

CEO Report to the Board

Period Covering: 21 December 2020 – 31 March 2021

April 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Office of the CEO	3
Organization People	4
Organization Finances	8
Procurement	14
Legal and Complaints Office	15
Global Domains and Strategy	18
Reviews (Support/Accountability)	23
Reviews (Implementation)	27
Contractual Compliance and Consumer Safeguards	29
Risk Management	34
Planning	35
Global Human Resources, Administrative Services, Security Operations	36
Engineering & Information Technology	38
Identifier Research, Operations, and Security (IROS)	42
Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO)	42
Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)	46
Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE), Meetings, Public Responsibility Support (PRS)	48
Global Communications & Language Services	51
Policy Development Support	54
Government and IGO Engagement	62
Regional Office Reports	66
Social Media Report	76

Office of the CEO

Göran Marby, *President and CEO*

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

- ICANN org continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic, and Managing Directors, with support from their regional crisis management team, will determine when their office can apply to reopen
- Development of the Operational Design Phase to inform the Board's decisions regarding GNSO-Council approved recommendations
- Launch of Information Transparency Initiative new search experience

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

ICANN org continues to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, especially as global vaccine availability increases. While we have extended our travel and face-to-face meeting ban to 30 June 2021, we have delegated the decision to reopen offices to their respective Managing Directors. We continue to engage with staff to determine the appropriate path forward, and are supporting staff members who make the decision to get vaccinated.

During my time as ICANN Org President and CEO, I've stressed the importance of both prioritizing our work and placing a greater emphasis on planning before we move to implementation. Having mature processes through which we conduct our work is the foundation of a strong, efficient, and effective organization. With so many projects and initiatives in progress simultaneously, and with a finite number of resources available at any given time, this focus becomes all the more important.

To that end, ICANN org has collaborated with the ICANN Board to develop the [Operational Design Phase](#) (ODP), which will assess the potential risks, anticipated costs, resource requirements, timelines, dependencies, and other matters related to the implementation of GNSO-Council approved recommendations. The outcome of an ODP, an Operational Design Assessment (ODA), will outline the org's findings, to help inform the Board as it deliberates on approving recommendations. The first ODP, regarding the System for Standardized Access/Disclosure (SSAD) outlined in recommendations 1-18 of the Expedited Policy Development Process on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Phase 2 (EPDP) Final Report, is launching in April 2021. A second ODP, regarding New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process recommendations, will also be launching soon.

This period also saw the launch of the [Information Transparency Initiative](#) (ITI) new search experience for more than 38,000 pages and files of content, as well as a new icann.org homepage and ICANN News Subscriptions feature. This is a major milestone, and sets the path for the rest of icann.org content, as well as Supporting Organization and Advisory Committee (SO/AC) site content.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

As the amount of work continues to increase, one of ICANN org's top priorities is taking a close look at how we prioritize projects and ensure they have adequate resources relative to what's available. I'm working with my Executive Team to better assess, from the start, how we prioritize the work ICANN org goes in support of the community, Board, and its mission.

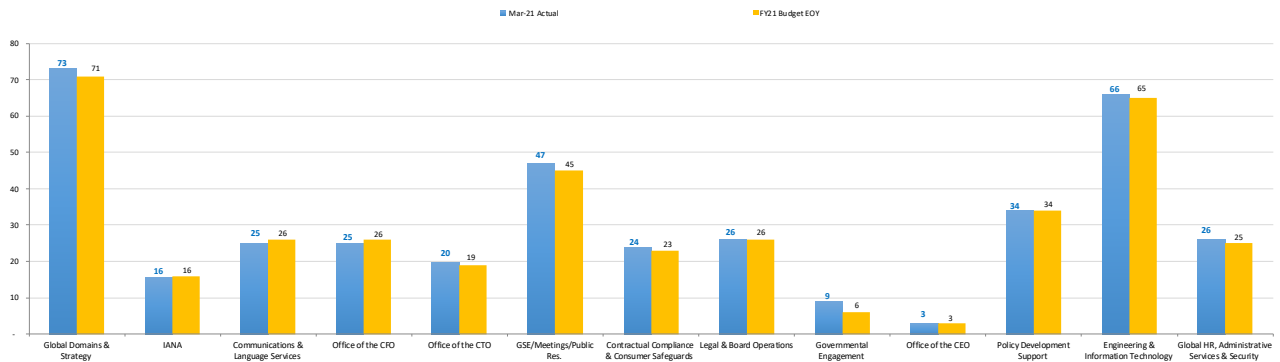
Organization People

Gina Villavicencio, SVP, Global Human Resources

ORGANIZATION PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS

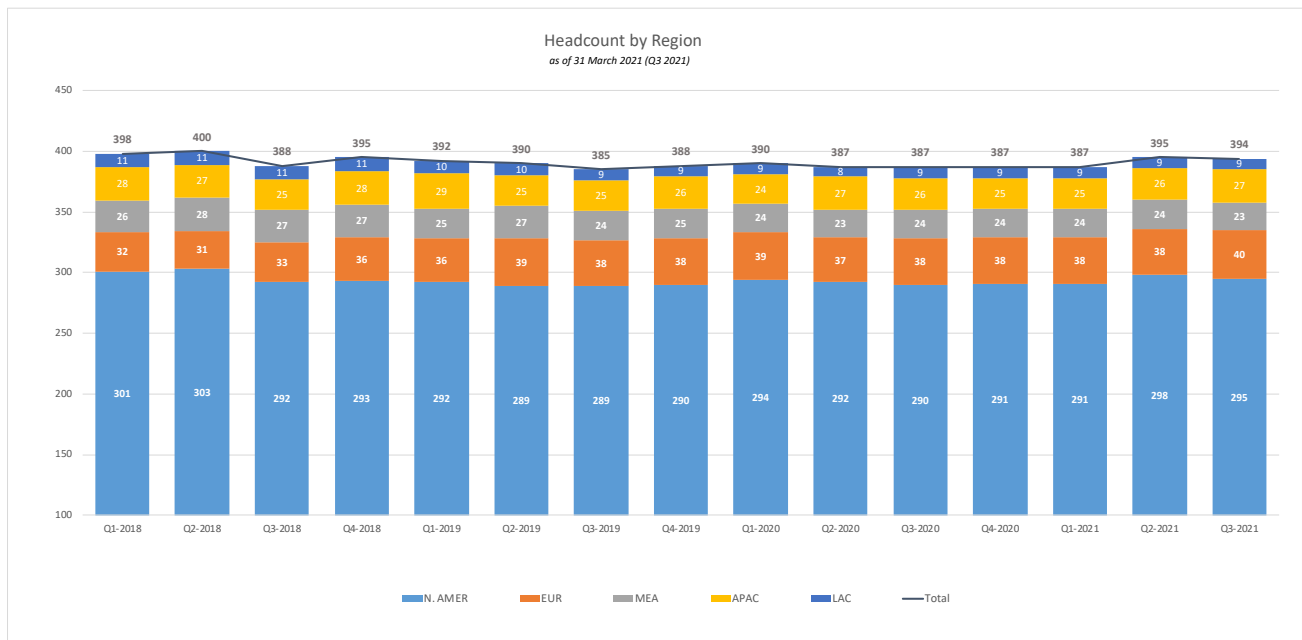
Since the last report, ICANN org metrics as displayed below remain relatively stable.

As of 31 March 2021, ICANN org had a headcount of 394 active staff. There are 4 pending new hires confirmed beyond 31 March.

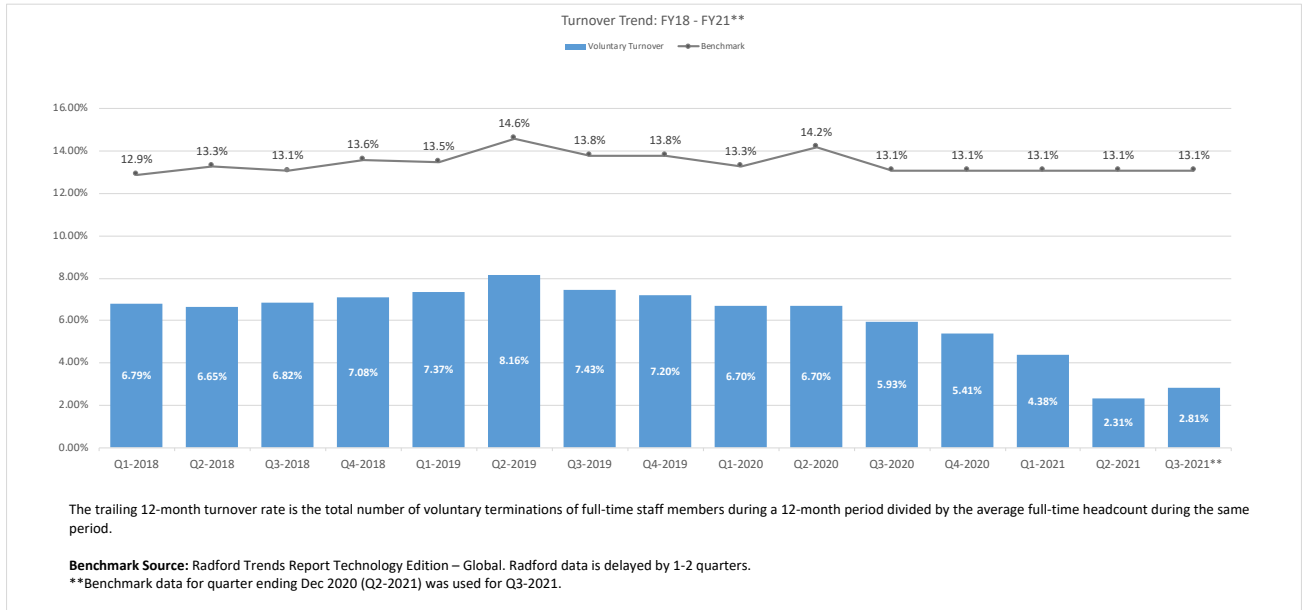


***Any hires or internal transfers after 1 July 2020 were not accounted for in the FY21 adopted budget. In previous fiscal years, new positions were accounted for in the department headcount. As of FY21, all positions are held in an unallocated pool at the corporate level. Due to this new org process, attrition and contingency has been removed from the chart. In some departments, headcount will appear to exceed the FY21 budget, but that is not the case. The FY21 budget allotted for 15 unallocated positions held at the corporate level, for a total headcount of 400.*

ICANN Org by Regions: As of 31 March 2021, the staff distribution by region was 295 (75%) in North America, 40 (10%) in Europe, 23 (6%) in the Middle East and Africa, 27 (7%) in Asia Pacific, and 9 (2%) in Latin American and Caribbean, for a total of 394.

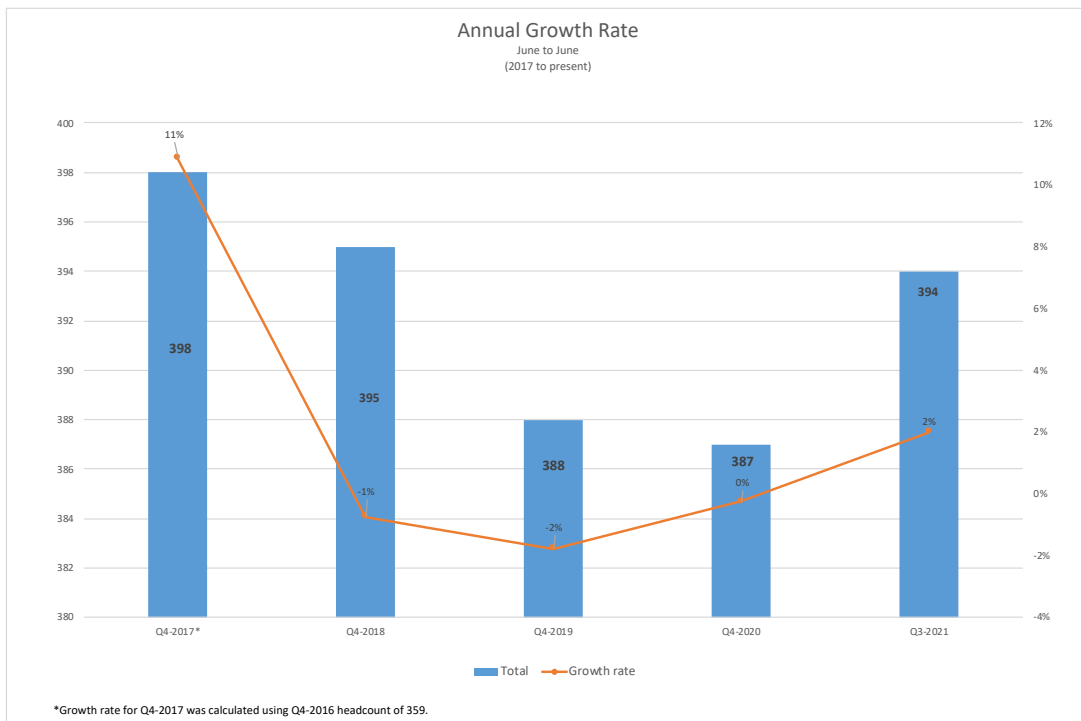


Voluntary Turnover as of 31 March 2021 was 2.81% and has remained relatively flat from the previous quarter end rate of 2.31%. Voluntary turnover has remained substantially lower than the worldwide voluntary turnover benchmark.

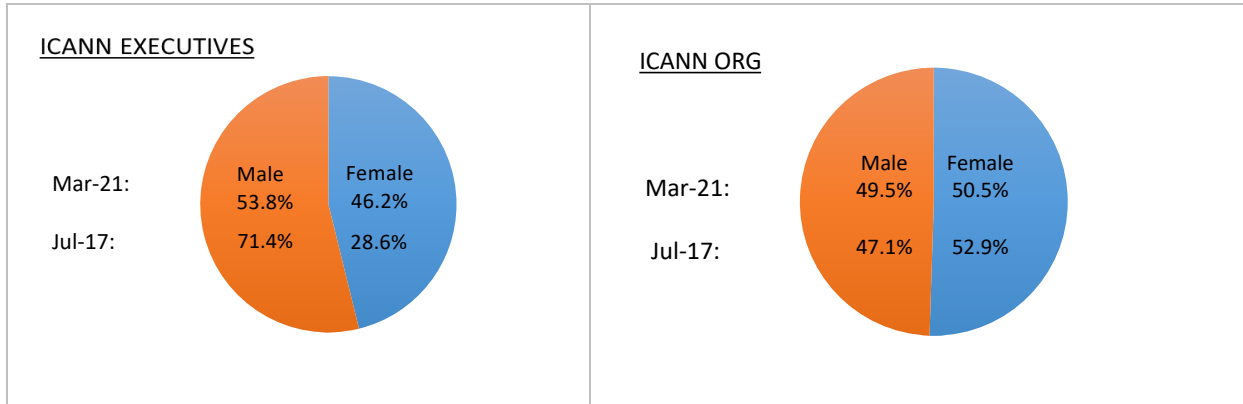


Over the last three months 4 staff members joined ICANN org and another 4 departed, resulting in a growth rate of 0%.

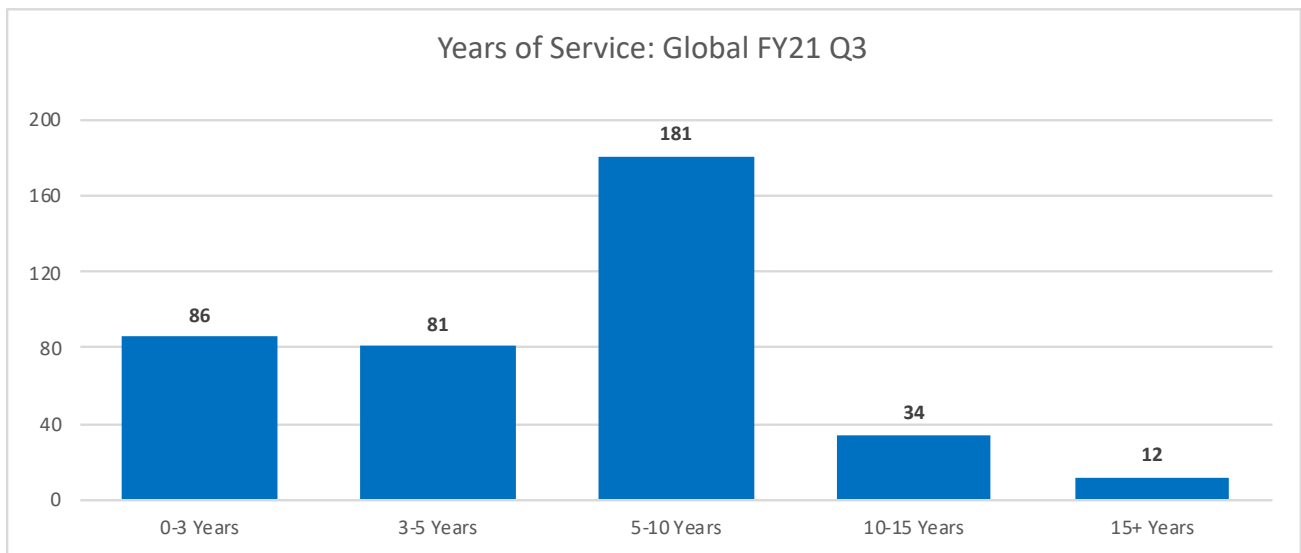
Annual growth rates (from June to June):



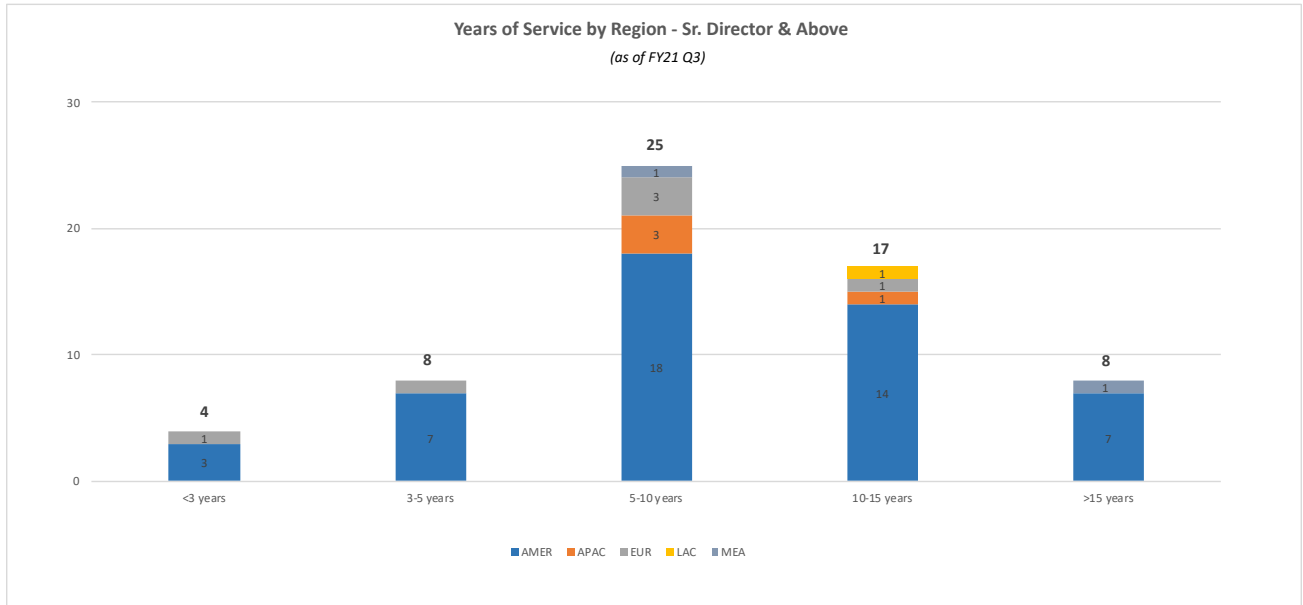
ICANN Org gender diversity continues to be well-balanced with females (50.5%) having a slight majority. The Executive Team has made substantial progress in leadership roles since FY17, improving its gender composition by 50%. ICANN org is committed to building a culture of diversity and inclusion at all levels of leadership.



