**Proposed Session Title**

[Navigating the Complexities of Safeguarding Core Internet Values](https://community.icann.org/display/atlarge/At-Large+Community+Session+Proposal+-+Navigating+the+Complexities+of+Safeguarding+Core+Internet+Values)

**Brief Description**

The concept of core Internet values, so central to the Internet’s architecture, has not been comprehensively revisited for over a decade. This oversight comes despite profound shifts in technology, governance models, and the global political landscape. The Global Digital Compact (GDC), held last September, underscored an increasing emphasis among some nation-states on national sovereignty over global agreements. This shift aligns with the rise of populism and nationalism, as reflected in recent global election outcomes. Such trends have led to policies and strategies that exacerbate e-frictions and contribute to Internet fragmentation. At the same time, the Internet—traditionally grounded in principles of openness, accessibility, and global interoperability—is under mounting pressure from emerging technologies and volatile geopolitical dynamics. This panel seeks to revisit and re-examine these core values, assessing their relevance and adaptability amidst these challenges, and exploring how to uphold them in today’s rapidly evolving environment. Proposal’s Alignment with ALAC and ICANN Initiatives This session aligns directly with ALAC’s mission to advocate for end users and builds upon the All-Community Plenary Session at ICANN 81: Shifting Paradigms: Multistakeholderism, Geopolitics, and Emerging Internet Infrastructures. Building on that foundational discussion, this timely session aims to: This timely session will convene experts across fields to: • Redefine core Internet values in the context of today’s geopolitical and technological realities. • Analyze emerging policy trends that threaten these values and exacerbate e-friction. • Equip stakeholders with actionable strategies to preserve an open and universal Internet. • Foster collaboration to develop a collective response that ensures the Internet’s global integrity and openness. This session serves as a crucial next step in empowering stakeholders to navigate shifting paradigms and protect the Internet as a secure, resilient, and inclusive resource for all. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Key Topics:

1. Revisiting core Internet values—their definition, relevance, and evolution over the last decade.

2. Emerging trends in digital sovereignty, data localization, and cybersecurity frameworks. 3. Strategies for mitigating geopolitical e-friction while safeguarding Internet collaboration. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Policies to Reference: • GDPR and other Digital Sovereignty Policies (e.g., China, Russia, and European Union frameworks). • Cybersecurity Frameworks: International agreements and national strategies. • Outcomes of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and preparations for WSIS+20. • The role of ICANN, IGF, ISOC, and the multistakeholder governance model. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Session Structure:

• Introduction by Moderator (5 minutes): Overview of the session’s purpose, objectives, and speaker introductions.

• Panel Discussion (30 minutes): A dynamic and interactive session structured around three key questions:

1. Why is it critical to revisit and redefine core Internet values in today’s geopolitical and technological landscape?

2. How do emerging trends like digital sovereignty and nationalism challenge these values, and what strategies can mitigate the resulting e-friction?

3. What role can Internet end users and internet community play in fostering international collaboration and ensuring the Internet remains secure, resilient, and universally accessible?

• Invited community input (20 minutes):

• Open floor for Q/A (20 minutes)

• Panelist Reflections (10 minutes): Each panelist shares key takeaways and actionable strategies.

• Closing Remarks by Moderator (5 minutes): A summary of key insights and next steps. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Target Audience This session is designed for end users, policymakers, regulators, technologists, academics, and stakeholders across the Internet governance ecosystem. The session will emphasize the critical role end users play in advocating for Internet values and shaping policies to ensure the Internet remains an open, interoperable, and resilient resource for all.

**Rationale/Desired Outcomes - Justification**

By fostering a forward-looking, solution-driven dialogue, this session will strengthen collective efforts to protect the Internet’s core values and promote collaboration to navigate today’s complex and evolving geopolitical environment. The key take aways will be: Revisiting Core Internet Values: Redefine and reaffirm foundational principles (e.g., openness, global interoperability, security) to ensure their relevance in today’s shifting political and technological landscape. Understanding Geopolitical Impact: Provide participants with a clear understanding of how emerging trends in digital sovereignty, nationalism, and policy fragmentation are challenging Internet governance. Empowering End Users:Offer strategies and tools to help end users actively participate in governance discussions and influence decision-making processes that safeguard the global Internet. Collaboration Across Stakeholders: Identify opportunities for greater cooperation among governments, technical communities, civil society, and end users to mitigate geopolitical tensions and promote multistakeholder solutions. Practical Recommendations for Global Processes: Develop actionable insights to contribute to the WSIS+20 Review, the implementation of the Global Digital Compact, and ongoing ICANN discussions to strengthen global Internet governance.

