to the shared statements from Stephanie, the community cannot be held responsible if they do not have the influence or power to shape policies or how ICANN policy drafts are derived.

Other participants felt that resources need to be brought to the table so that everyone can participate and can be trained on GDPR. A question was asked, “What does the law say about compliance, does it mean that those who seek compliance must fight for compliance and involve the community in the process?” of which I believe it is an incredible question that needed an equally sensible answer. A simple response was that ICANN’s job is to ensure compliance of GDPR and privacy on data sets needs to be prioritized. According to attendees, in the past there was discussion on how much data should be made available, a Temp Spec means some of the WHOIS data will be blocked and it appears that registries and registrars have the right to control information accessible, the Temp Spec goes beyond what is practical by the European Union GDPR.

The concern, I had in mind raised again, “it is seen that things get excluded by ICANN because they were not developed by the community but by individuals within communities and another problem is that ICANN is avoiding the sovereignty on nations by dictating to them and this is not a community effort”! A mention was made on PDP’s that it needs to be included in GDPR and the scope of PDP is dependent on the GNSO, the board has no control whatsoever on this. An argument was made that if the community does not get involved, ICANN the organisation and the board will make a decision on behalf of the entire community. According to Stephanie, the WHOIS policy is not existent at the moment and what registries want to know is if GDPR compliance will make them accountable or not. Amongst the key outcomes of this meeting was that:

- Action was needed on the temporary specification and
- Everyone was requested to comment on the universal access model

4. NCSG Policy meeting

The meeting deliberations were focused on Expedited PDP and the first point mentioned is that the WHOIS data access framework must be included in the EPDP, the Temp Spec which defines processing procedures, talks to access, thus the access framework is needed including determination on who gets the accreditation. Other views feel that 3rd party access to data should be limited to registrars, and government are in support of this but it does not comply with GDPR. Everyone was also reminded that ICANN was not a repository for data access, thus 3rd party access should be limited. As much as participants wanted the Temp Spec to go through, the access model will defeat the intended purpose and ICANN wants something done by end of the year, thus this access model still needs to be defined.

A motion was passed by Milton Muller that all should endorse the access model to so that it can be taken to the higher level interest session and this motion was seconded by Tatiana Tropina. The last point made in regard to access is that it is important to combating various cybercrimes, threats and attacks.



5. NPOC- GNSO meeting

Unfortunately when I attended this meeting I was coming from another session, so I could not capture the essence of involved deliberations besides the following.

It seemed like NPOC had budget issues and it was recommended that the NCSG FC needs to hold regular onsite meeting to keep the community up to date with developments and way forward because there seems to be confusion around the work the NCSG FC should be doing. It appears that currently there was limited communication and interactions around financial issues. NPOC planned activities include, increased visibility in IG events like the Rightscon and the IGF and the NCUC chair was also attending this meetings.



6. Joint NCSG ALAC outreach

According to this meeting deliberations, ICANN's accountability needs to increase to improve, and ICANN operational procedures must not violate or infringe on human rights and to deal with this, there is now what is called the ICANN CCWG on human rights. Martin Silva alluded that the GNSO RPM (Rights Protection Mechanism) WG started in 2016 and that the RPM is about protection of trademarks, it protects rights and commerce related issues on domains. The purpose of RPM is to have a healthy trademark environment and the issue is about the domain name strings and not the content itself.

Greg an ALAC and IPC member from ISOC New York emphasized that trademarks are not there to exclude people but to promote uniqueness in domain names. RPM also encompasses protection of internet users from cyberattacks. Some registrants protect their domains at country code level and very few countries include legal fees. RPM also protect domain name abuses and improves on internet trust due to reliable information.

Sometimes domain names can collide, so balance is needed to avoid this kind of conflict/collision. Free, fair and efficient use of domains are the basic principles of the RPM-WG. Uniform Rapid Suspension (URS) are a quick takedown mechanism which can be appealed in court, and with every domain registration there should be a trademark involved, bad faith use of domain names needs to be proven in order for the RPM or URS to be considered as a solution.