Age distribution of the organization has also been stable over the last 4 years, averaging around 44 years of age and represents the typical mid-point of most professional careers. The organization’s average **years of service** as of March 2021 is 6 years, reflecting consistent growth and stability in ICANN org positions.



Sr. Director & Above global distribution has remained stable for the last couple of years, with the largest population between 5 to 10 years of service. This reflects ICANN org depth of experience within senior leadership.



Organization Finances

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning & Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

1. Financial Overview

This Financial Overview section provides a summary of financial highlights covering eight months of FY21 unaudited financials ending February 2021. This is the most recent financial information available as of the time of publication of this report.

The FY21 Budget assumed that Travel and Meetings would resume in October 2020 and forward, and that funding would decline compared to FY2020, as result of the pandemic and confinement situation. So far, actual funding has continued to grow at a modest rate, as it has in prior years, and travel restrictions have extended at least until the end of FY21.

Funds Under Management have increased versus the prior year despite market volatility due to the global pandemic. (For more details, see page 14)

USD in millions Unaudited	FY21 YTD Actual	FY21 YTD Budget	Under / (Over) vs. FY21 Budget	FY20 YTD Actual	Under/(Over) vs. FY20 Actuals
	Total ICANN Operations	Total ICANN Operations	ICANN Operations	Total ICANN Operations	ICANN Operations
Funding	\$93.0	\$85.1	\$8.0	\$94.5	(\$1.4)
Expenses					
Personnel	50.4	49.9	-0.5	47.6	-2.8
Travel & Meetings	0.4	4.9	4.4	7.0	6.6
Professional Services	9.9	12.2	2.3	12.8	2.9
Administration	9.4	11.5	2.1	10.7	1.4
Capital	0.5	0.9	0.3	1.7	1.1
Contingency	3.8	3.5	-0.3	2.4	-1.3
Cost Savings Initiatives	0.0	-1.6	-1.6	0.0	0.0
Cash Expenses ⁽¹⁾	\$74.4	\$81.1	\$6.7	\$82.3	\$7.9
Net Operating Excess/(Deficit)	\$18.6	\$4.0	\$14.6	\$12.2	\$6.4
Active Headcount ⁽²⁾	389	396	7	373	(16)

1) Expenses exclude depreciation, investment income, and F/X translation

2) Reflects end of period headcount excluding leave of absences and temps

Net Operating Excess at the end of February is \$18.6M, which is \$14.6M higher than budget and \$6.4M higher than the prior year.

February year to date net excess is \$14.6M higher than budget due to higher than planned funding \$8.0M, and lower than planned expenses \$6.7M. Funding for Jul-Dec has been billed, and funding for January and February is estimated.

- Funding is \$8.0M higher than budget driven by:
 - Higher than planned transactions fees, registry fixed fees, and registrar accreditation \$7.8M due to higher than planned contracted parties (transaction volumes and the number of contracted parties were projected to decline in the

budget but have experienced little to no impact resulting from the pandemic so far)

- Cash expenses are \$6.7M lower than budget driven by Travel and Meetings \$4.4M due to conducting ICANN69 virtually.
 - \$3.7M due to ICANN69 being held virtually. Actual expenses were \$0.5M versus a budget of \$4.2M. ICANN 69 expenses are primarily related to Language Services.
 - \$1.6M due to non ICANN meeting travel restrictions
 - \$1.0M lower than budget due to savings across all departments, most notably \$0.4M from office parking and expense savings
 - The budget includes (\$1.6M) of Cost Savings Initiatives. Year to date savings have been realized due to lower Travel & Meetings, ICANN69 held virtually, and office and parking expense reductions.

February year to date net excess is \$6.4M higher than the prior year due to lower expenses of \$7.9M, partially offset by lower funding of \$1.4M

- Funding is \$1.4M lower than prior year driven by New gTLD transactions due to promotions last fiscal year which did not repeat this year (namely from .icu and .top)
- Expenses are \$7.9M lower from the prior year driven by Travel and Meetings \$6.6M due to travel restrictions from the global pandemic and holding ICANN69 virtually.

2. Funding

Funding Year to Date Eight Months Ending 28 Feb 2021 (Unaudited)					
In Millions, US dollars	FY21 Actual	FY21 Budget	Var	FY20 Actual	Inc/ (Dec)
Transactions					
Registry transaction fees - Legacy	\$34.1	\$31.2	\$2.9	\$33.1	\$1.0
Registry transaction fees - New gTLD	3.0	2.8	0.2	4.9	(1.9)
Registrar transaction fees - Legacy	21.9	19.5	2.4	20.8	1.0
Registrar transaction fees- New gTLD	2.7	2.2	0.5	4.0	(1.3)
Sub-total	\$61.3	\$55.6	\$5.7	\$62.8	(\$1.5)
Registry Fixed Fees	\$19.9	\$19.1	\$0.8	\$20.2	(\$0.3)
Registrar Accreditation					
Application fees	\$0.5	\$0.0	\$0.5	\$0.2	\$0.3
Accreditation fees - annual	6.7	5.7	1.0	6.6	0.1
Per-registrar variable fees	2.3	2.3	(0.0)	2.3	(0.0)
Sub-total	\$9.5	\$8.0	\$1.5	\$9.1	\$0.4
Contributions					
RIR	\$0.0	\$0.0	-	\$0.0	-
ccTLD	2.4	2.2	0.2	2.1	0.2
Meeting Sponsorships	0.0	0.2	(0.1)	0.3	(0.3)
Sub-total	\$2.4	\$2.3	\$0.0	\$2.5	(\$0.1)
ICANN Ops Total	\$93.0	\$85.1	\$8.0	\$94.5	(\$1.4)

Versus Budget

Funding through February includes six months of actuals for July through December and represents two months of estimates for January and February.

Through February, Funding is \$8.0M higher than budget driven by higher than planned transactions fees, registry fixed fees, and registrar accreditation due to higher than planned contracted parties. Transaction volumes and the number of contracted parties were projected to decline in the budget but have experienced little to no impact resulting from the pandemic so far.

Funding for the first eight months of the fiscal year is \$8.0M higher than budget primarily due to higher than planned:

- Transaction fees from Legacy \$5.0M and New gTLD \$0.7M due to less negative impact from the pandemic versus plan
- Accreditation Fees \$1.0M due to less negative impact from the pandemic versus plan

-
- Registry Fixed Fees \$0.8M due to less negative impact from the pandemic versus plan
 - FY21 Actual of 1,186 TLD operators average in Q1 – Q3 versus FY21 Budget of 1,154 (+32)
 - Application Fees \$0.5M driven by a drop catching entity applying for 50 new registrars in September 2020 (the budget assumed no new applications in FY21)

Versus Prior Year

Funding is (\$1.4M) lower than prior year due to:

- Transaction Fees (\$1.4M) driven by a decline in New gTLD transactions due to promotions last fiscal year which did not repeat this year (namely from .icu and .top)
- Registry Fixed Fees (\$0.3M) driven by a decline in registry operated TLDs
 - FY21 Actual of 1,186 TLD operators average in Q1 – Q3 versus FY20 Actual of 1,205 (-19)
- Meeting Sponsorships (\$0.3M) as ICANN hosted a face-to-face AGM meeting last year (all meetings since then have been virtual)
- Partially offset by
 - Application Fees \$0.3M driven by a drop catching entity applying for 50 new registrars in September 2020
 - ccTLD contributions \$0.2M

3. Expenses

USD in millions Unaudited	FY21 YTD Actual	FY21 YTD Budget	FY21 Actual vs. Budget		FY20 YTD Actual	FY21 Actual vs. FY20 Actual	
Personnel	\$50.4	\$49.9	(\$0.5)	-1%	\$47.6	(\$2.8)	-6%
Travel & Meetings	0.4	4.9	4.4	91%	7.0	6.6	94%
Professional Services	9.9	12.2	2.3	19%	12.8	2.9	23%
Administration ⁽¹⁾	9.4	11.5	2.1	18%	10.7	1.4	13%
Capital	0.5	0.9	0.3	39%	1.7	1.1	67%
Contingency ⁽²⁾	3.8	3.5	(0.3)	(9%)	2.4	(1.3)	-55%
Cost Savings Initiatives	0.0	(1.6)	(1.6)	100%	0.0	0.0	0%
Cash Expenses	\$74.4	\$81.1	\$6.7	8%	\$82.3	\$7.9	10%

(1) Excludes depreciation, bad debt, investment (income)/ expense

(2) Contingency actuals have been extracted from their respective cost categories and aggregated on this line. Contingency budget of \$5.2M is spread evenly over twelve months beginning July 2020.

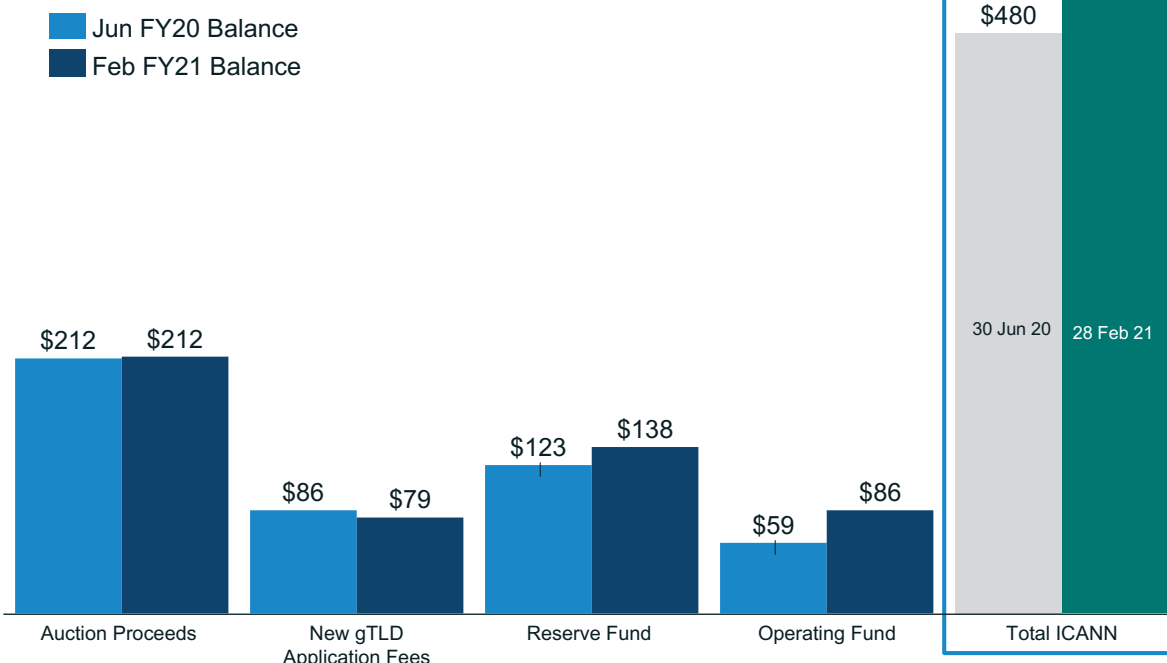
Expenses are \$6.7M lower than budget due to:

- Personnel expense is (\$0.5M) higher than budget driven by one-time costs (*please see Personnel Variance Analysis for more details*).
- Travel and Meetings expenses are lower than budget \$4.4M due to holding ICANN69 virtually and current travel restrictions. Travel restrictions from the global pandemic were included in the FY21 budget for July through September.
- Professional Services are \$2.3M lower than budget primarily due to:
 - \$0.8M across all departments due to ICANN69 being held virtually
 - Global Domains & Strategy \$0.4M due to lower consultant expenses and a delay in the WHO IS project.
 - Language Services \$0.3M due to lower translation costs than planned
- Admin is \$2.1M under budget driven by:
 - Engineering and IT are \$0.4M under budget due to less than planned meetings technical costs as a result of travel restrictions and delays in security testing, both resulting in fiscal year savings
 - Regional Offices are \$0.4M under budget due to receiving parking credits at the LA Headquarters
 - \$0.3M from timing of sponsorships and contributions across multiple departments
- Capital is \$0.3M under budget driven by less than planned internal software development related to ITI, RZM, and NSp projects
- The budget includes (\$1.6M) of Cost Savings Initiatives. Year to date savings have been realized due to lower Travel & Meetings, ICANN69 held virtually, and office and parking expense reductions.

For Contingency details, please see page 12.

4. Financial Overview

\$ in millions



Total ICANN represents sum of month-end balances for all accounts

Funds Under Management as of 28 Feb 2021 increased by \$35.6M as compared to 30 Jun 2020 (end of FY20) driven primarily by net excess in the operating fund and market gains from the Reserve Fund.

- Auction Proceeds increased \$0.3M due to investment gains.
- New gTLD Application Fees decreased \$6.4M due to a transfer for cost reimbursement to ICANN Operations of \$6.0M, expenses paid of \$1.2M, partially offset by investment gains of \$0.7M.
- The Reserve Fund increased \$14.7M due to investment gains.
 - The Reserve Fund balance is now in line with one-year of expenses (\$129M in FY21 Budget).
 - The Reserve Fund Replenishment Strategy is tracking well ahead of the Board approved strategy.
- The Operating Fund increased \$26.9M due to net excess from this fiscal year, receipt of SSR Contribution of \$4.0M, and reimbursement of New gTLD expenses for \$6.0M.

Procurement

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning & Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Procurement supported the organization in various purchasing related activities throughout the reporting period to ensure that goods and services were procured at the right time, place and at the right price. Procurement also supported the org with strategic sourcing (RFP) efforts and supplier negotiations. The function has added an additional headcount with significant procurement experience as a step to fulfilling the objective of increasing the Procurement function's level of maturity over time (Procurement 2.0 initiative).

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Procurement Operations: Purchase orders for December thru March (FY21) totaled \$5,595,066, issued to 135 unique suppliers with an average PO amount just over \$32K. The PO amount for this period was a reduction of 40% compared to the activity during the same period last year (FY20), which was \$9,431,693. This decrease is attributed in large part to a reduction in spending driven by the pandemic, notably, reduced spending for face-to-face meetings and related activities (e.g. catering, hotels, vendor services, etc.).

A summary of procurement operations metrics for the reporting period is provided below:

Purchasing Operations Metrics for Reporting Period: Dec 2020 thru Mar 2021						
Metrics	FY21 YTD Summary (Jul '20 - Mar '21)	Reporting Period (Dec '20 - Mar '21)	March '21	February '21	January '21	December '20
Number of PO's	519	174	61	45	24	44
Total Amount (\$) of POs	\$19,366,896	\$5,595,066	\$1,361,939	\$1,667,947	\$1,206,973	\$1,358,207
Average PO Amount (\$)	\$37,431	\$32,156	\$22,327	\$37,065	\$50,291	\$30,868
Average Cycle time ¹ (days)	18.6	17.8	20.9	16.6	25.5	10.4
Number of unique suppliers that were issued POs	352	135	52	41	21	40

1. Cycle time is defined as the number of days it takes from submission of a purchase request in Oracle to creation of the associated purchase order (PO). Steps included: Approvals per contracting & disbursement policy; contract revisions by Legal-Contracting; and obtaining signatures from both parties.

Strategic Sourcing (RFPs): Procurement continued to support the organization with the various phases of sourcing (RFP) activities throughout the reporting period. The volume of sourcing (RFPs) is lower compared to the same reporting period from last year, although it is starting to pick up again. Given that the cycle-time for RFPs is several months long, with the lower volume in 2020, only 2 RFPs were closed while other RFPs were started during the reporting period.

Notable Purchases/Deals/Cost savings: Procurement supported the ICANN organization in regular purchases/deals and cost savings throughout the reporting period. A specific deal of note: A renegotiated contract was signed with ICANN's credit card processor (Elavon) – the service is used to process credit cards for all contracted parties that choose to pay ICANN with credit cards. This renegotiated contract is valued at approx. \$794K over three years, and is expected to save ICANN an estimated \$250K annually. This renewed commitment was approved via a board resolution in December 2020 with contracting completed in March 2021.

Legal and Complaints Office

John Jeffrey, General Counsel and Secretary

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

- Board Operations focused on the content, coordination and logistical support of the remote Community Forum (ICANN70), to produce a sustainable agenda over several weeks of meetings and facilitate the Board's preparation for the various meetings with Stakeholders. It is to be noted that Board Ops worked closely with the Policy team to further revise and improve upon the format of those engagement sessions with the community.
- The Complaints Office received two new complaints during the reporting period.
- With respect to litigation and arbitration matters, three of the claimants in the .HOTEL IRP sued ICANN, and ICANN has asked the court to dismiss the case. Additionally, ICANN made various written submissions and Court appearances in insolvency proceedings in India regarding an ICANN-accredited registrar. The Court issued an interim order preventing ICANN from terminating the Registrar Accreditation Agreement.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Board Operations:

Board Workplan: As it is the case for a year now, Board Ops contributes to the ongoing remote efforts to fulfill the Board's workplan and support the org and the community with their work throughout this pandemic. The team continues to focus on the optimization of the time spent online by facilitating the development of a strategic agenda in close cooperation with the CEO, Executive Staff and the Board.

Board Workshops: In the lead-up to ICANN70, Board Ops organized and facilitated a remote Board workshop in January as well as another one early March—the seventh since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to organize Weekly Board Info calls to allow the Board and org to deliver on their commitments and responsibilities within deadlines.

Board Meetings: As part of its day-to-day activities, Board Ops supported 4 ICANN Board meetings, 1 PTI Board Meeting, 11 Committee meetings, 8 Caucuses/Task Force meetings, and 1 Working Group meeting. In addition, Board Ops also contributes to the Board Performance efforts with a focus on the training aspects. The annual Board Audit Training was organized remotely over 3 days in order to facilitate across various time zones, and its content was fully revised and expanded to reflect the modified allocation of time. Eleven Board members also attended a total of 31 virtual trainings over the past 12 months.