**Which, if any, other community groups do you plan to involve in your session? Please explain your plans for working cooperatively with the group(s), including your contacts, skill sets sought, etc.**

ALAC, GAC, RSSAC, and SSAC

**Session Leaders/Facilitators and Panelists**

•Vint Cerf – Internet Pioneer • Kurtis Lindqvist, ICANN CEO • Becky Burr, ICANN Borad • Olivier Crepin-Leblond – Chair, Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values; Founder, EuroDIG; Chair, CPWG/ICANN • Fadi Chehadé - was the President and CEO of ICANN from 14 September 2012 until 10 March 2016. He built a strong executive leadership team that transformed ICANN. • Ana Cristina F. Amoroso das Neves – Chair, UN Commission on Science & Technology for Development; Head, Internet Governance Office, Portugal • David A. Gross – International Telecommunications Policy Expert; Former US Ambassador to the ITU • Wang Lang – Deputy Director, International Department, China Internet Information Center (CNNIC) • John Crain – ICANN SVP & Chief Technology Officer • Moderator: Pari Esfandiari, ALAC, EURALO, Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values, Global TechnoPolitics Forum

**Under which At-Large Priority Activities 2025 work track area does this topic fall?**

Policy

**Are you planning on inviting any ICANN Board members/Executives? If so, please list hereafter in order for Staff to work with Board Operations on invitations.**

Kurtis Lindqvist, Becky Burr

**Additional information or comments**

This discussion is crucial for ICANN as it addresses the growing threats to the core Internet values that underpin ICANN's mission and the stability of the global Internet. With rising trends pointing to increased Internet fragmentation, there is an urgent need to redefine Internet core values to meet today's realities and to align stakeholders on strategies to preserve a secure, resilient, and universal Internet.

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**Title**

[“But you promised…” - Evaluating Community perceptions on the new gTLD program's Global Public Interest (GPI)](https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=428834895)

**Session Duration:**

90 minutes

**Objective:**

To critically assess whether the new gTLD program is fulfilling its social purposes, examining plans, expectations, and proposed outcomes.

**Overview:**

This session aims to explore whether the ‘promises’ made within ICANN during the development and implementation of the new gTLD program are being met, particularly in terms of their social impact and alignment with the global public interest. This discussion is particularly timely as we approach the next Applicant Guidebook (AGB) revision. Based on community understanding of the successes and failures of the ongoing 2012 round,  the discussions on how the next round (Subpro) would fix everything, and the status of the current implementation of the New gTLD Round, can we identify gaps that should be dealt with before it is too late?

**Key Questions to Address:**

1. Has the work on the new gTLD program met the expectations of contributors, participants, in terms of the global public interest?  Are we building what we need?  Does it meet the threshold of delivering public value according to our mission, commitments, and core values?

       2. Are the 'promises' made during the early stages of the Subpro program being fulfilled?

   - These are promises people think they heard from leaders, teams, and Board members concerning topics such as IDN/UA, outreach, applicant support, contention set resolution.

   - Is the implementation aligning with what was expected?

      3. Does the AGB proposed implementation of New gTLD program fulfill the stated goals of the program?

   - Are there indications that the program is not delivering for the global public interest as expected by the community?

   - What are the key concerns that need to be addressed?

      4. Are public concerns about the program being dismissed without sufficient discussion in the understandable rush to meet a schedule?

   - Are there real issues that need attention, or are these concerns being minimized?

      5. What are the potential circumstances that could hinder or even derail the program's success?

   - Issues similar to those we have seen like HAN single-character surprises, the need to withdraw Board-approved recommendations, and what appears to be acceleration of ad hoc policy adjustments.

   - How can these best be addressed?

     6. Is it ok to rely on an increasing number of new  ‘promises’ of fixing issues in future ‘procedures’?

   - Is this a satisfactory response, or just more deferrals of public interest?

   - Can we ensure that these issues are tackled now rather than deferred yet again?

**Discussion Format:**

The session will be structured as a moderated debate, with input from a diverse group of ICANN stakeholders, including community members, Board members, and experts in gTLD policy. Key points of concern, included in the key questions, will be raised and debated, with updates provided on the current status of implementation. The session will aim to offer transparency on the challenges faced and provide a forum for stakeholders to express their views and develop a wider understanding of the current situation.

**Outcome Goal:**

The primary goal of this session is to provide a clear picture of whether the

New gTLD Round will fulfill its intended public interest purpose. If the program is on track as many believe it is, this will provide reassurance to stakeholders. If not as some are concerned, this session will provide a platform for discussing what may need to be done before it is too late.

**Expected Takeaways:**

- Clarity on the community understanding on the public interest objectives of the new gTLD program.

- Identification of areas where the program may not be fulfilling its GPI obligations.

- Open discussion on how to address any concerns raised before the final stages of implementation and deployment.

- A plan for addressing small but significant issues that may have been overlooked.

**Target Audience:**

ICANN participants, stakeholders in the domain name industry, policy makers, and anyone interested in the future of the gTLD program and its impact on the global Internet community.

**Conclusion:**

This session will provide an essential benchmark to assess the goals and achievements of the new gTLD program, engage with relevant stakeholders, and help the Board ensure that the program  serves the global public interest before it has to give the go ahead for the next steps.