GNSO workshop

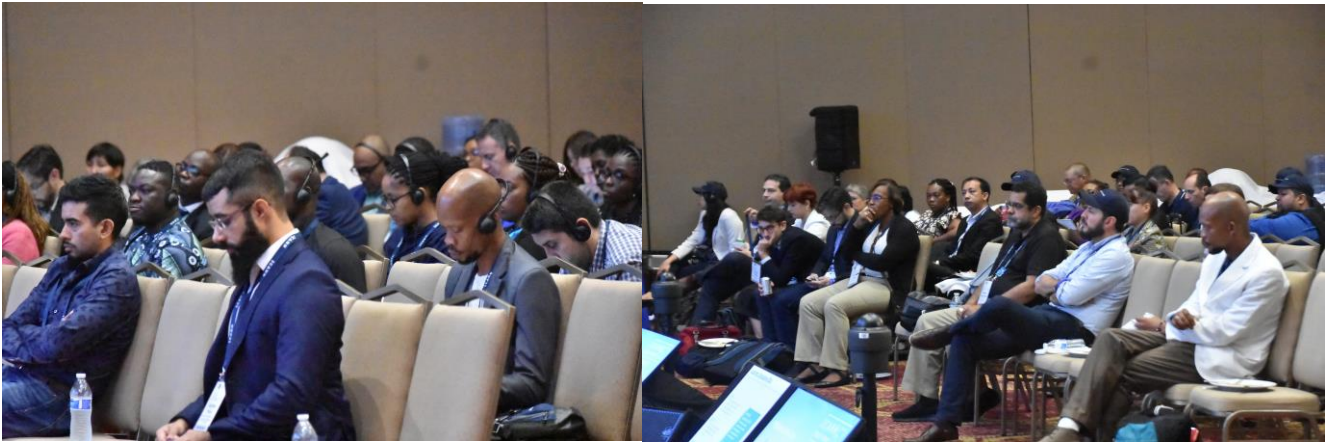
This meeting was also attended when it was due to finish but the main takeout were around the following.

In regard to GDPR compliance, registries need to keep accurate data and there are gaps in the Temp Spec. Secondly, in regard to the budget, a draft budget was shared on the GNSO mailing list and the GNSO processes are a lot more complex thus more resources are needed. The budget spent is expected to remain the same and an increase in fees is a barrier to registrants in certain regions.

The GNSO charter will be underpinning operations of the GNSO and will help with dealing with contracts. After making an enquiry around how the GNSO finance committee and how it works with SGs, no satisfactory answer was obtained but 'some members in attendance emphasized that the lack of proper communication and coordination frustrates Finance committees of SG's.

7. Fellowship sessions (Day 1 – Day 4)

These fellowship meetings were chaired by Siranush Vardanyan and aim to fast track participation of fellows in ICANN activities, the **first of these meetings was around ICANN PDPs**, the panelists which were Carlos and Maryam from ICANN explained the 3 components of ICANN (board - governance, organisation – support staff and community – heart and soul of ICANN and their collective role in furthering the merit of ICANN). The Multistakeholder model used to enable participation of multiple groups was also elaborated on, including the EPDP which related to the 1st phase of 5 stages of the normal PDP. It was also mentioned that WHOIS policy has potential to violate GDPR and the Temp Spec built into registry and registrar contracts is a result of a response to GDPR compliance. GNSO working groups were also explained, which include the RPM in all gTLD's WG, the New gTLD subsequent procedures WG, Protection of geographic names WG and UDPR WG (Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy) to name a few.



The second of these fellowship daily sessions focused on LACNIC evolution, the guest speakers mentioned that ICANN is an open organisation and anyone can join. ICANN opened regional engagement offices to enable this and scarce resources limit them in taking ICANN to the world. Each region has different priorities and ICANN presence is beyond America. Initially there were only 19 registries and translation was necessary to get more people involved and they needed to know how DNS is managed.

The Internationalization strategy enabled establishment of regional offices. There also needs to be sector balance at regional level, In LACNIC, business was represented within ICANN, thus efforts were undertaken to help sectors get more involved in regional strategies. They focused on awareness and capacity building at regional level and regional strategies must talk to local and regional priorities.