Other activities: Board Ops also participates in several internal projects such as the development of Information Transparency Platform that will impact the Board online pages, as well as support to the Root Server System Governance Working Group (RSS-GWG). In addition, the team ensures that the entire organization is kept abreast of Board deadlines and processes and therefore organized an important org-wide training in early 2021 to ensure that ICANN org staff could be briefed on key Board processes.

Complaints Office:

The office received two new complaints during the reporting period. Of the 56 complaints submitted to date, approximately 60% of closed complaints have led to ICANN org improvements, while 31% have resulted in opportunities to educate complainants about the

multistakeholder model, ICANN org's remit, or opportunities to provide input into the multistakeholder model.

Dispute-Related Matters and Internal Services:

In addition to the key litigation and arbitration activities highlighted above, the team also handled the following:

- Accountability Mechanisms. The BAMC summarily dismissed Reconsideration Request 21-1. There are three pending IRPs: (i) Afilias IRP (.WEB) – final hearing took place in August 2020, currently waiting for the Final Declaration (expected no later than June 2021); (ii) .HOTEL IRP – Panel Chair selection is in process; and (iii) Namecheap IRP (.ORG, .INFO, .BIZ) – Panel granted ICANN's motion to dismiss claims re .ORG change of control, extensive disputes and motion practice regarding discovery took place, review of documents in process. Cooperative Engagement Process (CEP) with GCCIX regarding .GCC closed; claimant given until 1 June 2021 to initiate an IRP.
- Subpoenas and Legal Inquiries: Since January 2021, ICANN has responded to six subpoenas regarding information mostly concerning reserved or Special Use IP addresses that have not been assigned to any particular entity or individual for use; and has responded to an additional subpoena requesting document production.
- Internal Services and Legal Support to Board: Advised Finance team on various matters, including review and revision of ICANN and PTI 990 forms and finalization of planning documents; facilitated organizational compliance tracking; worked with Contractual Compliance team on issues regarding registrar termination; supported the ASO on due diligence of Board candidates; advised HR on various matters; advised 401(k) plan committee on various matters; and provided lead staff support to three Board committees and legal support to all other Board committees and the Board.

Legal Contracting:

Advised ICANN org on a wide variety of ongoing contracting-related issues, with approximately 250 new requests for contract advice during the period. The team handled contract negotiation, drafting and/or advice for all ICANN org Functions, which included such work on the following representative projects:

- For Global Domains & Strategy: (1) the change of control of Donuts, Inc. to Ethos Capital, (2) ongoing work related to Registry Agreement/Registrar Accreditation Agreement amendments to add a contractual obligation for implementation of Registration Data Access Protocol, (3) ongoing work on the addition of data processing terms to the agreements with certain Contracted Parties, (4) numerous amendments, assignments and terminations of Contracted Party agreements, (5) agreements for the development of an RDAP tool and (6) agreements related to universal acceptance readiness.
- For Other ICANN org Functions: agreements and amendments with vendors related to (1) DNS security initiatives, (2) ongoing work for the Information Transparency Initiative, (3) various software licenses, (4) the ICANN70 public meeting, (5) continued issues with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and (6) various sponsorship and trademark licensing engagements with organizations that are linked to ICANN's Mission and Strategic Plan for 2020-2025.

Legal Support for GDD and Policy Teams:

The Governance Function continues to provide legal and other strategic support on projects across the Organization including:

- **Consensus Policy Implementation Activities:** Supported implementation activities for Phase 1 recommendations of the Expedited Policy Development Process on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data (EPDP), as well as the Operational Design Phase for the Phase 2 recommendations of the EPDP regarding the System for Standardized Access and Disclosure.
- **Data Privacy/Protection Matters:** Supported ICANN org projects related to the GDPR and other global privacy legislation, including submitting feedback to the public consultation on the proposal to revise the existing European Union Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS Directive).

Legal Support for Global Stakeholder Engagement, Strategic Initiatives and Implementation of IANA Stewardship Transition:

Provided legal advice supporting key areas of work across many aspects of ICANN org's work including:

- **Specific and Organizational Reviews:** Continued to support ICANN org efforts on consideration of the SSR2 Final Report; implementation of the CCT Recommendations; evaluation of proposals arising out of the Nominating Committee Review Implementation Working Group; and support to other ongoing planning and implementation efforts.
- **Community Initiatives:** Engaged with the Root Server System Governance Working Group to begin providing legal inputs to proposals; engaged with the ccNSO's policy development effort on establishing review processes; provided internal legal support on the implementation of Work Stream 2 recommendations on Enhancing ICANN Accountability, and preparing for Board consideration of the recommendations of the Cross Community Working Group on Auction Proceeds.
- **Internal Org Efforts:** Provided legal advice to support ICANN org's continued response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, including preparations to bring ICANN org back into offices; provided strategic and legal advice to the team coordinating a successful ICANN70; advising on the development of the Operational Design Phase; supporting the Government Engagement team in publishing updates and information to the ICANN community.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

We provide support and briefing documents in ongoing litigation, in support of Independent Review Process filings concerning new gTLD Program applications. The litigation issues are mitigated by maintaining a litigation readiness plan for relevant legal filings as well as utilization of the Risk Fund for costs. We provide an attorney-client privileged version of a litigation report to the Board under separate cover. Ongoing litigation activities are published on the litigation page on the ICANN website: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/litigation-en>.

Global Domains and Strategy

Theresa Swinehart, SVP, Global Domains & Strategy

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Please see the Reviews section (Support and Implementation) for comprehensive reporting on reviews and Work Stream 2.

Data Protection and Privacy

- Convened and participated (David Conrad, Chief Technology Officer, and Elena Plexida, VP for Government and IGO Engagement) in European regional Stakeholder Assembly on 27 January 2021 presenting ICANN reflections on current European Union (EU) initiatives, including:
 - Digital Services Act (DSA)
 - Digital Market Act (DMA)
 - Network and Information Security (NIS2) Directive
 - EU Cybersecurity Strategy
- Convened an interactive webinar on 26 February 2021 with the European Commission (EC) on its recent initiatives. During the webinar the EC provided an overview of the recently announced initiatives, focusing on the areas of relevance to the Domain Name System (DNS) and the broader ICANN community, and answered community questions on the initiatives and their possible impacts.
- Briefed ICANN Board on preparations for ICANN org's first Operational Design Phase (ODP) for the EPDP Phase 2 team's recommendations related to a System for Standardized Access/Disclosure to Nonpublic Registration Data (SSAD), including preparation for Board consideration of a resolution on the SSAD ODP on 25 March 2021.
- Supported preparatory work, together with a cross-functional team, on development of the SSAD ODP Scoping Document. Over the next six months, GDS will support conduction of the ODP by addressing the questions (required resources; vendors; legal risks, etc.) included in the scoping document.
- Briefed ICANN Board on the potential impact of the new proposed legislation in the EU, the NIS2 Directive and the Digital Services Act.
- The ICANN GDS team, together with ICANN legal, continued as org liaisons to EPDP [Phase 2A team, which](#) launched its work on 17 December 2020. The EPDP Phase 2A is aimed at resolving two outstanding topics:
 - 1) Whether registrant data policy ought to distinguish between the data of legal persons versus natural persons.
 - 2) The feasibility of unique contacts to have a uniform anonymized email address across registrations.
 - The group is expected to deliver its initial report by the end of May 2021.
- The EPDP Phase 2 team's Priority 2 policy recommendations [Public Comment](#) period ended on 22 January 2021. This proceeding sought to obtain community input on a set of four final recommendations related to topics carried over from the EPDP's Phase 1 discussions.
- The EPDP Phase 2's 18 policy recommendations as they related to the SSAD also underwent a [Public Comment period](#), which ended 30 March 2021.
- Continued to provide strategic cross-functional coordination on all issues related to ICANN org's effort to bring Registration Data Directory Service (RDDS) into compliance with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- [Commented](#) on the European Data Protection Board's (EDPB) proposed measures that supplement transfer tools to ensure compliance with the EU's level of protection of personal

data, the European Commission's updated standard contractual clauses for transferring personal data to non-EU countries, as well as the EDPB's consultation on the guidelines for the concepts of controller and processor.

- Continued to engage with European authorities to gain greater clarity about how the GDPR law applies. This includes ongoing discussions with European data protection authorities, as well as the European Commission, to ensure efficient and predictable access to non-public registration data can be provided to those with a legitimate interest while the WHOIS services continue to comply with the GDPR.
- Submitted a [public comment on behalf of ICANN org on the](#) Proposal for a Directive on Measures for a High Common Level of Cybersecurity Across the Union, repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148 (NIS 2 Directive).
- Submitted feedback on the proposed Digital Services Act ([DSA](#)) regulation. The comment [submitted](#) highlights that the proposed DSA, in its current form, is not sufficiently specific with regard to the scope of applicability to DNS services.
- Published eight new pieces of correspondence related to data protection and privacy, which can be viewed [here](#) and five related announcements and/or blogs which can be viewed [here](#).

Registrant Program

- Held a series of webinars, together with GSE and OCTO, for the Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns (NPOC) constituency and others from NCSG on topics ranging from Domain Name System Basics; Registrant Rights and Responsibilities; Domain Name management best practices and DNSSEC, among others. More information on the [webinar series](#), including archived recordings, can be accessed [here](#).

Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance (UA)

IDN Program

- Published a second Public Comment for the [Proposal for Korean Root Zone Label Generation Rules](#).
- Published [Public Comment](#) for second-level reference Label Generation Rules (LGRs) for the Arabic, Hebrew, and Sinhala script-based LGRs, and the Hebrew language-based LGR.
- Published additional [second-level reference Label Generation Rules \(LGRs\)](#) including: Bangla, Devanagari, Ethiopic, Georgian, Gujarati, Gurmukhi, Kannada, Khmer, Lao, Malayalam, Oriya, Tamil, and Telugu script-based LGRs, and the Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, and Thai language-based LGRs.
- Hosted an ICANN70 Prep Week [session](#) providing an update on the Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) work at ICANN, that also featured updates from the community on the development of Root Zone LGRs (RZ-LGRs), and insights into the Greek, Korean, Latin, and Myanmar Generation Panels.
- ICANN, in partnership with the Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association (APTLD), [announced](#) a collaborative Universal Acceptance (UA) training program for members of the Asia Pacific (APAC) community. The APAC Regional Universal Acceptance Training Program is conducting a [series of trainings](#) on the technical aspects of UA which will also serve as a forum to discuss how to effectively address UA issues in the region.
- ICANN's Engineering & IT department developed "An Introduction to UA for ICANN Technology Partners" [deck](#) that outlines how ICANN org is becoming UA-ready and its plan to include UA provisions/requirements in its procurement process with outside vendors.
- Finalized the "Introduction to Universal Acceptance (UA)" ICANN Learn course, which is expected to be published in mid-April 2021.

-
- Conducted UA training globally, including sessions with the ASEAN Workshop to Promote IDNs and IDN ccTLDs, Joint ICANN-APTLD UA training on Email Address Internationalization (EAI) and CSNOG training on EAU.

UA Program

- The UA Program hosted the ICANN70 Prep Week [session](#) "UA Update on UA Readiness" which introduced the concept of UA, outlined the UASG's objectives, and provided an update on progress to achieve UA readiness. The session featured 100-plus participants, and speakers included UA Ambassadors and UA Local Initiative leaders. The program also hosted the ICANN70 [session](#) "Remediating UA Issues" that featured updates from the UASG Measurement, Technology, and Email Address Internationalization (EAI) working groups regarding current UA gaps in technology. The session featured 100-plus participants.
- UASG leadership elections for the 2021-2023 term were also conducted. The UASG reelected Dr. Ajay Data, founder and CEO of XgenPlus, as UASG Chair for his second term. Additionally, three new Vice-Chairs were elected, including Abdalmonem Galila, deputy manager of Egypt's IDN country-code top-level domain (ccTLD), Dessalegn Mequanint Yehuala, lecturer and researcher at Addis Ababa University, and Dr. U.B. Pavanaja.
- Published weekly social media content to promote UASG resources, blogs and industry news. Continued the #PeopleofUASG [social media campaign](#) by highlighting UA Local Initiative leaders.
- Published educational material including:
 - Documentation
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): UA Readiness of Programming Languages and Email Tools ([UASG031](#)) (for UA remediation work)
 - Blogs/Announcements
 - [UASG Finds Promising Results for Internationalized Email Support Among Global Systems](#)
 - [Looking Back and Planning Ahead for Supporting a Diverse and Global Internet Universal Acceptance \(UA\) Readiness](#)
 - [UASG Announces New Working Group Leadership for 2021](#)

Contractual Activity

- In December 2020 the ICANN organization approved a change of control request from Afilias, Inc., related to its proposed merger with Donuts, Inc. The approval followed completion of ICANN org's due diligence, and a briefing to the ICANN Board.
- In March 2021 the ICANN organization approved a change of control request from Donuts in connection with their 22 January 2021 announcement that Ethos Capital was acquiring a controlling interest in Donuts. The approval followed the completion of ICANN org's due diligence and briefing to the ICANN Board.

Contracted Parties

- Launched new Registry Agreements and Registrars Listing pages on ICANN.org through the Information Transparency Initiative (ITI). The new pages provide the community with improved features and functionality.
- ICANN org extended the date that [Registry Reports](#) will permanently move to [ICANN Open Data](#) to 30 July 2021. This means Registry Reports will still be available on <https://icann.org> on the [Registry Reports landing page](#) beyond the previously announced 15 March deadline. The extension gives the community more time to adjust to the upcoming changes

announced on [7 January 2021](#). On 30 July 2021, ICANN Open Data will become the permanent home of Registry Reports.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

ICANN70 Virtual Meeting

- The GDS team held a total of four Prep Week sessions leading up to the ICANN70 Virtual Community Forum. The sessions included updates on the Nominating Committee review, ICANN Reviews and implementation, Universal Acceptance (UA) readiness, and the IDN Program.
- At ICANN70, the GDS team supported one session related to Universal Acceptance held by the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG). The session focused on remediating UA issues and provided updates from the UASG Measurement, Technology, and Email Address Internationalization (EAI) working groups regarding current gaps in technology.

New gTLD Program - Subsequent Procedures

- Facilitated and supported Board review and discussion of policy recommendations outlined in the Final Report.
- Continued cadence of Board Caucus meetings on the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process.
- Facilitated discussions with SubPro caucus and Board Technical Committee regarding Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) interactions with SubPro.
- Continued to progress organizational planning of project work tracks prior to the expected launch of an Operational Design Phase.

Development of the Operational Design Phase (ODP)

- ICANN org held a [webinar](#) on the [second version](#) of the Operational Design Phase concept paper on 13 January 2021.
- Following community from the [webinar](#) as well as a [written community input](#), ICANN org further refined the ODP process paper and shared a [final version](#) with the Board.
- The Board reviewed the paper and Maarten Botterman and Göran Marby published a [blog](#) on 11 March announcing the publication of the [final ODP paper](#).

Domain Name System Security Threat Mitigation

- Issued Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) project [blog](#) introducing the provision of personalized monthly reports for country code top-level domains (ccTLDs).
- Delivered a DNS Security Threat report to the gTLD Registry Stakeholders Group and Registrars Stakeholder Groups based on their request for data regarding DNS Security Threats in gTLDs. The report provided summary level data from DAAR, DNSTICR and Contractual Compliance. The report was also provided to the GAC.

Operations, Service Delivery & Support

Responsible for GDS Operations, contracted party service delivery, vendor management, and worldwide support for community members and registrants. Activities included:

Global Support

- The Global Support team answered 2,210 phone calls and closed 8,537 cases. ICANN's contracted parties represented 11 percent of the case volume while the remaining 89 percent were from registrants and the community. The team sent 28 [notifications](#) to contacted parties during this period. The overall customer satisfaction score was 3.8 on a 5-

point scale for the question “How satisfied are you with the service you received from ICANN?”

Contracted Party Service Delivery

- A total of 729 service requests were completed during the period. Fifteen (15) Registrar Accreditation Agreements (RAAs) were renewed, 7 RAAs were terminated (6 voluntarily and 1 involuntarily) and 1 new registrar was accredited. Nine (9) Registry Agreement (RA) assignments were completed for 274 gTLDs, 17 Material Subcontracting Arrangement requests were completed for 22 gTLDs, and 4 gTLD RAs were terminated (all voluntarily).

Board Advice

- The ICANN Board received 5 advisories related to ALAC, RSSAC, RZERC, and SSAC advice, which equates to 18 pieces of individual advice (advisories often contain more than one piece of advice). Seventeen (17) require action from the ICANN Board, and 1 is a statement and/or informational advisory that does not contain a specific recommendation for the ICANN Board. In addition, the ALAC issued 3 public statements. GAC advice is not included in these metrics.

Correspondence

- ICANN org handled 90 cases related to the work of processing Correspondence. Of those, 6 were letters resulting in substantive responses and were published on the ICANN Correspondence page. ICANN also published 14 letters directed to the ICANN community to inform the community or request information on various topics.

New gTLD Program

- As of 31 March 2021, 35 applications remain in the 2012 round with two applications actively working toward contracting. During this period, no applicants withdrew from the Program and agreements for four TLDs were subsequently terminated and removed from the root zone.

Public Comment Activity

- Proposal for Korean Root Zone Label Generation Rules - Second Public Comment (opened 2 Mar., closed 15 Apr.)
- Second Security, Stability, and Resiliency (SSR2) Review Team Final Report (opened 28 Jan., closed 8 Apr.)
- Additional Reference Label Generation Rulesets (LGRs) for the Second Level (opened 28 Jan., closed 11 Mar.)

Reviews (Support/Accountability)

Theresa Swinehart, SVP, Global Domains & Strategy

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Specific Reviews

Second Security, Stability, and Resiliency Review (SSR2)

- On 25 January 2021, the SSR2 Review Team submitted its [final report](#) containing 63 recommendations to the ICANN Board.
- The final report was posted for [Public Comment](#) (28 January - 8 April) to inform Board action on the recommendations.
- The Board discussed the topic of SSR2 recommendations at the 18 March Board Workshop. Given 63 recommendations, many of them complex, it is prudent to address these recommendations in a way that ensures there is sufficient time for a fulsome analysis and consideration of public input, while also respecting the Bylaws mandated deadline of 25 July (6-months after the SSR2 review team delivered its [final report](#) to the Board). The SSR2 review and recommendations are unique and demand a different approach as compared to other specific reviews.
- One avenue discussed by the Board is to categorize the 63 recommendations, factoring resourcing needed to provide the Board with the necessary information to inform their action. The categorization would consider complexity and other factors to arrive at two groupings:
 - “Low hanging fruit” recommendations that are implementable (subject to prioritization): the Board could accept these by the 25 July deadline.
 - Recommendations that require substantial additional analysis, community consultation and clarification to inform Board action. The work required to inform the Board whether the recommendations should be accepted or rejected will be mapped out against a reasonable timeline, factoring resourcing. The Board would consider these recommendations for action after 25 July, based on completion of specific activities, in consideration of a reasonable timeline.

Organizational Reviews

At-Large2 Review (ALAC)

- In December 2020, the ALAC Review Implementation Working Group (RIWG) provided a [status report to the Organizational Effectiveness Committee \(OEC\)](#) on two remaining issues "Member Engagement and Criteria" and "Absence of consistent performance metrics."

Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO2) Review

- ccNSO Review Working Party (RWP) [provided the Organizational Effectiveness Committee \(OEC\) with clarifications to their Feasibility Assessment](#) on 26 February 2021, in response to the [OEC letter](#) on 9 December 2020.
- These clarifications will help the OEC inform their evaluation of the Feasibility Assessment and advise the ICANN Board on the recommendations and next steps, including the basis on which the Final Report and Assessment and Implementation Plan can be accepted.

Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Review

- No activity to report.

Nominating Committee (NomCom) Review

- The NomCom Review Implementation Working Party (NomComRIWG) submitted their second implementation progress report to the OEC in December 2020, reporting that implementation had now started on all recommendations. The progress report highlighted two areas of focus: 1) proposed changes to the ICANN Bylaws, and 2) a proposed charter for the NomCom Standing Committee.
- The NomComRIWG hosted a [one-hour webinar](#) on Wednesday, 10 March 2021, to provide a progress update on the first year of implementation for the NomCom review.
- Potential concerns with the implementation work were observed, which ICANN org enumerated to the OEC during their March meeting, with the OEC deciding to initiate a dialogue with the NomCom Review Implementation Working Group (RIWG) to discuss progress and recent concerns related to materials changes in implementation steps to clarify that these are significant/fundamental changes

Second Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC2) Review

- The RSSAC2 Review Implementation Work Party submitted their second implementation progress report to the OEC, reporting that out of the six recommendations, two have been implemented, two are in progress, and two have not yet started, as they are dependent on the progress of [Root Server System Governance Working Group](#).

Second Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC2) Review

- The ICANN Board [accepted](#) the [Final Implementation Report](#) of the second SSAC Review issued by the SSAC RWP approved by the SSAC, which marks the completion of this organizational review. The ICANN Board also invited the SSAC RWP to provide OEC with progress updates on the three remaining recommendations that each have one incomplete component by 30 June 2021.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

- Supported the work of one Specific Review – SSR2; one Organizational Review in preparation for Board consideration – ccNSO; and three Organizational Reviews during their implementation work (NomCom, RSSAC and SSAC).
- Supported ongoing work to improve ICANN’s Bylaws-mandated reviews. This includes the work by the ICANN Board, ICANN organization, and community on streamlining of reviews, in close alignment with the findings and recommendations from the ATRT3.
- Continues to support the transition of ATRT3 recommendations from the Review Support and Accountability Team to the Implementation Operations Team.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

The SSR2 review and recommendations are unique and demand a different approach as compared to other specific reviews. SSR2 recommendations are complex; the Board needs sufficient time to understand their meaning and potential effects; additional information and input from the community will be needed along with other substantial work. The Board considered the factors that make the SSR2 review unique during its 18 March discussion and determined that it will be important to communicate with the community starting immediately, to inform them of the overarching issues impacting the Board action.

Board approval of review-related ATRT3 recommendation and its resulting implementation will result in significant reforms and changes to ICANN Reviews and ultimately changes to the

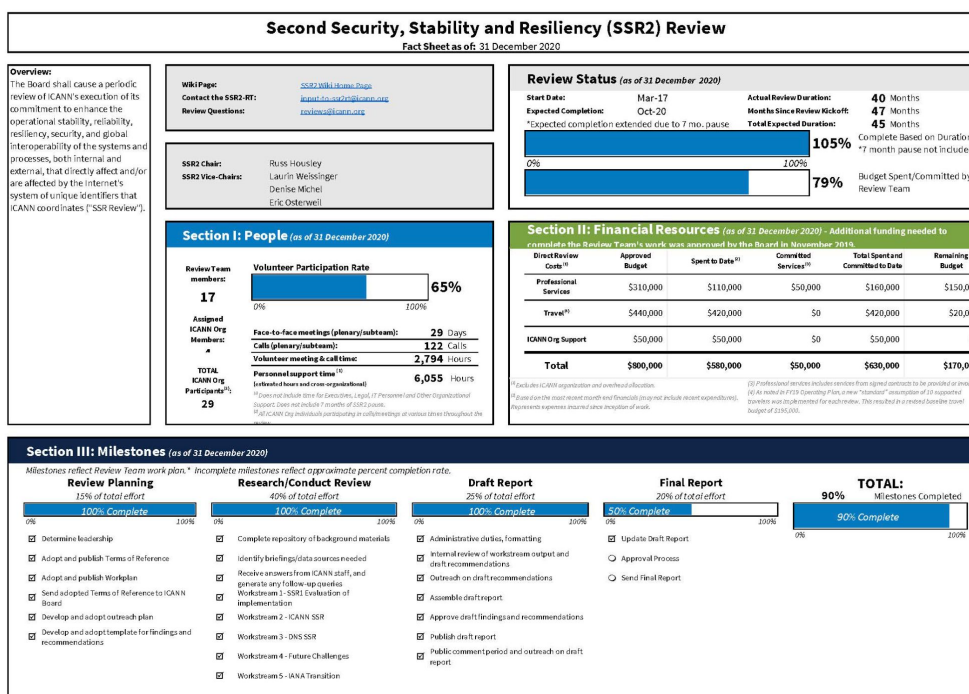
ICANN Bylaws. In order to accomplish this, community support for these Bylaws changes will be necessary. Given the complexity of its recommendations, ATRT3 implementation shepherds have recognized that an iterative process may be needed to achieve the intended outcome and the Board's action is supportive of this approach. This approach applied to the Holistic Review Pilot and the Continuous Improvement Program Pilot will facilitate engaging with the community to make near-term progress and test possible solutions in partnership with the community.

FACT SHEETS

Second Security, Stability and Resiliency Review (SSR2) - [Fact Sheet](#) (most recent quarterly version published December 2020)

Key Data Points:

- Completion, based on duration: 105%
- Budget spent and committed: 79%
- Participation rate: 65%
- Milestones completed: 90%



Accountability and Transparency Review (ATRT3) - [Final Fact Sheet](#) (June 2020)

Registration Directory Service Review (RDS) - [Final Fact Sheet](#) (August 2019)

Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice Review (CCT) - [Final Fact Sheet](#) (October 2018)

Reviews (Implementation)

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning & Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

- On 10 March 2021, the Implementation Operations and the Review Support and Accountability teams, jointly, participated in the ICANN70 Prep Week by hosting a webinar and presenting on the progress of ICANN Reviews, status of implementation work pertaining to the Board-approved recommendations resulting from Specific Reviews (CCT, RDS-WHOIS2, and ATRT3), the CCWG-WS2, and the community following its work on the Evolution of the ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, as well as the work being done towards establishing periodic reporting to keep the community informed of the progress of work with respect to the implementation of these recommendations. More information about this presentation and the recording of this webinar can be found on the ICANN70 meeting [webpage](#).
- Following the [ICANN Board resolution](#), some of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability, Work Stream 2 (WS2) recommendations directed at ICANN org and Board were placed into the implementation planning phase, while others have already been implemented and/or are currently in the implementation process. ICANN org has convened an internal WS2 Cross-Functional Project Team, composed of 15 subject matter experts, to complete the implementation planning necessary for those recommendations not already implemented. This effort includes determining suitable implementation paths, while considering appropriate resource planning and prioritization cycles. On 4 March 2021, ICANN org issued a [blog post](#) to provide an update on implementation progress and implementation planning efforts related to the recommendations outlined in the [Final Report](#) of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability, Work Stream 2 (WS2). This will be followed by a dedicated webinar during Q2 of 2021.
- As the Board noted in its [14 October 2020 paper on Enhancing the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model](#), incorporating an ongoing evaluation methodology is an important element of successful implementation of the Evolution of the ICANN Multistakeholder Model project. The Implementation Operations team is developing a proposed evaluation methodology, the purpose of which is to help the ICANN organization, the Board, and the community monitor their progress of work and assess the effectiveness of implementation towards evolving the multistakeholder model.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Implementation of Recommendations:

ICANN organization is currently processing the Board-approved recommendations from the CCT review team, the RDS-WHOIS2 review team, the CCWG-WS2, the community following its work on the Evolution of the ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, and the ATRT3 review team through various steps including the development of an implementation plan, prioritization, scheduling of the implementation into the strategic and operating plans of the organization, and actual implementation.

In parallel, to better keep the ICANN community apprised of the implementation work underway, the Implementation Operations team is developing a reporting platform and mechanisms to capture progress of work, milestones to be achieved, target completion date of milestones, as well as other relevant information, which will be published periodically.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

While implementing recommendations is not a new activity for ICANN organization, the implementation of 'non-policy' recommendations; i.e. recommendations resulting from specific reviews and the work of cross-community working groups, up to now, were carried based on facilitated individual efforts of the various functions having expertise in the subject of the recommendations. Additionally, these recommendations are numerous, often quite complex, and require significant time and resources to implement effectively. All this necessitated the need for a more formal and structured implementation structure and approach for the implementation of 'non-policy' recommendations.

The Implementation Operations function has established a foundation for successful implementation based on project management best practices, which are laid out in the Project Management framework (developed and rolled out across the organization as one of ICANN President and CEO's goals), and collaboration with cross-functional teams across ICANN organization, the ICANN Board, and the community. In furtherance of ICANN organization's commitment to transparency and accountability, the Implementation Operations function is also developing a platform for reporting on progress made towards implementation of Board-approved recommendations resulting from specific reviews and the work of cross-community working groups with the aim of publishing periodic progress reports incorporating details of work done, milestones achieved, and measures of success.

Contractual Compliance and Consumer Safeguards

Jamie Hedlund, SVP, Contractual Compliance & Consumer Safeguards and Managing Director
– Washington D.C. office

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Audit Program

On 11 January, ICANN Compliance launched an audit to review registrars' compliance with DNS security threat obligations. OCTO and Compliance developed the methodology and gathered the necessary data to conduct the audit. The 127 registrars selected for audit had at least five domain names associated with phishing, malware and botnets as reported on Reputational Block Lists in November 2020. The security threats were further validated using VirusTotal. The approach and audit questionnaire (RFI) were discussed with the Registrar Stakeholder Group (RrSG) prior to the launch of the audit. The RrSG had no objection to the finalized RFI and supported the launch of the audit.

By the end of February, over 1,400 documents had been received from all but ten of the selected registrars. During March, all responses received were being reviewed by ICANN and KPMG (audit vendor). Initial audit reports (with initial findings of non-compliance, if any) will be prepared and sent to auditees in April.

Separately, Compliance received responses to a Request for Proposals (RFPs) to provide audit vendor services. The final selection will be made after the next audit is completed.

Contractual Compliance Enforcement - All notices can be found [here](#).

Notices of Breach, Suspension, Termination and Non-Renewal

On 10 December, ICANN sent a [Notice of Breach](#) to the registrar Net 4 India Limited (India) ("Net 4 India"). The breach was the result of the failure of the registrar to (1) provide an interactive webpage and a port 43 WHOIS service; (2) make registration data and records available upon request by ICANN - specifically records related to requests involving 185 domain names; (3) escrow gTLD registration data; and (4) pay past accreditation due fees. ICANN org published a [blog](#) regarding support available for Net 4 registrants. The deadline to cure was 31 December 2020.

On 24 December, ICANN sent another [Notice of Breach](#) to the registrar Net 4 India. The breach was the result of the failure of the registrar to make registration data and records available upon request by ICANN - specifically records related to requests involving 4 domain names. The deadline to cure was 14 January 2021.

On 29 January 2021, ICANN sent a third [Notice of Breach](#) to the registrar Net 4 India. The breach was the result of the failure of the registrar to make registration data and records available upon request by ICANN; specifically records related to twenty-eight domain names. The deadline to cure was 19 February 2021.

Following the issuance of this Notice of Breach, ICANN issued an [announcement](#) to inform the community about the breach and how the ongoing proceedings in the Indian insolvency court against this registrar have impacted compliance actions against Net 4 India. Specifically, Net 4 India [asked](#) the insolvency court to prevent ICANN from terminating the Registrar Accreditation Agreement for Net 4 India's failure to cure the India numerous breaches. While maintaining its

challenges to jurisdiction, ICANN explained to the court why Net 4 India's request should not be granted. ICANN provided the court with extensive information regarding Net 4 India's breaches, and the harm Net 4 India's actions are causing to registrants. In January, ICANN Legal and ICANN Contractual Compliance worked closely to prepare this information for the court. The court issued an [order](#) that acknowledged ICANN's input and noted that the court was concerned with ensuring that the breaches were remedied. The court also ordered the registrar to provide services in a timely fashion to registrants and requested (but did not order) that ICANN not terminate the RAA for three months while the insolvency proceedings continue, so long as Net 4 India complies with the RAA.

On 26 February 2021, ICANN sent a [Notice of Termination](#) to Net 4 India with an effective termination date of 13 March 2021. The termination of the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) was due to Net 4 India's repeated and consistent breaches of the RAA and failure to cure such breaches despite multiple notices from ICANN and opportunity to cure. In particular, Net 4 India: (1) failed to cure the breaches set forth in ICANN's 10 December 2020 Notice of Breach by the 31 December 2020 deadline; (2) failed to cure the breaches set forth in ICANN's 24 December 2020 Notice of Breach by the 14 January 2021 deadline; and (3) failed to cure the breaches set forth in ICANN's 29 January 2021 Notice of Breach by the 19 February 2021 deadline. That Net 4 India had received three breach notices within a 12-month period constituted additional grounds for termination. An [announcement](#) was posted regarding this termination.

ICANN org continues to urge the National Company Law Tribunal – New Delhi Bench (NCLT) handling Net 4 India's insolvency, matter number IA No. 1228 of 2021 in Company Petition (IB) NO. ND.409 (PB) of 2017, to issue its final determination and allow ICANN to move forward with transitioning the Net 4 India registrations to an alternate registrar. Some registrants have applied directly to the NCLT for relief related to their grievances with Net 4 India, which are currently pending consideration by the NCLT in this matter. Progress of the matter may be monitored at <https://www.nclt.gov.in/exposed-order-judgements-page> [[nclt.gov.in](https://www.nclt.gov.in)].

Enforcement of the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data via the Interim Registration Data Policy

Contractual Compliance continued to process Temporary Specification-related compliance inquiries, during this reporting period.

In December, Contractual Compliance initiated one new inquiry concerning the display of Registration Data in RDDS (Sections 2.2-2.6 Appendix A); and one new inquiry concerning Consent to display Registration Data in the RDDS (Section 7.2).

In January, Contractual Compliance initiated three new inquiries concerning the display of Registration Data in RDDS (Sections 2.2-2.6 Appendix A).

In February, Contractual Compliance initiated three new inquiries concerning the display of Registration Data in RDDS (Sections 2.2-2.6 Appendix A) and nine new inquiries concerning third-party access to non-public Registration Data in the RDDS (Section 4.1, Appendix A).

In March, Contractual Compliance initiated six new inquiries concerning the display of Registration Data in RDDS (Sections 2.2-2.6 Appendix A) and seven new inquiries concerning third-party access to non-public Registration Data in the RDDS (Section 4.1, Appendix A).

During this reporting period, the Compliance team continued:

- providing contractual compliance input for implementation of EPDP Phase 1 recommendations, specifically concerning policy language and enforcement;
- participating in review of draft final report for EPDP Phase 2, including assessment of implementation challenges;
- attending Board Caucus calls concerning GDPR and EPDP Phase 2 recommendations;
- participating in sub-team meetings for conflict assessment between the RAA/RAs and EPDP Phase 1 recommendations; and
- providing metrics related to complaints received related to alleged violations of the Temporary Specification and compliance notices/inquiries sent and closed during the month.

In addition, Compliance:

- commenced publishing updated reporting features/tables on the Compliance monthly dashboard to report on reporter complaints and contracted party inquiries/notices with additional granularity available following the transition to the Naming Services portal (NSp).
- presented updates to the community concerning compliance activity related to enforcement of the Temporary Specification during the [pre-ICANN70 Compliance Webinar](#);
- updated the complaint submission webpage to incorporate additional instructions on how to submit complaints concerning requests for access to non-public registration data. These instructions are available in the six official languages of the United Nations.
- continued addressing previously submitted cases currently under remediation or pending further response and collaboration from contracted parties; and
- continued educating complainants on Temporary Specification requirements for out of scope/invalid complaints (e.g., where complainants believe Registration Data redacted per the Temporary Specification is “missing” from public WHOIS, privacy/proxy service data are redactions, or that all non-European data should be displayed, etc.).

Compliance Matters Related to Registrars and Registry Operators

From December 2020 to March 2021, Contractual Compliance received a total of 7,683 new complaints (6,735 in registrar complaint types, and 948 in registry operator complaint types) and sent 1,929 inquiries and notices (collectively referred to as “compliance notifications”) to contracted parties. This number (1,929) refers to 1st, 2nd and 3rd compliance notifications and does not account for notifications sent to request clarification or additional evidence following a contracted party’s response.

The majority of notifications sent to registrars addressed obligations related to Transfers, Domain Renewal/Redemption, and Registration Data Inaccuracy. The majority of notifications sent to registry operators addressed obligations related to Service Level Agreement Alerts. From December 2020 to March 2021, Contractual Compliance closed 3,193 complaints without contacting the contracted party due to the complaint being out of scope of ICANN’s policies and agreements. Examples of complaints closed without contacting the contracted party include those in which the complainant: did not respond to ICANN Contractual Compliance’s request for evidence; complained about a domain registered in a country-code top level domain; or submitted a duplicate complaint before resolution of original complaint or about an issue already resolved at the time the complaint was reviewed (e.g., domain subject to WHOIS inaccuracy complaint already). In all cases, the Compliance team educated complainants on ICANN’s scope and provided alternative means for pursuing their complaints.

Contractual Compliance Performance Measurement - Monthly Dashboards

The Monthly Dashboards for the period covered by this report are available by accessing the following links:

- [ICANN Contractual Compliance Dashboard for December 2020](#)
- [ICANN Contractual Compliance Dashboard for January 2021](#)
- [ICANN Contractual Compliance Dashboard for February 2021](#)
- [ICANN Contractual Compliance Dashboard for March 2021](#)

Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) Implementation

The Contractual Compliance team continued processing Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) service-related compliance notifications. From December 2020 to March 2021, the Compliance team has continued to process notifications with respect to the implementation of RDAP service and registration of base Uniform Resource Locators (URLs). Current information indicates that 3 TLDs and 50 registrars remain that should upload their URL to the Naming Services portal (NSp), register their URL with IANA, and upload their URL to the Naming Services portal (NSp), respectively. The Compliance team continues to collaborate with these contracted parties that have not yet implemented RDAP, and those that have presented remediation measures to become compliant. These contracted parties are requested to provide regular updates to their open compliance tickets regarding their progress towards remediation. To date, Compliance has received no third-party complaints concerning RDAP. There has been no indication that any registrars or registry operators have ceased to operate WHOIS services.