Mr. Albert Daniels of GSE team in the Caribbean, mentioned that we need to start promoting online professional identity, Brazil and Argentina have around 2000 ISP's so they capacitate them on BPG on how DNS and unique identifiers work. Universal acceptance WG is responsible for translation of content into local languages and this includes capacity building at grassroots level.



A representative of ICANN GSE team mentioned that they start by identifying relevant people who can participate in the GSE activities and the GSE itself always tries to lower barriers to ICANN participation. Capacity building is very important, and the GSE team also supports capacity building in rural and underserved regions. The LACNIC GSE team also partners with initiatives outside their regions as relationship building is important within ICANN for future success. In Africa the DNSSEC workshops proved to be effective and they were adopted in different regions.

ICANN's regional strategy is a result of internationalization and ***GSE teams have regional strategies which necessitate formation of working groups, created by the community for the community but has to be specific.*** ICANN engagement and outreach that supports DNS in regions was developed by LACNIC with 75 members as part of the strategy (council and implementation teams acting on the strategy). The LACNIC strategy has a vision, goals and outcomes, and regional strategies offer an opportunity for fellows to work in their regions and they will be invited to participate in regional strategies. Participation is important when consideration is made on award of fellowships at regional level. This was another highlight session of the ICANN 62 that I attended.

My key takeouts from this meetings

LACNIC's evolution, its strategies and how they get executed, illustrates how systematically the region grew the DNS industry by working with and involving communities and other sectors in regional strategies in order to address local priorities. LACNIC focused on building capacity in DNS and unique identifiers to create a conducive environment. I am currently engaging a fellow, Sarata Omane, on how we can start to proactively contribute to the African Regional Strategy.

The third meeting was hosted by PRS – Public Responsibility Service, centered on conflict resolution.

In this session, the first thing that was undertaken was looking at various conflict definitions, causes of conflict and different ways of resolving conflict. To me this session was more of a fine tuner of the NCSG capacity building workshop as I brought embedded knowledge from the initial NCSG capacity building workshop to this meeting. In this conflict resolution workshop, real situation examples were used in resolving potential conflicts or disagreements that usually take place within the policy development environment of ICANN, group activities were also encouraged, very good session.



In the fourth meeting, fellow were joined by the CEO of ICANN. According to the CEO, ICANN works in the IG eco-system with other partners like ISOC and IETF and there is currently 4 million internet users globally. ICANN is a technical organisation, not a political one thus that no 1 particular stakeholder or country should control the internet and the fellowship program is important to ICANN as it brings new voices into the table.

Regarding the budget, the CEO mentioned that the CIANN board has done 29 exercises of the budget with the community and trend outlook of ICANN informs the 5-year strategic plan to be adopted and ICANN meetings cost 14 – 15 million UDS per year and according to other fellows, ICANN is seen as the UN of the internet, the CEO had interesting observations around diversity within ICANN the organ.



8. Conclusion

In conclusion, ICANN 62 was successful as it allowed me to link with another Finance Committee member (Remmy Nweke – NPOC representative), enabling us to draft a way forward for the NCSG Finance Committee. This opportunity also provided in-depth understanding on NCSG policy activities, making it easier for me to participate more meaningfully in PDP's, for instance gaining grasp of WHOIS issues on safety, commercialization and privacy and how they link or collide with EPDP, data access models and GDPR compliance implications. I also managed to connect the missing dots towards getting a clearer picture of how ICANN operates regionally and with the involvement of the community. Another thing noted is that one never stops learning this abbreviations, so this meetings helped me also understand commonly used and new terms like RPM, URS and the Temp Spec, of course.

Although there were other meetings, one wished to attend but due to the tight schedule and conflicts in GNSO, NCSG and fellowship meetings, I could not follow meetings on ALAC, new gTLD auction proceeds and subsequent procedure sessions. Besides the fun nights out with the guys, meeting up will colleagues for the advancement of our work in the IG fora was another advantage, thanks for the opportunity to participate in this meeting and to Celeb Olumyiwa for capturing and sharing all these memories with his camera.