The Contractual Compliance team continued participating in regular cross-functional meetings surrounding the current status of RDAP enforcement, development of RDAP implementation into contractual amendments and timeline of transition from RDAP to sunset of WHOIS.

Registrar and Registry Compliance Checks

By the request from the Global Domains Division (GDD) to ensure that a contracted party is in good standing, a total of 2512 registrars and 282 gTLDs went through compliance reviews from September to December 2020, and a total of 167 registrars and 282 gTLDs went through compliance reviews in January and February 2021.

Annual Compliance Certification Review Efforts

During this reporting period, Contractual Compliance received the referrals from the Services Delivery Team for both registrar (33) and registry operator annual compliance certifications corresponding to the year 2021. These certifications are required of contracted parties on an annual basis and are due by 20 January each year. The certifications are confirmation by the contracted parties that they have conducted internal reviews and were in compliance with their contractual obligations for the prior year. The compliance review of these certifications has been placed on hold due to the large number of complaints received against Net 4 India Limited and the number of staff dedicated to them to assist registrants. The exercise will resume shortly.

Policy and Working Group Efforts

The Compliance team continued working with the MSSI team on multiple reviews assessing the recommendations produced by review teams. The following activities continued during this reporting period:

- Provided input regarding metrics used for the Domain Name Marketplace Indicators initiative.

-
- Continued providing contractual compliance input for implementation of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Phase 1 recommendations
 - Participated in the review of draft final report for EPDP Phase 2, including assessment of implementation challenges;
 - Attended Board Caucus calls concerning GDPR and EPDP Phase 2 recommendations;
 - Participated in sub-team meetings for conflict assessment between the RAA/RAs and EPDP Phase 1 recommendations; and
 - Provided metrics related to complaints received related to alleged violations of the Temporary Specification and compliance notices/inquiries sent and closed during the month.
 - Participated in cross-functional meetings, provided input and data to the Policy team related to the Preliminary Issue Report on a Policy Development Process to Review the Transfer Policy

Compliance Outreach

On 8 December 2020, Compliance conducted a call with one single reporter who had submitted 20% of the abuse complaints received from 1 September 2020 to 7 December 2020. A large number of these complaints were invalid. The purpose of the call was to explain contractual requirements to this reporter and assist them in understanding how to submit a valid complaint.

On 10 March 2021, Compliance participated in the ICANN70 Prep Week by hosting a [webinar](#) and presenting a general update regarding its activities since ICANN69. The Compliance team presented updates concerning the launch of NSp Compliance, the enforcement of the Temporary Specification obligations, the next Audit which will be focused on registrars' abuse report handling obligations, as well as enforcement actions with respect to several other contractual obligations. After the presentation, Compliance answered different questions from the participants.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

None during this reporting period.

Risk Management

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning & Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

- Quarterly update of risk register completed.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

The org carried out its quarterly update of the org Risk Register, identifying one new risk which was deemed a “top risk.” The Risk Management function and the org assisted the BRC in a review of its committee charter with the proposed updates being approved by the BRC. The updated charter moves to the BGC for consideration. The org-level CEO Risk Management Committee comprised of the CEO and several org executives met to discuss those issues as well as a discussion to develop training for org staff regarding the Risk Appetite; and an annual update to the org Risk Management Policy which had no major change

Planning

Xavier Calvez, SVP, Planning & Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

- Engaged with the community via [two webinars](#) during the Public Comment period of the Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget.
- Engaged with the community during [ICANN 70](#).
- Published Public Comment [staff report](#) of the Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget.
- Conducted 12 Strategic Trend Identification sessions with the Community, Board and org.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Strategic Outlook and Strategic Planning:

The Planning team kicked off the FY23 Planning process with the Strategic Outlook Trend Identification sessions. From January to March, the Planning team conducted six sessions with ICANN org, five sessions with the Community and one session with the Board. Two other sessions will be conducted in April. The next phase of this process is the data analysis and reporting to take place in April and May.

Operating Plans and Budget:

In December 2020, ICANN published the Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget for [Public Comments](#). With the objective of engaging with the community, the Planning team in collaboration with the Finance team hosted several [webinars](#) during the Public Comment period. Comment submissions were received from 10 community groups and one individual. From those submissions, ICANN org identified 218 specific comments covering nine different themes.

Following the Public Comment period, ICANN org held a webinar during [ICANN 70](#) prep week to discuss the community's comments. The Public Comment [staff report](#) on the comments received was published on 18 March, 2021. The team is working on updating the draft plans based on community's feedback. The updated draft plans are targeted for ICANN Board adoption in May 2021.

Prioritization of ICANN's Work Project

Prioritization of ICANN's Work is a key targeted outcome of the "Planning at ICANN" operating initiative in ICANN's FY21-25 Operating Plan. The "Planning at ICANN" operating initiative includes the design and implementation of a prioritization framework in collaboration with the ICANN community, Board and org. The Planning team will conduct a community webinar in April to present a proposed scope and approach for the project .

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

None.

Global Human Resources, Administrative Services, Security Operations

Gina Villavicencio, SVP, Global Human Resources

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Global Human Resources, Administrative Services, and Security Operations continued their support of the org's response to COVID-19 and the work-from-home requirement, including facilitating planning and preparations for the eventual return to normal operations (RTNO) and to mitigate the impacts on staff. All three departments also played a critical coordinated role in the success of the face-to-face KSK Ceremony that took place on 11 February, for logistics, training, and security. Other key activities and accomplishments included training on specialized software for continued implementation of the project management framework, conversion of Belgian staff to a group medical insurance plan, and the successful fulfilment of key staff vacancies under completely remote working circumstances.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Global Human Resources:

- Continued to support ICANN's COVID-19 crisis response, supporting staff and guiding managers with planning as well as developing procedures and protocols for a safe, eventual return to ICANN offices.
- During this reporting period, three vacancies were filled with external candidates in our Brussels, Los Angeles and Singapore offices. Four staff left the org, and currently recruiting for 14 open positions.
- Began preparations for our annual staff engagement survey scheduled to commence June 2021. DecisionWise has been re-engaged to conduct the annual survey for three more years.
- In preparation for the SR2 FY21 performance review cycle, communicated the schedule of key dates and deliverables to staff and trained all people managers on providing feedback to staff on their goals and capturing goals timely in the system.
- Trained selected staff on safety protocols for COVID-19 in preparation for the face-to-face KSK ceremony that took place on 11 February 2021. Continued to develop our people managers through our Leadership Development & Education (LEAD) program, including topics on managing staff in an all-virtual workplace, creating an inclusive environment, and setting goals and reviewing staff performance. Trained all managers on effective remote participation in preparation of ICANN70, and trained all staff on the new scheduling software tool as part of the org's Project Management Framework implementation. Offered new learning opportunities for staff to improve their collaboration and language skills and continued "Getting to Know ICANN" sessions to enhance staff knowledge of the organization's functions.
- Converted the Belgium staff individual based medical insurance program to a group plan, which was effective March 2021. The transition to a group medical program in Belgium provides improved benefits to staff and improvements in administrative efficiency for the org. Completed a redesign of salary grades and career paths for all staff positions and shared proposed changes with the Executive Leadership Team in advance of implementation planned for June-July. Distributed SR1 FY21 At-Risk payments to all eligible staff in December 2020.

Administrative Services:

- Continued to provide support for ICANN staff working remotely in addition to maintaining the offices globally on a daily basis.
- Continued cross-functional collaboration as part of the regional crisis management teams work to support the org's return to normal operations (RTNO) planning.
- Provided administrative and facilities support for the 11 February face-to-face KSK Ceremony. in addition to the onsite COVID-19 testing prior to the ceremony for all staff involved.
- In the process of lease renewals and market evaluations for the Los Angeles and Singapore offices respectively, in addition to an analysis of the Geneva and Istanbul office leases for the upcoming renewal process.
- Revised the org's Global Health and Wellness program to focus more on regional staff needs and continued efforts to provide all staff with morale boosters and tools for managing whole health and mental wellness. Activities and events included ergonomics support for home workspaces and a giving back initiative focused on showing appreciation for those who provided support to ICANN staff during the COVID-19 crisis.

Security Operations:

- Continued to drive ICANN's response to COVID-19 with global and regional crisis management teams and planning for a return to ICANN offices, resuming business travel and face-to-face (F2F) meetings. Efforts included the operationalization of office planning, beginning the transition from plan development to plan implementation and a focus on business travel and F2F framework planning development.
- Continued support of the Travel Safety Committee (TSC) with a request for an exception to the org's travel/F2F ban in effect until 30 June 2021.
- Began the optimization of the org's crisis management program to ensure its various elements operate within the same framework and use the same consistent methodology, thereby enhancing the robustness of any future response through a unified, cross-functional effort.
- Facilitated Kidnap-For-Ransom training for the Global Crisis Management Team (G-CMT) as part of our ongoing crisis management preparedness, furnishing the team with an understanding of this unique threat and how to respond to such a crisis.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

Continued focus on staff's safety, mental health and wellbeing while balancing home/work priorities.

Engineering & Information Technology

Ashwin Rangan, SVP, Engineering & Chief Information Officer (CIO)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

The most important milestone for this period was the v1 launch of ITI, which greatly improved the findability of information on ICANN.org. In addition, we are doing preparatory work to begin the move of content from the RSSAC, SSAC and ccNSO website. After process mapping and analysis we are now looking to modernize the travel support department with greater automation support. This work will continue over the next few semesters. With respect to internal E&IT processes, progress is being made with our Capability Maturity Model (CMM) efforts. Recent measurements indicate that we have moved from a Level 2.5 to a Level 3.2 within the past year, bringing us closer to our goal of reaching Level 4. This work improves repeatability, reliability, measurement and constant improvement of our engineering and IT processes. And lastly, we continue to make good strides in our virtual meetings support by offering Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) integrated into Zoom to simplify the process and reduce platforms for participants.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Follows the Pillar-Plank rubric for reporting

The Pillars

Front Office Relationship & Delivery (FORD) Team

Universal Acceptance: An array of 25 test gTLDs and IDNs in a variety of scripts were successfully registered and deployed during this period. These domains will be used by the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) for UA-compliance evaluations and by the community for UA-readiness testing.

Platform Reduction: The E&IT platform reductions continue and remain on track. During this period the team has been able to move or retire four additional legacy ICANN org services. Reductions will continue during CY2021. Top-level systems count is now at just over 110. Our goal is to consolidate further down to ~85 systems. A long roadmap stretches this journey to 2025 +/-.

Community Collaboration Pillar

The Information Transparency Initiative (ITI): Launched v1 on March 16th, which is inclusive of Announcements, Blogs, Registry Agreements, Accredited Registrars, and Acronyms and Terms. Development continues for migration of existing content and features on icann.org.

ICANN Lookup: We delivered functionality to support lookups by AS Numbers.

ccNSO Website: Preparing to inventory content so it can be audited as part of the ccNSO website transition to the new icann.org architecture.

Community Engagement Pillar

Single Sign-On (aka ICANN Account): Continued progress has been made to move Community-facing services to ICANN Account, our single sign on (SSO) and secure authentication solution. Pathable (Meeting Schedule and Mobile App) and Concur Expense for Board are in progress. Completed applications include Meetings, Learn, CZDS, Fellowship,

Information Transparency Initiative (ITI), Open Data Platform (ODP), ICANN Join for working groups, and NextGen. Additional security features to provide Two Factor Authentication (2FA) capability are in progress to support NSp and other applications.

Travel Support Modernization: A cross functional team has looked at improving efficiencies and the onboarding experience for Funded Travelers. Potential process and system improvements have been identified. Solutions are being evaluated along with business process improvements.

NextGen and Fellowship: The new Fellowship service was launched in March. We have now completed the consolidation of services to the Wizehive platform, the same platform being used for NextGen.

Community Relationship Management (CRM): Phase 2 for data clean up is 90% complete. Normalizing regional processes and data with the goal to improve internal efficiencies and governance for connecting the org are in progress. The first service is Events 2.0 which will provide holistic event planning and an improved integrated public facing calendar on the ITI website.

Meetings: We continue to make improvements to address delays between Meeting Registration (EventsAir) and the Schedule/Mobile App (Pathable) experienced during ICANN69. Additional work to integrate Pathable with ICANN account will eliminate two passwords and further improve the experience for ICANN71.

Contracted Parties Pillar

Naming Services portal: NSp launched the first half of its second Compliance phase on 26 March to bring technical service integration to the contracted parties. This release brought improved monitoring capabilities, and the team started working on the retirement of the legacy Kayako platform.

Technical Services Pillar

NSp Compliance - SLAM/RRI Integration was deployed to production in March. The SLA Monitoring (SLAM) system and Registration Reporting Interfaces (RRI) events integrated with Naming Service Portal(NSp) compliance system.

Technical Services Security Update was deployed to production in February. This included an upgrade to 11 technical services codebase to use the new Kafka cluster, redis cluster and helm configurations to eliminate known security vulnerability.

Staff Operations Pillar

Smartsheets Roll-out: Smartsheet is an easy to use and centralized solution, to enable efficient and common project scheduling practice supporting the project management framework. The implementation process began in October, since then training was provided in different levels, now the tool is available to all ICANN Staff.

The Planks

Software Engineering

Testim Tool Implementation: Software Engineering has enhanced Testim coverage from 6 web applications to over 15. We are currently working on integrating Testim into our Continuous

Integration toolchain for further automation. Testim has proven to be a valuable tool for ICANN by providing significant time savings with an increase of overall quality for application testing.

Continuous Integration & Continuous Delivery: Software Engineering has continued to improve the overall CI/CD footprint for application management. We are currently working on migrating applications from the existing Kubernetes clusters to the newer OpenShift clusters. OpenShift provides a more up to date, stable, and metric rich environment for applications to run with more flexibility and reliability.

Process Improvements: Software Engineering has begun a process improvement cycle to standardize our internal nomenclature across different tools. Ensuring all Software Engineering staff can speak the same technical language, with clear definitions of terms and structure, increases delivery efficiency and mitigates technical confusion across pillars.

CMM: Software Engineering has identified four goals to actively pursue to increase the CMM level of the the department. These goals are currently being refined and milestones are being established. These goals include suggested specifications for requirement consumption, regularly published technical roadmaps, architectural review processes, and architectural change management processes.

Data Center & Cloud Ops (DCCO), Meetings Tech Services (MTS) & End User Support (EUS)

Data Center & Cloud Ops – Authentication Standardization and Audit – We are ahead of schedule with both assessment and remediation of our services against our updated authentication standards. We are prioritizing services based on data sensitivity and have completed over 70% of planned services. We expect 7 new planned improvements to be completed in FY21 SR2.

Data Center & Cloud Ops – Email Address Internationalization Readiness – We have completed 2 of the 3 main milestones for EAI readiness with our core email systems. The remaining milestone is for Proofpoint Email Protection to complete their updates to support EAI and they are on track for an updated release by FY22 SR1. We are also working on an EAI community test bed in parallel which we expect should be completed by FY21 SR2.

Data Center & Cloud Ops – Private Cloud infrastructure Improvements - We are mid project to replace our first generation bespoke Kubernetes compute clusters with Redhat Openshift Kubernetes which will bring even more stability, efficiency, and features for our engineered services such as ITI/ITP. We expect this migration to be completed no later than FY22 SR1.

Data Center & Clouds Ops & Meetings Technical Services - CMM Journey: Managed the Staff Operations assessment which indicated that the function is currently operating about 3.8 on a CMM self score. Worked with each team in Staff Operations to review Risk Management and develop a Risk Register.

Meetings Technical Services - Virtual Meetings: Successfully transitioned ICANN70 to a fully virtual meeting with several new features or services implemented. Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) was integrated into Zoom to simplify the process and reduce platforms for participants. Automated real time transcription (RTT) was enabled in all sessions that do not have live captioners providing the service. The YouTube streaming pilot continued, increasing

to eight sessions, though usage remained relatively low. Breakout rooms, along with the guidelines for use during ICANN Public Meetings, were made available and successfully used during the Coffee Breaks hosted by the Meetings Department. 1:1 Networking Opportunities were implemented, allowing participants to schedule and manage their own ad hoc meetings with one another.

End User Support -Laptop Support and Management: 135/142 laptops have been upgraded to ensure Zoom Virtual backgrounds. All remaining users are working individually with EUS and have solutions in progress. The fleet of laptops at ICANN is in an excellent state right now, with all users on recent hardware and upgraded to macOS 10.15 Catalina (2019 release). Upgrades to macOS 10.16 (2020 release) currently rolling out to E&IT staff for final review and issue identification prior to Org wide rollout. Updates (both applications and operating systems) being delivered and managed centrally.

End User Support- Technical Support Requests: During calendar year 2019, End User Support received 9,184 general support requests. In 2020, EUS received 7,951 general requests. This 15% reduction in support requests is in line with long term EUS goals, and is the result of improved automation, standardization and cross functional documentation. EUS has projects underway to continue to improve ICANN Org's device and software experiences, and we expect a further reduction as we move forward.

Security and Network Engineering

Network and DNS Engineering – ICANN Managed Root Server (IMRS) Clusters –

Investigation and analysis has started to consider additional IMRS Clusters that will be funded through the provision of SSR funds from Verisign. A project will be established, following the doctrine of the ICANN project management handbook, to manage the deployment of additional IMRS instances.

Information Security - Overall Information Security posture - The vulnerability discovery and reward program through HackerOne was paused with the intention of restarting in January. The program hiatus was extended to provide the opportunity to review the constructs of the program and to ensure we make best use of ICANN resources. In May the program will be restarted with a specific focus on critical severity vulnerabilities. Information Security has also implemented a SSL/TLS certificate monitoring system to ensure the certificates used in ICANN are monitored for changes, expiry, and validity.

Identifier Research, Operations, and Security (IROS)

David Conrad, SVP & Chief Technology Officer

Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

- OCTO leads the management of SSR Contribution
- IANA Functions Review (IFR) completed
- Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) Study 2 begins
- New OCTO documents and presentations published
- Root zone management study underway
- Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) tool enhancement discussed
- Domain Name Security Threat Information Collection and Reporting (DNSTICR) updated
- RDAP performance measured and documented
- A cloud-based training lab infrastructure for technical trainings deployed
- KINDNS Initiative launched
- Overall community technical engagement increased

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

OCTO leading the management of the SSR Contribution

Through discussions and negotiations between the leadership of ICANN org and Verisign Inc., the two parties entered into a [Letter of Intent](#) (LOI) on [27 March 2020](#). The purpose of this LOI is to collaboratively work towards combating Security Threats as defined in the letter, for which section 2 of the LOI specifies that ICANN org will receive USD \$4M a year from Verisign for five years, beginning on 01 January 2021 and ending on 31 December 2025. The Office of the CTO (OCTO) was asked to request and manage the internal candidate Projects, Programs, or Initiatives that may be eligible for these funds.

IANA Functions Review (IFR)

Key highlights and milestones from the [Fact Sheet](#)

- Completion, based on duration: 100%
- Budget spent and committed: 0%
- Participation rate: 78%
- Milestones completed: 100%

The IANA Functions Review team (IFRT) has fulfilled a number of unique IFR Bylaw requirements to finalize and submit their [Final Report](#) to the Board. The final report will be submitted for the 8 April 2021 Board Briefing, and will be put on the next Board meeting's consent agenda.

Name Collision Analysis Project (NCAP) Study 2 begins

On 26 March 2021, the ICANN Board, following a recommendation submitted by the Board Technical Committee (BTC), approved a resolution accepting the results of NCAP Study 1 and directing the NCAP Discussion Group (NCAP DG) to proceed with Study 2. This study will analyze name collisions and their causes, with particular attention focused on .corp, .home and .mail. Unlike Study 1, which was performed by a contractor managed by OCTO, the Study 2 design calls for NCAP DG community members to perform a significant portion of the research

and analysis. ICANN org will supply secretariat and project management services, as well as contract a technical writer and a technical investigator. Work on the study has already begun and is expected to take approximately 18 months, finishing in mid 2022.

New OCTO documents and presentations published

The Office of the CTO (OCTO) team published seven documents in the OCTO document series:

- [OCTO-021](#): DNS Root Service Operations
- [OCTO-022](#): IETF Year in Review for 2020
- [OCTO-023](#): Collecting "Typical" Domain Names for Web Servers

OCTO personnel also made several technical presentations to community members at various events.

Root zone management study underway

JAS Global Advisors has been contracted and has begun work on a study researching possible changes to the root zone management process to address any deficiencies, inefficiencies, or other issues that might affect the ability of ICANN to provide root management services to the naming community. This study was called for by the IANA functions transition proposal released by IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group (ICG) in March 2016. The study is expected to take approximately one year to complete.

Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) tool enhancement discussed

OCTO staff continue dialog with members of the community related to DAAR improvements. A new format of the report which incorporates many of the suggestions of the Registry Stakeholder Group (RySG) DAAR working group has been developed and will be published starting April 2021. OCTO will continue to improve DAAR based on community input and the DAAR project leads are drafting a proposal on more major enhancements to the existing version of the DAAR system.

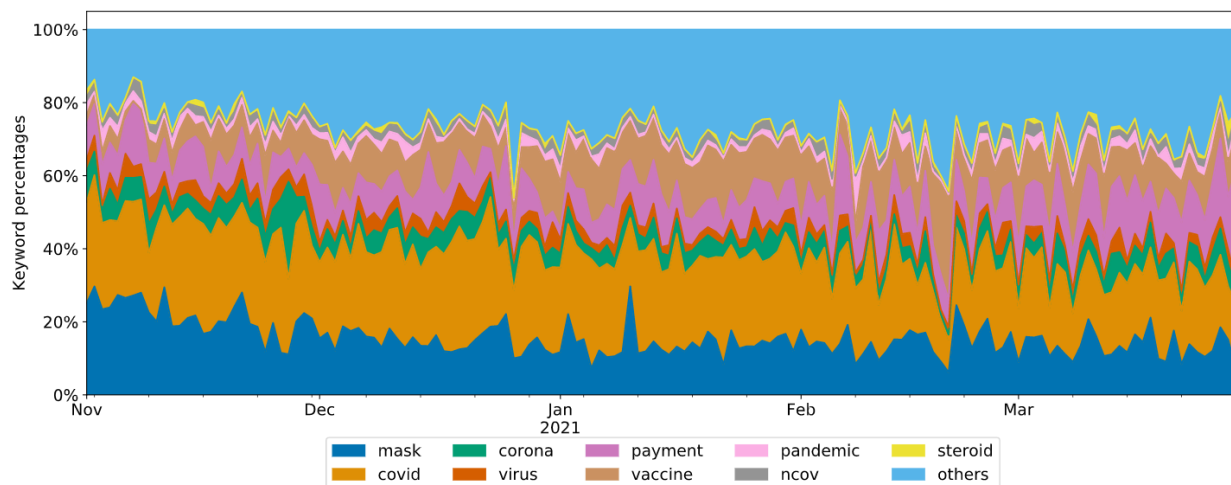
Currently, 15 ccTLDs have agreed to participate in DAAR and OCTO staff are distributing individualized monthly reports to those participants that show data from their ccTLD in relation to the regular DAAR monthly reports. Perhaps as a result, popularity of the DAAR project seems to be gradually growing among the ccTLD operator community.

Domain Name Security Threat Information Collection and Reporting (DNSTICR) updates

OCTO staff continue to monitor the DNS name space for names related to the COVID-19 pandemic and where sufficient evidence of phishing or malware distribution exists, report those to the sponsoring registrar. Research is ongoing to establish an automated process by which names associated with external events can be flagged and additional strings can be collated for potential inclusion in the DNSTICR monitoring system.

Despite adding terms related to the specific vaccines being developed (e.g., pfizer, moderna, etc.) the total number of registrations examined has continued to decline (note that the word "vaccine" was already a DNSTICR search term). From the 15.6k names that matched a search term seen in December, the number of names matched has decreased to 14.3k in January, 12k in February, and 10.7k in March. Domains seen to be malicious have fallen also with only a handful of domains reaching the reporting threshold (e.g., 17 domains reported in the first half of December). However, as access to one of our sources was interrupted during this time, the comparison is perhaps incomplete.

While the overall volume of examined registrations has been falling we have seen some changes in the keywords being detected across all examined registrations, not just the ones detected as malicious:



Although not immediately noticeable, there has been a definite increase in the proportion of registrations with the term “vaccine” through November and December which has then been fairly stable since. We have seen 13.5k registrations with this term in total, 1,830 in December; 2,733 in January; 2,362 in February and 1,632 in March (although the term “covid” remains the largest single component).

RDAP performance measured and documented

OCTO staff are studying the responsiveness of the currently deployed RDAP services. Large-scale distributed measurements are being performed to evaluate and quantify the response time of these services. Focusing on domain name queries, the response time of 533 RDAP services is being measured. The impact of specific factors, such as RDAP operator type, IP address type, and response size are studied. OCTO staff continue working together with the Global Domain and Strategy function to fix errors identified in the RDAP deployment of specific operators.

A document is being developed to inform the ICANN community and relevant stakeholders that rely on the public access to registration data for their operation and research.

A Cloud-based Training Lab Infrastructure for Technical Trainings deployed

OCTO staff have successfully developed and deployed a scalable lab infrastructure that is now being used for technical training of ICANN stakeholders on topics such as DNS, DNSSEC, hyperlocal root service, and other technical topics. Housed in Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud infrastructure, the lab environment allows OCTO staff to spin up a large number of virtual machines for participants to use in their laptop/desktop environments and to implement training modules. Since its deployment, OCTO’s Technical Engagement team has trained hundreds of engineers from around the world, with a heavy emphasis in Africa, including courses on DNSSEC 101 and an introduction to deploying and maintaining hyperlocal root service.

This lab environment is available to others in ICANN org to use for technical training (e.g., Universal Acceptance).

KINDNS Initiative launched

OCTO staff announced the launch of the new KINDNS Initiative. KINDNS stands for Knowledge-sharing and Instantiating Norms for DNS and Naming Security. It is a community-based initiative with the goal being to work with the DNS technical community to develop a shared framework of best practices to which all DNS operators should voluntarily adhere for the purposes of increasing the overall security and stability of the DNS.

The initiative has a [website](#), multiple mailing lists, and is currently developing the best practices document that the community will work with.

Overall Community Technical Engagement increased

During this quarter, OCTO Technical Engagement (TE) staff conducted 46 outreach and training sessions throughout the world. Sessions were conducted in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, and were held for stakeholder audiences in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia), the Middle-east (Afghanistan, Palestine, Turkey, Yemen), Asia (Myanmar, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka), Europe (Czech Republic, Italy, Scandinavia), the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago), and Central America (Nicaragua).

The team successfully used the cloud-based training lab infrastructure to deliver hands-on courses on DNSSEC, teaching engineers how to deploy and maintain DNSSEC-validating resolvers and DNSSEC-signed zones.

In March, GSE and TE teamed up to host a large and successful event, “Nordic Region Workshop: ICANN and its Technical Mission” which highlighted ICANN’s work in the DNS, the root server system, and the IANA. Attendance was large and the material was very well received.

OCTO staff also continued its efforts in working with the ICANN Universal Acceptance Working Group to provide training on Email Address Internationalization (EAI) and to socialize the important efforts of UAWG.

TOP ISSUES AND MITIGATION

- Resource constraints have limited the OCTO Technical Engagement team from having a Technical Engagement team member based in Europe, reducing our ability to respond to technical engagement requests from that region. The current mitigation is to have Technical Engagement team members from other regions cover Europe when time permits.
- Continuing difficulties in obtaining sponsoring registrar information for domain names that are identified as appearing on a reputation block list has precluded the DAAR system from being used to report on security threats by registrar. While recent contract amendments with Verisign have allowed access to sponsoring registrar information for .COM domains, no solution has yet been identified for domains in other gTLDs (or ccTLDs participating in DAAR). The DAAR team continues to investigate options.

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)

SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- The IANA services met or exceeded all of the service level agreements for the period.
- Core IANA request-processing activities have been sustained at normal levels during COVID-19-related restrictions.

Performance in brief

This represents a summary view of comprehensive reporting available on the IANA website at <http://iana.org/performance>

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Overall
DNS Root Zone					
SLAs Met	98.4%	100%	98.4%	100%	99.2%
Metrics Met	63/64	64/64	63/64	64/64	—
CSC assessed satisfactory or higher	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Request Volume	165	158	168	197	688
TLDs in Root Zone	1502	1502	1501	1500	—
DNS Root KSK**					
Metrics Met	—	—	5/5	—	—
Scheduled Items Met	—	—	6/7	—	—
.INT Top-Level Domain					
New .INT registered	0	0	2	2	4
.INT modifications	1	0	3	4	8
Request Volume	14	6	18	17	55
Protocol Parameters					
SLAs Met	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Met MOU requirement (90%)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Met internal target (95%)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Request Volume	243	305	301	284	1133
Number Resources					
SLAs Met	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Metrics Met	4/4	4/4	4/4	4/4	—
Met SLA requirement	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Request Volume	0	0	0	0	0
Label Generation Rulesets					
New LGRs posted	306	577	68	503	1454
LGRs modified	235	0	2	1	238
Request Volume	2	2	3	10	17
General Enquiries					
Request Volume	102	106	118	149	475

** Only applicable to months where ceremonies are held. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the February 2021 key ceremony generated signatures for three calendar quarters. No further signatures will be generated until Q4 2021.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- The second Annual Customer Survey focused on engagement and the results were released and published in December 2020.
- IANA continues to measure customer satisfaction after requests are completed. For this reporting period, overall customer satisfaction rated 98% while the participation rate was 39.4%.

Satisfaction in brief

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Response Rate	31.0%	44.3%	47.3%	35.2%
Satisfaction	94.4%	96.8%	100%	100%

OTHER UPDATES AND INITIATIVES

- The third-party SOC2 audit that covers IANA's registry assignment management systems was released for the period covering October 2019 through September 2020. No exceptions were identified.
- The third-party SOC3 audit that covers management of the Root Zone Key Signing Key is in progress and no exceptions are anticipated for the period. The report is scheduled to be released at the end of April and will be published on the IANA website.
- A KSK ceremony was held in February 2021 in a modified form to facilitate essential key signing operations with limited attendance and compensating controls to ensure security and trust objectives continue to be met. Planning is underway for subsequent operational activity later in 2021 which is anticipated will partially return to its normal format.
- The IANA team performed its annual test of its Contingency and Continuity of Operations Plan. The COVID-19 pandemic was the basis of new scenarios that were exercised, revolving around the ability to sustain operations despite long-term inability to access key operational assets.

Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE), Meetings, Public Responsibility Support (PRS)

Sally Costerton, Sr. Advisor to President & SVP, Global Stakeholder Engagement

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

As a result of the Chairing Skills webinar that was held on 7 December 2020, Public Responsibility Support (PRS) has launched the *Effective Chairing Skills* course on [ICANN Learn](#). This course will complement future Chairing Skills programs and webinars, and will be available to ICANN Supporting Organization/Advisory Committee and working group chairs and leaders.

In addition to the Chairing Skills training on ICANN Learn, PRS continues to respond to the demand for remote training for the community with new online learning content during this period with the launch of *ICANN Public Meetings for Newcomers* and *Building Trust* as well as the Spanish translation of the basic cybersecurity course (*Introducción a los Conceptos Básicos Sobre Ciberseguridad*). Upcoming courses will cover technical, policy, and skill-building topics.

ICANN launched new application systems for NextGen@ICANN and Fellowship programs. The new systems enhance program operations, increase organizational efficiency, and utilize the ICANN Account service to enrich the user experience.

PRS implemented other improvements to the NextGen@ICANN program. Program [mentors](#) and [selection committee](#) are now appointed by SOs and ACs.

In February 2021, GSE, GDS, OCTO and Policy started a seven-part webinar series for the Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns Constituency (NPOC) covering DNS fundamentals, the role of ICANN, registrant rights and responsibilities, ICANN policy making, a review of policies impacting registrants and rights protection mechanisms, protecting and securing domain names, and DNS privacy. <https://npoc.org/npoc-launches-webinar-series-dns-operational-concerns/> The webinar series concludes on 14 April 2021.

GSE also worked with OCTO deliver a webinar for the Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) project for African ccTLDs. The webinar had 54 participants representing 30 ccTLDs from the region. The overall objective was to encourage African ccTLD operators to join into the DAAR project. GSE is working with OCTO to encourage other ccTLD managers to participate.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

With the continued suspension of global travel and in-person meetings due to COVID-19, Global Stakeholder Engagement supported a variety of online engagement events and trainings between December 2020 and March 2021. These included ICANN-supported regional events: ICANN 69 Readouts for China, Japan; Turkmentel 2020; Georgian IGF and Youth IGF; Youth IGF Turkey; NetMission Academy 2021; the ASEAN IDN Workshop 2021; a Dutch stakeholder prep meeting for ICANN 70; the GAC LAC Preparatory workshop for ICANN 70; APAC Space Web Conference; and a joint webinar on trademarks and domain names with KeNIC.

GSE also delivered virtual lectures for Middle East Technical University, Lund University (Sweden), an academic engagement webinar for AAU in Africa; Universal Acceptance Local Initiative Tech Talks in India; Bahcesehir University in Istanbul. The team participated in the

13th MENA Working Group Meeting on Cybercrime for Heads of Units; Cybersecurity Day 2021 in Moscow; Internet Measurement Day Armenia; APRICOT 2021; APTLD 79; CaribNOG 21; among other regional events.

GSE partnered with OCTO on the delivery of virtual DNSSEC and DNS Operations Workshop programs for the .YE and .AF ccTLDs, and workshops for the local communities in Palestine, Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan and Turkey. The team also delivered a successful Nordic Region Virtual Workshop, featuring talks by ICANN OCTO and IANA staff. This was the first ICANN virtual event specifically for the Nordic region. There were 250 registrations, with good participation from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

The GSE North America team kicked off a series of virtual discussions with stakeholders on the North America regional engagement plan, technical issues and data privacy discussions in Europe related to the Digital Services Act and NIS2; participated in the Technology Policy Research Conference; and an IPv6 lecture for the University of Colorado with ARIN.

At ICANN 70, ICANN accommodated 12 NextGen@ICANN and 22 Fellowship selectees deferred from ICANN 67. PRS enhanced the programs for virtual participation, incorporating all the key elements of the current in-person programs along with additional opportunities made possible by a remote format. For example, participants of both programs attended tailored training sessions on “How DNS Works” led by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) and on consensus building (“Consensus Playbook”) by the Policy team.

Due to the virtual nature of ICANN 70, the [ICANN Community Childcare Grants Pilot Program](#) was canceled; the grant will be available to the community at the next in-person meeting.

Global Meetings Operations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all face-to-face meetings have been cancelled through June 2021, and possibly beyond. The Meetings team has been focusing its energies on: providing new features to increase networking opportunities during the virtual meeting experience; continued collaboration on the community consultation on the ICANN meetings and events strategy; and involvement in crisis management discussions and planning on the return to normal operations, specifically for ICANN in-person meetings and events, including a regional meeting strategy.

During this time, the Meetings department continues to support internal initiatives including: the Bandwidth Reimbursement pilot program; Return to Normal Operations roadmap (w/SecOps); Travel Modernization Project; Meetings Business Architecture mapping; Meeting data cleanup and analysis; supporting initiatives related to participation data analysis of COVID-19 impacts; virtual meeting enhancements; and several other related papers and initiatives. The Meetings team continues to support the community-driven virtual meeting for ICANN 71, and planning for ICANN 72 and ICANN 73.

Virtual ICANN 70 By the Numbers data report can be found here: [ICANN70 By the Numbers Report](#).

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

GSE continues to reach out to regional partners and stakeholders virtually and encourage their participation in ICANN technical and policy work. The extended period without in-person

meetings is having an impact on attracting newcomers into ICANN. The team is focused on one of the CEO goals of “making new friends” with stakeholders in the regions, and continues to raise awareness of ICANN activities with groups who do not currently participate or are aware of ICANN. In all of our regions, the teams have been running regular webinars aimed at a broad audience on current topics of discussion from ICANN meetings, including DNS security threats, Universal Acceptance and IDNs, DNS privacy issues and EU legislative and policy matters.

The ICANN Fellowship returning fellows selectees from ICANN 67 and ICANN 68 are deferred to participate at the ICANN 71 Policy Forum in June 2021. ICANN 71 virtual Fellowship will follow the format utilized for ICANN 70.

PRS continues to support two ICANN Board operational priorities for calendar year 2021: Developing a Public Interest Framework and the Working Group on Anti-Harassment.

Global Communications & Language Services

Sally Newell Cohen, SVP, Global Communications

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

This period saw the launch of the Information Transparency Initiative, aimed at improving the ease of finding content on icann.org, as well as the launch of Remote Simultaneous Interpretation (RSI) platform integration into ICANN70 Zoom sessions. Both the Global Communications and Language Services teams provided extensive support for the ICANN70 Virtual Community Forum, including the development of a comprehensive messaging document, session support (including the Public Forum), briefing documents, newsletter distribution, social media engagement, and more.

Information regarding our social media engagement is available in the *ICANN Board Social Media Report* on page 73.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

Information Transparency Initiative (ITI) – Tuesday, 16 March 2021 marked ITI Release Day. On that day, the new ITI search experience launched for more than 38,000 pages and files of content, along with the new ITI ICANN homepage and ICANN News Subscriptions feature. Details about this launch were shared in a [March 2021 blog](#). The following content types were the focus for the release:

- [Accredited Registrars](#)
- [Acronyms and Terms](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Registry Agreements](#)

A new multilingual site navigation experience also launched for Announcements, Blogs, and Acronyms and Terms. As announced in an [earlier March 2021 blog](#), the old ICANN News Alert feature was replaced by [ICANN News Subscriptions](#). Currently, the new feature allows users to customize their subscriptions to Announcements, Blogs, and Registry Agreements updates, with more content types added as they are launched by ITI.

Open Data Platform – In an [announcement from Monday, 15 March 2021](#), ICANN announced that the date that [Registry Reports](#) will permanently move to [ICANN Open Data](#) has been extended. The date mentioned in the previous CEO Report to the Board, 15 March 2021, has been changed to 30 July 2021.

Language Services – After a few very well-received demo sessions and a successful real-time test during the LAC Regional Meeting, the ICANN Language Services Team launched the full use of the Remote Simultaneous Interpretation platform integration into Zoom for ICANN70. The experience was very well received, and was seen as an improvement on the experience for both ICANN community members and meeting participants. This new development, which was carried out by Congress Rental and Language Services, with the participation of the Meetings Technical Services Team, provided a more unified, easier experience.

Regional Communications Teams *Asia Pacific (APAC)*

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- Global Cyber Peace Challenge (January) – Coordinated with GSE and Global Comms to develop Board Chair Maarten Botterman’s video presentation for the virtual event in India.
 - APRICOT (February) – Supported Göran’s keynote at the Asia Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies.
 - India DNS Project Competition (ongoing) – Drafted ICANN-related content for the website. Collaborating with the project team on communications plan when the competition is ready to kick off.
 - IMRS instance hosting communications strategy (Jan-Apr) – Developed communications strategy for IMRS instance hosting to ensure consistent approach by all regions.
 - Messaging brief / Hot topics – Finalized the process with Board Ops to provide the Board with a centralized and complete information resource for Public Meetings.

Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA)

- The team continues to focus on media outreach. In Turkey, we coordinated two Interviews in main outlets: An interview with Baher Esmat in Haber (both print and [video](#)) and the Dijital Hayat radio show on TRT (Turkish Radio Television) [Radyo1](#) (Mert Saka).
- Continued our [UA series](#) in TAG (Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property Newsletter) and contributed to the [WEF multistakeholder governance article](#), by providing a quote from Chris Mondini.
- This period also saw us plan communications and support for the 7th Middle East DNS Forum. Other work included supporting other events and activities, including but not limited to the two European Stakeholder Assemblies: [Stakeholder Assembly: ICANN Perspectives on EU Digital Initiatives](#) & [ICANN Stakeholder Assembly: Briefing by the European Commission on the Recent EU Initiatives on Digital Services and Cybersecurity](#).

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

- Our regional communications efforts for this period were aimed at spreading the word about the ICANN70 Public Meeting in “Virtual Cancun”. We were active in social media prior to and during the meeting in the languages of the region ([Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [French](#) in addition to English). Additionally, and for the first time, we created a short promo video featuring Rodrigo de la Parra (in English and Spanish), which was shared on Instagram. The Instagram Reel was an innovative way to share our message and it was successful in reaching our audiences with more than 700 views in 24 hours.
- We also collaborated with the Mexican entities from the academia and public sectors to promote the meeting via their websites, virtual magazines, social media handles, and even [interviews](#).
 - Collaboration with the u-GOB portal – based in Mexico with 50k government active members in the entire region.
 - Collaboration with ANUIES (National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education) – a non-governmental organization which includes 191 public and private higher education institutions in Mexico.

Board Communications – We continue to work with the ICANN Board of Directors to find new opportunities for engagement with the ICANN community, including the launch of a new “Meet the Board Committee” webinar series. The series is aimed at connecting individual committees with interested stakeholders, to provide the committee with a direct platform for interaction and education.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

- As part of ongoing efforts to ensure our messaging is efficient and effective, the Global Communications team is collaborating with GSE to define regional audiences by stakeholder group and maturity levels. This audience-identification work will inform our efforts to develop more targeted messaging and engagement strategies that leverage existing resources more holistically.
- We continue to balance support and service requests against available resources, as part of ICANN org's overall efforts to better prioritize its work.
- Developing a consistent methodology for Communications plans that focus on the objectives and the desired outcomes. To support this, we're building the necessary tools and strengthening our internal knowledge.

Policy Development Support

David Olive, SVP, Policy Development Support

HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Empowered Community and Empowered Community Administration

- On 24 March 2021, the Empowered Community Administration notified the ICANN Secretary that the Rejection Process for the FY22 IANA Budget had been terminated. No Decisional Participant of the Empowered Community received any petitions to reject the FY22 IANA Budget.

Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

- The ASO Address Council continues to work through the selection process for ICANN Board Seat 9. Eight candidates reached the interview phase; four candidates emerged as the finalists in the deliberation phase.

Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

- The ccNSO virtual workshop on 16 March 2021 focused on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the ccNSO Council.
- The ccNSO Strategic and Operational Planning Committee submitted its comments on the FY22 Operating Plan and Budget and the update of the five-year Operational Plan.
- The SOPC has established a working relationship with the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Standing Committee on Budget and Operations.

Policy Development Processes (PDPs)

ccNSO PDP3 on Retirement of ccTLDs and Review Mechanism

- The third ccNSO Policy Development Process (ccPDP3) consists of Parts A and B. The ccPDP3 Retirement Working Group leads Part A and is tasked with proposing policy recommendations for the retirement of country code top-level domains (ccTLDs). In February 2021, the ccPDP3 Retirement Working Group concluded its work by unanimously supporting the policy recommendations pertaining to the retirement of ccTLDs.
- The ccPDP3 Review Mechanism Working Group leads Part B, which focuses on the development of a review mechanism for decisions regarding the delegation, transfer, revocation, and retirement of ccTLDs. Currently, the working group discusses the processes and procedural requirements for the review mechanism itself. The working group prefers a two-step mechanism: The first step is the need to use the existing, internal IANA Complaint procedure and building upon this procedure; the second step is an independent review mechanism. To date, the working group has identified:
 - Decisions subject to such a review mechanism.
 - Who has standing to submit a review.

ccPDP4 on Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) ccTLD String Selection

- The ccPDP4 variant management subgroup recently began working in parallel to the ccPDP4 Working Group. It closely coordinates its work with GNSO efforts in this area and ICANN org efforts on Root Zone Label Generation Rules. The working group continues reviewing and updating the original ccPDP2 proposals with respect to the selection of IDN ccTLD strings.

Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

GNSO Council Resolutions

During this reporting period, the GNSO Council passed a number of resolutions, including:

- GNSO Council input on Recommendation 7 of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on the Temporary Specification for Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) Registration Data Phase 1 Final Report and Thick WHOIS Transition Policy.
- Appointment of a GNSO Representative to the Community Representatives Group that will nominate the Independent Review Process (IRP) Standing Panel.
- Approval of Recommendation 4 in the IANA Functions Review Final Report, which recommends an IANA Naming Functions Contract amendment.
- Approval of the charter for the PDP to review the Transfer Policy.
- Approval of the recommendations from the Phase 1 Final Report of the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs and subsequently, confirmation of the Recommendations Report to the ICANN Board regarding adoption of the recommendations.
- Approval of the Outputs from the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP Final Report and subsequently, confirmation of the Recommendations Report to the ICANN Board regarding adoption of relevant Outputs.

Other GNSO Council Work

PDP 3.0

- As the GNSO Council scopes and initiates new GNSO policy development efforts, it has actively applied PDP 3.0 improvements to enhance the effectiveness of GNSO projects such as the charter of the PDP to review the Transfer Policy.

GNSO Framework for Continuous Improvement

- The GNSO is considering mechanisms to complete work related to a number of important community efforts that are not directly related to policy development such as the Work Stream 2 recommendations of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability and the Evolution of the Multistakeholder Model initiative. The GNSO Council is consulting with the Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies to develop an approach to address this work.

Data Accuracy

- The GNSO Council agreed to establish a scoping team on data accuracy. As a preparatory step, the GNSO Council requested that ICANN org prepare a briefing document that outlines both existing accuracy requirements and programs, and the corresponding impact that the European Union General Data Protection Regulation has had on implementing and enforcing these requirements and programs. ICANN org delivered this written briefing to the GNSO Council on 26 February 2021. The GNSO Council is determining next steps as it relates to the briefing and the scoping team.

Policy Development Processes (PDPs)

Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Phase 2A

- The EPDP Phase 2A team met for the first time in late December 2020. This limited duration effort is focusing on two subjects: 1) Legal vs. natural persons and 2) Feasibility of unique

contacts to have a uniform anonymized email address. After reviewing existing legal advice, the EPDP Team proposed clarifying and follow-up questions to be forwarded to external legal counsel.

Review of the Transfer Policy PDP

- On 18 February 2021, the GNSO Council initiated a two-phase PDP to review the Transfer Policy. This PDP is tasked to determine if changes to the policy are needed to improve the security and efficacy of inter-registrar and inter-registrant transfers. As recommended in the Final Issue Report, this PDP will address the following topics:
 - Phase 1A - Form of Authorization and AuthInfo Codes
 - Phase 1B - Change of Registrant
 - Phase 2 - Transfer Emergency Action Contact (TEAC) and reversing inter-registrar transfers, Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy (TDRP), NACKing transfers, and ICANN-approved transfers
- On 24 March 2021, the GNSO Council voted to approve the charter for this PDP. ICANN Supporting Organizations, Advisory Committees, and GNSO Stakeholder Groups and Constituencies will appoint a limited number of members and alternates to the working group. The GNSO Council will identify a chair for the working group through an Expression of Interest process.

New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP

- On 18 February 2021, the GNSO Council approved the Affirmations, Recommendations, and Implementation Guidance (collectively referred to as "Outputs") that were determined to have received either Full Consensus or Consensus designations as documented in the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group Final Report. The approval of the relevant Outputs represents the completion of approximately five years of community work.
- The GNSO Council confirmed the Recommendations Report to the ICANN Board during the 24 March 2021 GNSO Council meeting. The Recommendations Report and Final Report were then delivered to the ICANN Board for its consideration. The ICANN Board plans a Public Comment proceeding to support its consideration of the recommendations.

Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs PDP

- On 21 January 2021, the GNSO Council approved the recommendations from the Phase 1 Final Report of the Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms (RPMs) in All gTLDs PDP, covering RPMs applicable to gTLDs launched under the 2012 New gTLD Program. Similar to the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group, the completion of the RPMs PDP also represents a significant milestone, completing a five-year community effort.
- The GNSO Council also confirmed the RPMs Recommendations Report during its 18 February 2021 meeting and then delivered it to the ICANN Board. The ICANN Board plans a Public Comment proceeding to support its consideration of the recommendations.

IGO-INGO Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms PDP

- The International Governmental Organization (IGO) Work Track began meeting in February 2021, and its preliminary discussions are critical in developing an appropriate work plan for GNSO Council consideration.

EPDP on IDNs

- A drafting team is in the process of developing a draft charter and initiation request for an EPDP to address the impacts from the IDN variant TLD recommendations. Once the drafting

team completes its draft charter, the GNSO Council will consider initiating the EPDP on IDNs.

At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

- The ALAC published five statements, notably the ALAC statement submitted to the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) New Generic Top-Level Domain Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group. In addition, the ALAC is preparing to submit ALAC Advice to the ICANN Board on the topic.
- The ALAC also submitted statements on the Operational Design Phase, European Union Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems, IANA Naming Function Review, and Draft FY22-26 Operating and Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan and Budget.
- In December 2020, the ALAC approved the At-Large Structure (ALS) Mobilization Working Party Report. In March 2021, the ALAC ratified the Unaffiliated Individuals Mobilization Working Party Report. These reports were part of the At-Large Review Implementation Issue 2 on increasing the engagement of ALSes and individuals.

Regional At-Large Organization (RALO) Activities

African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO)

- The African community held the Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting on Wednesday, 24 March 2021, to discuss regional issues and finalize their joint statement, “ICANN Multistakeholder Model and the Increase in National Legislation and Regulation”.

Asian, Australasian, and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO)

- The members of APRALO continued to implement their policy forum to increase engagement in At-Large policy issues. They also initiated a pilot mentoring program with plans to expand to all of At-Large.

European Regional At-Large Organization (EURALO)

- EURALO revised its monthly meeting structure to encourage wider discussion in a series of roundtables.

Latin American and Caribbean Islands Regional At-Large Organization (LACRALO)

- LACRALO held its first Virtual General Assembly consisting of four sessions during ICANN70.

North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO)

- Since December 2020, monthly NARALO webinars have explored the following topics: the secondary market in domain names, opportunities and risks in internationalization of domain names, practical approaches to DNS abuse, and the development and implementation of human rights at ICANN.

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

- For the first time in the past year, the GAC developed Consensus Advice for the ICANN Board. GAC Consensus Advice and its accompanying “rationale” regarding Phase 2 of the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) Registration Data were included in GAC ICANN70 Communiqué.

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- In the GAC ICANN70 Communiqué, the GAC also reflected on matters related to previous Consensus Advice provided to the ICANN Board including, the Competition, Consumer Trust, and Consumer Choice (CCT) Review, new gTLD subsequent procedures, and International Governmental Organization (IGO) identifiers.
 - The GAC also provided information on a number of “issues of importance” such as Domain Name System abuse, public interest commitments, rights protection mechanisms, new gTLD subsequent procedures and domain name registration data, including the GNSO EPDP Phase 2, data accuracy, and policy implementation.
 - During this reporting period, the GAC was an active contributor to a number of Public Comment proceedings and cross-community efforts, including providing input on the ICANN Public Meeting strategy. The GAC also produced comments regarding the updated Operational Design Phase Proposal by ICANN org and submitted comments on the ICANN org Draft FY22-26 Operating and Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan and Budget.
 - During this reporting period, the GAC sent and received written correspondence regarding various matters of importance to GAC members including the Final Report of Phase 2 of the GNSO EPDP on gTLD Registration Data, ICANN Board action on IGO protections at the second level, and the GNSO New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group Final Report.

Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

- On 16 December 2020, the RSSAC published RSSAC054: RSSAC Statement on the ICANN Root Name Service Strategy and Implementation. In this statement, RSSAC recommends clearly identifying the two different roles for which ICANN is responsible: Serving as a Root Server Operator, and serving as the body responsible for facilitating the coordination of the Root Server System.

Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

- On 11 February 2021, the SSAC published SAC114: SSAC Comments on the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) New Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group Draft Final Report. SSAC conducted a holistic review of the Draft Final Report and specifically considered the implications of the expansion of TLDs and how the Draft Final Report addressed previous SSAC advice on new gTLD subsequent procedures. Overall, the SSAC is concerned about proceeding with the delegation of new TLDs without addressing several fundamental issues related to the security and stability of the Domain Name System (DNS).
- On 24 March 2021, the SSAC published SAC115: SSAC Report on an Interoperable Approach to Addressing Abuse Handling in the DNS. In this report, the SSAC proposes a general framework of best practices and processes to streamline reporting abuse of the DNS.
- On 24 March 2021, the SSAC published SAC116: SSAC Comments on the Second Security, Stability, and Resiliency (SSR2) Review Team Final Report. The SSAC is of the view that issues of security and stability are of paramount importance in the ICANN role in the Internet naming system. SSAC is committed to supporting the efforts of the ICANN org and community in responding to the SSR2 Final Report and within that context will provide further detailed analysis and commentary as appropriate.
- On 25 March 2021, the ICANN Board authorized Study 2 of the Name Collision Analysis Project. Study 2 is principally the analysis of name collisions for the purpose of responding to ICANN Board questions and providing advice on how to evaluate future name collisions, including a root analysis of known name collisions. The study is expected to finish by June 2022.

Customer Standing Committee (CSC)

- The CSC did not identify any issues with respect to how the IANA Naming Function was performed during this reporting period.

Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (RZERC)

- On 25 January 2021, the RZERC published RZERC002: Recommendations Regarding Signing Root Zone Name Server Data. In this report, the RZERC recommends the ICANN organization conduct the further studies called for in RSSAC028: Technical Analysis of the Naming Scheme Used for Individual Root Servers and further explore the tradeoffs and risks of signed root zone name server data.
- On 12 February 2021, the RZERC published RZERC003: Adding Zone Data Protections to the Root Zone. The RZERC believes that ZONEMD, a protocol that embeds a cryptographic digest of zone data into the zone itself, will be a reliable technique for verifying the root zone content. The RZERC supports deploying ZONEMD in the root zone, and asks the ICANN Board to organize the necessary work outlined in RZERC003.

Root Server System Governance Working Group (GWG)

- Since January 2021, the RSS GWG has focused its discussions on the New Organization (NewOrg) proposal. The RSS GWG merged the Public Root Services (PRS); Strategy, Architecture, and Policy Council (SAPC); and rationale for Root Server Operator (RSO) funding papers into a single NewOrg draft document.

UPCOMING WORK & MITIGATION

Address Supporting Organization (ASO)

- The ASO Address Council expects to announce its selection for ICANN Board Seat 9 in May 2021.

Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)

Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data Phase 2

- In adopting the Phase 2 Final Report of the EPDP Team and as part of the delivery of the GNSO Council Recommendations Report to the ICANN Board, the GNSO Council requested a consultation with the ICANN Board to discuss concerns around the financial sustainability of the System for Standardized Access/Disclosure (SSAD). This includes whether a further cost-benefit analysis should be conducted before the ICANN Board considers all SSAD-related recommendations for adoption. The requested consultation with the ICANN Board took place on 22 February 2021, where some councilors expressed their concern that the anticipated Operational Design Phase (ODP) was not equivalent to the cost-benefit analysis as requested.
- During its meeting on 25 March 2021, the ICANN Board directed ICANN org to initiate an ODP for EPDP Phase 2 recommendations related to the SSAD. The ICANN Board provided information regarding the SSAD ODP, including timing and scope; the scope of the ODP is intended to answer the majority of the GNSO Council-suggested operational impact assessment elements.

New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP

- With the transmission of the Recommendations Report and Final Report to the ICANN Board on 24 March 2021, a Public Comment proceeding will be initiated to support ICANN

Board consideration of the GNSO Council-approved Outputs. The ICANN Board may initiate an Operational Design Phase to further support its consideration.

Review of All Rights Protection Mechanisms in All gTLDs PDP

- The GNSO Council Recommendations Report has been delivered to the ICANN Board, and the ICANN Board plans a Public Comment proceeding to support its consideration of the recommendations.

Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO)

- The ccNSO Council and members are expected to start a decision-making process on separating ccPDP 3 Part A (retirement) and ccPDP 3 Part B (review mechanism) and adopt the policy recommendations on retirement. To be adopted by the ccNSO members, at least 86 of the 172 ccNSO members need to cast their vote, and 66% of the votes cast need to be in favor. The discussions on a review mechanism will continue.
- The ccPDP4 effort will continue. The working group will review and update the 2013 proposals. A sub-working group will develop recommendations on variant management at the top-level domain level, starting on the basis of the ICANN org proposals with respect to Root Zone Label Generation Rules.

At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC)

- The 2021 ALAC and Regional At-Large elections will begin in early May 2021. The open positions include an ALAC slot from the Asian, Australasian, and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization and ALAC chair.
- The EURALO General Assembly has been rescheduled from June 2021 to June 2022.

Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)

- The GAC confirmed its overall priority issues for 2021:
 - New generic top-level domain subsequent procedures
 - Registration Directory Services and data protection
 - Domain Name System abuse mitigation
 - International Governmental Organization Rights Protection Mechanisms
 - Implementation of the Work Stream 2 recommendations of the Cross-Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability

Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC)

- The RSSAC continues to review the latest working documents of the Root Server System Governance Working Group with interest.
- The RSSAC Caucus has a work party to develop a tool to gather a local perspective of the Root Server System (RSS). The RSSAC seeks to develop a tool or set of tools that can easily measure the local perspective of the RSS at various points of the Internet. The tool(s) should collect enough information to identify some of the reasons why the local perspective is performing at the measured level to differentiate potential misconfigurations or inadequate infrastructure from the true need for a new instance. The work party is nearing the completion of its report.
- The RSSAC Caucus has a work party studying the effects and mitigations of a rogue Root Server Operator (RSO). This work party is examining scenarios where an RSO, or someone acting as an RSO, serves incorrect zone data or otherwise violates any of the 11 principles outlined in RSSAC037. The purpose of this work is to understand the risks of potential rogue operators as well as prepare mitigations and proper responses to limit harm to the global Internet. The work party is nearing the completion of its report.

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- RSSAC is nearing finalizing a statement on the “Principles Guiding the Operation of the Public Root Server System.”

Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)

- The SSAC chartered a work party to investigate issues of Internet routing security. The scope of the work party is to examine the security and stability implications of routing security issues on the Internet's routing system and Domain Name System (DNS). The SSAC seeks to document this space in an effort to help the ICANN and Internet policy communities understand these technologies and the issues surrounding them. The SSAC has informed the Regional Internet Registries of this effort, and they have appointed a liaison for this work.
- The SSAC chartered a work party to comment on OCTO-15 and explore the possibility of a root service early warning system (EWS). Work party tasks may include: reviewing all past material on the topic, discussing the assumptions inherent in OCTO-15, commenting on the feasibility, desirability, practicality and usefulness of a root service EWS, investigating relevant data available for such a system and how such data might be made available to a future EWS, reviewing developments in the DNS and root service, that could affect overall stability of the root service, including such developments as deployments of new technologies and changes to the overall DNS ecosystem.

Customer Standing Committee (CSC)

- In May 2021, the CSC will launch a call for volunteers to ensure the annual CSC membership is appointed by 1 October 2021.

Root Zone Evolution Review Committee (RZERC)

- The RZERC has not received any questions or proposals to study in the upcoming reporting period.

Root Server System Governance Working Group (GWG)

- The GWG agreed that there is no common understanding of how much it costs to operate global root service. Therefore, the GWG worked with the Root Server System Advisory Committee to identify an intermediary for requesting an estimate from each Root Server Operator (RSO) about the scale of likely aggregate funding for the Root Server System (RSS). The exercise intends to assure the Internet community that the GWG is designing the New Organization proposal to the appropriate scale of expenditure. Engaging an intermediary to understand confidential and sensitive financial data about RSO business operations will help the GWG understand the extent of funding needed for the RSS. The exercise will also provide an understanding of the degree to which the business models of the RSOs are keeping pace with the function of the RSOs.
- In the coming months, the GWG intends to provide a stable document to its stakeholders for feedback and ongoing discussions.

Government and IGO Engagement

Mandy Carver, SVP, Government and IGO Engagement

KEY HIGHLIGHTS & MILESTONES

Participation in virtual engagement events at the United Nations (UN) in New York City

- Monitored ongoing discussions at the UN General Assembly regarding the existing Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on cybersecurity and the proposal for a new OEWG with four-year mandate (2021-2025)
- Monitored the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) dialogue on cybersecurity
- Monitored the UN Open-Ended Committee of Experts (OECE), tasked with drafting a UN cybercrime convention.

Continued engagement with European Institutions on new and existing key legislative initiatives

- Attended virtual High-Level group on Internet Governance on 28 January.
- Ongoing engagement with EU institutions on topical legislative initiatives i.e., revised Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS2) and Digital Services Act (DSA). Engagement efforts included:
 - Webinar between the Commission and the community on the NIS2 and DSA on 26th of February
 - Bilateral meetings with lawmakers involved in the drafting of NIS2
 - Written contributions to public consultations on the draft DSA and NIS2 proposals
 - Speaking engagement opportunities for ICANN CEO Goran Marby, such as European Internet Forum (network of Members of the European Parliament) “meet the CEO” event on 25th of March

Continued engagement with IGOs

- Initiated discussions with ITU-D on potential collaboration efforts as part of the preparation for the WTDC 2021 meeting in Addis
- On-going discussions with UNESCO about opportunities to promote Universal Acceptance/IDNs and ICANN’s potential support to UNESCO Internet Indicators program
- Followed ITU Council Working Groups discussions, touching on ICANN’s mission
- Ongoing engagement with the OECD on OECD’s reports and papers on topical issues for ICANN such as DNS security
- Followed the ITU WTDC21 Road to Addis Webinars
- Developed potential list of short term deliverables for next eight months of ICANN-ITU-D collaboration

Other processes continued in a virtual form, including following the ITU study groups' episodic dialogues about New IP and polymorphic networking. The WTSA preparatory discussions continue as that conference is now scheduled for March 2022.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITY

1. Liaising with the Government Advisory Committee (GAC)

Work with the GAC during this time period focused on briefings and discussions with the GAC leadership and the preparation of briefing materials for virtual ICANN70. In addition, the GE team continued to support the GAC capacity building program in accordance with the Underserved Regions Working Group (USRWG) work plan by organizing a webinar on Universal Acceptance with GSE Africa and the Universal Acceptance team.

GE continued with the monthly calls with the GAC Leadership to report on Government and IGO engagement activities and to provide an update on UN activities in NYC, a discussion on the issues involved in the proposed AU release, and a briefing on the possibilities for organizing the next High Level Governmental Meeting. GE, in coordination with the GAC Leadership, changed the usual format of these calls which previously had been mostly based on reporting to a format aimed at developing a dialogue with GAC leadership on several hot topics.

GE also performed coordination tasks for the organization of a webinar on DNS abuse for the African GAC Representative in collaboration with one of the GAC Vice-Chairs, OCTO and AfricaCERT. This webinar to be held on May 2nd.

2. Government and IGOs Engagement

The Government and IGO Engagement team continued its work with governments, global and regional intergovernmental organizations, as well as the country missions and permanent representatives to the various IGOs in Geneva, Brussels and New York.

GE has intensified engagement with the European Institutions, following their increased legislative activity on digital policy. The Revised Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS2) and Digital Services Act (DSA) were published in December. Both of these legislative proposals are relevant for ICANN and its community as they focus on WHOIS data, cybersecurity and liability of digital services for third party illegal content passing or hosted on services within the scope of ICANN's remit. The European Commission (EC) launched stakeholders' consultations ahead of the proposals (GE contributed to the one on the DSA)¹. The EC also launched a new public consultation to gather feedback on the text of the draft laws. GE submitted comments on both the legislative texts ([here](#) for the DSA, [here](#) for the NIS2). On the 26th of February, GE organized a webinar between the EC and the community to present these legislative initiatives and allow the community to ask questions.

GE is continually engaging with EU lawmakers to ensure consistency, sufficient legal clarity and technical feasibility of the proposed laws through bilateral meetings and speaking in events. As part of this work GE facilitated a speaking engagement for the ICANN CEO Goran Marby at the European Internet Forum so that he could address this network of members of European Parliament on issues of free flow of data and the importance of the single stable interoperable Internet for meaningful connectivity for their constituents. GE plans to organize additional targeted events and workshops in the upcoming months.

GE also continued to engage across the board with EU lawmakers on data protection. Following a landmark ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), which declared void the EU-US data umbrella agreement "Privacy Shield" and included new requirements for international data transfers, the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) published a draft Recommendation that companies will have to implement and sought comments from stakeholders on the draft text. ICANN submitted [comments](#). In this context, ICANN also submitted [comments](#) on a public consultation on the review of the data transfer instrument "Standard Contractual Clauses" (SCCs). SCCs had to be reviewed by the EC after the entry into force of the GDPR. ICANN comments also reflected the outcome of CJEU ruling. GE continues to monitor legislative developments and negotiations on the e-Privacy Regulation.

¹ <https://www.icann.org/en/announcements/details/icann-org-responds-to-digital-services-act-initiative-public-consultation-launched-by-european-commission-10-9-2020-en>

Ongoing IGO work also included monitoring the activities of the OECD (their reports and papers) and participating in its work providing technical input on topical issues for ICANN such as DNS security. This includes on-going engagement in the OECD ITAC and participation in the discussions and framing of questions to be addressed in proposed upcoming papers from the OECD.

GE's other ongoing IGO work also included monitoring the ITU Council Working Groups (CWGs) including the WG on international Internet-related Public Policy Issues and the WG on Child Online Protection (COP) meetings in Geneva, as well as the sessions of ITU-D Study group 1 and 2 for issues that have the potential to impact ICANN's mission. Although these WG do not always discuss issues touching on the operation of the DNS we have seen recently that similar proposals are launched simultaneously in several WG necessitating outreach and discussions with member states about separate responses in each wg. Among other issues this has included the episodically recurring discussions of new IP. GE, in collaboration with the OCTO team, also continued monitoring the non-IP network discussions within ETSI (the ETSI NIN working group) and tracking governments potential interest in and their response to the issues. Responding to questions from the community, GE provided comments on the three proposals by the Russian Federation to the CWG (2 - at CWG-Internet, and 1 - at CWG-COP), which directly addressed the DNS. The Russian proposals did not achieve consensus in the WGs and therefore were only noted in the CWG chairs' reports².

Another area of ongoing activity for GE during this time has been the UN General Assembly (UNGA) deliberations and the discussions of the UNGA resolutions that have the potential to touch on ICANN's mission. The discussions at the UN OEWG were on cybersecurity.

During the reported period, the OEWG held two meetings - on 15-17 February and 8 - 12 March. GE monitored the publicly accessible meetings and the virtual Informal Multi-stakeholder 90-minutes sessions, which took place on 9 March and 12 March 2021. The sessions were intended to provide an opportunity for a dialogue between the member states and NGOs. They were not a formal part of the OEWG process but the opinions expressed in the informal sessions helped ICANN org better understand the different positions of non-governmental actors regarding the ongoing discussions at the UN OEWG.

GE also continued to monitor the discussions around the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, and developments related to the establishment of an Office of the Technical Envoy as a new high-level position at the UN Secretary-General's office. GE continued to hold virtual bilateral meetings in New York with diplomats and officials from permanent missions and UN staff.

GE organized a webinar on New IP with the French government (Foreign affairs and Digital Economy ministries), French Permanent Mission in Geneva, ANSSI (French national cybersecurity agency) and AFNIC (.fr registry). This webinar aimed to share ICANN's analysis and exchange information with the French administration on all ongoing non-IP networks initiatives.

² FINAL REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH meeting of the Council working group on international Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet) <https://www.itu.int/md/S21-RCLINTPOL15-C-0012/en>
Report by the Chairman of the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection OUTCOME OF THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION, <https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CLCWGCOP17-C-0008/en>

The GE team continued its work with colleagues on discussions in the ICANN community and the larger IG ecosystem on data protection and the GDPR as part of the broader outreach and engagement work with governments and IGOs.

3. Participation in and following of Internet and Technical Internet Governance Discussions

ICANN continues its active support of the global IGF through participation of its representative in the regular Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) virtual meetings. While the next global IGF will take place in December of 2021 the process of designing themes and preparing submissions for the conference program continues throughout the year. GE leads an internal cross-functional committee working to develop possible ICANN Org workshop proposals for IGF2021. The 16th edition of the IGF will have several main themes that have been selected by the MAG. This year's 'issue-driven approach' has thus far identified two categories of activity: a 'main focus area' with two issue areas intended to be multi-year and outcome-focused, and an 'emerging and cross-cutting issues' category that will be discussion-driven. The 'main focus areas' are *Economic and social inclusion and human rights* and *Universal access and meaningful connectivity*. The four 'emerging and cross-cutting issues' are *Emerging regulations: market structure, content, data and consumer/users rights regulation*, *Environmental sustainability and climate change*, *Inclusive IG ecosystems and digital cooperation*, and *Trust, security, stability*. The global IGF2021 plans to continue the Parliamentarian track with an emphasis on greater government participation so GE is actively engaged with the local hosts and colleagues at ICANN to identify opportunities for meaningful engagement in the government focused track.

The members of the GE team also participated in various regional and country forums virtually, primarily as observers of relevant high-level discussions.

TOP ISSUES & MITIGATION

GE, in collaboration with the GSE, continued to monitor the development of the e-privacy initiatives and various cybersecurity topics as they arise in various fora. The GDPR, its impact on ICANN Org processes and procedures and the development of mechanisms to more effectively monitor developing legislative and regulatory initiatives globally remains an important focus. This is part of the overall geopolitical tracking done by GE in collaboration with other ICANN functions and in coordination with other organizations in the Internet ecosystem.

GE has analyzed a number of statements by high-level officials from Russia (President Putin, former President Medvedev, foreign minister Lavrov, Amb. Krutskikh and others), who since mid-August have publicly said, on a number of occasions, that the way the DNS and IP addresses are being managed is not appropriate, that there is a need to push the Internet Governance discussion to the UN and/or to the ITU, etc. A paper, focused on the Russian Internet-related proposals and policies, was published³ by GE in January 2021.

GE is continually engaging with EU lawmakers to ensure consistency, sufficient legal clarity and technical feasibility of the new proposed legislation on cybersecurity and digital services through bilateral meetings and targeted events and workshops that will continue in the upcoming months

GE papers on various government and IGO activities can be found at <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/government-engagement-publications-2020-03-02-en>.

³ Download the PDF here: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/ge-006-19jan21-en.pdf>

Regional Office Reports

APAC (Singapore)

Jia-Rong Low, VP, Stakeholder Engagement & Managing Director - Asia Pacific

Key Regional Activities

Date	Event Name	Location	Remarks
Dec 19-22	<u>Thailand Networking Group (THNG) Camp #10</u> Organized by the Thai Network Information Center Foundation	Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We spoke on Internet Governance (IG), Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), and Universal Acceptance (UA). 45 participants attended this youth engagement camp.
Dec 29-30	<u>India Internet Week: Workshops on (i) UA Challenges (ii) UA Standardization</u>	Virtual (India)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We presented on the topics of ICANN's role in the Internet ecosystem, and UA. Organized by the India Internet Foundation (IIFON), the two workshops were attended by 23 and 19 participants respectively.
Jan 3- Feb 9	<u>Global CyberPeace Challenge 2.0</u> A competition targeted for global youth comprising three sub-challenges: policy development, cyber-hygiene, and information technology solutions for specific cybersecurity issues.	Virtual (India)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICANN Board Chair Maarten Botterman delivered a congratulatory speech, emphasizing the importance of multistakeholder collaboration against rising cybersecurity threats. We also conducted a workshop on Domain Name System (DNS) threats and abuse handling, as well as best practices for securing the DNS, which was attended by 47 participants. Over 1,600 participants from 55 nations competed in the challenge.
Jan 7 Feb 18 Feb 25	<u>Netmission Academy 2021</u> An online Internet Governance (IG) capacity-building program focused on	Virtual (Hong Kong)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We contributed in three sessions covering ICANN's structure and functions; ICANN's Policy Development Process (PDP); and Diversity and Multistakeholder Participation.

	interactive learning approaches.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICANN Board Chair Maarten Botterman participated in the aforementioned third session. • The 2021 cohort comprised 50 full-time tertiary students.
Jan 20	<u>APAC UA Training Program</u> A series of UA training sessions.	Virtual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with the Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association (APTLD), we conducted the first training session of the Program on “Configuring for Email Address Internationalization (EAI)”. • 27 participants attended.
Jan 30	<u>UA Local Initiatives Tech Talk for Academia</u>	Virtual (India)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We delivered a keynote speech on IDNs and UA. • Organized by the Indian Language Internet Alliance (ILIA), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the session was attended by 110 students and academics.
Feb 22- Mar 5	<u>APRICOT 2021</u> An annual technical event consisting of a 5-day Technical Tutorial Week for regional network operators, followed by a 5-day Conference Week.	Virtual (Philippines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICANN CEO and President Göran Marby delivered a keynote speech on “Navigating the Post-Pandemic World as an Internet Community”. The session was attended by 180 participants. • We conducted a two-day “Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) Operations” workshop during the Tutorial Week, which was attended by 67 and 38 participants respectively.
Feb 25	<u>APAC Space</u> A regional platform to discuss DNS industry topics and/or ICANN-related policy issues.	Virtual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We held an information sharing session on the Root Server System (RSS). • The session was attended by 55 participants.
Mar 16-22	<u>ICANN70 Related Sessions</u>	Virtual	We spoke at the following ICANN70 related sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the DNS for 42 NextGen participants and ICANN Fellows. • ICANN70 India Pre-Meeting, which was attended by 24 participants.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICANN70 Tech Day on the topic of EAI, attended by 140 participants.
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Europe (Brussels)

Chris Mondini, VP, Stakeholder Engagement, Europe & Managing Director, Brussels

Overview of Significant Activities

A lot of activity was directed at addressing geopolitical issues impacting ICANN's mission, specifically a package of proposed legislation released by the European Commission (EC) aimed at online platforms and services. The EC also released a cyber security strategy and draft directive for member states to secure networks and information technology infrastructure. Each of the drafts either directly mentions the Domain Name System (DNS) or has the potential to affect the functioning of key organizations across the DNS ecosystem. In addition to blogs and public comments submitted in response to these proposals, ICANN organized two well-attended webinars, plus a speaking engagement for ICANN CEO Göran Marby before the European Internet Forum. The campaign to explain Technical Internet Governance kicked off at the very beginning of April, with an appearance by Mandy Carver (virtually) at the Russian IGF.

The highlight of DNS security engagement was a workshop for the Nordic Region explaining ICANN's mission and operations, attended by 150 technical stakeholders, resulting in the establishment of a Nordic mailing list for ICANN issues and events. The team conducted trainings for Network Operating Groups ("NOGs") in Finland, Czechia and Slovakia on the topic of Universal Acceptance. ICANN became a member of CyberNet, a European Union initiative to provide training on Internet Security. CyberNet will deploy ICANN experts to help conduct some of its trainings. In collaboration with technical partners from ccTLDs and RipeNCC, we also launched an "Internet Measurement Day" for Armenia, to raise awareness of the DNS among influential stakeholders there. We continued to promote OCTO projects DAAR and ITHI across the region, and OCTO began developing new DNSSEC training for registries in the region using the Power DNS software.

Beyond technical and government engagement, ICANN conducted a series of instructional webinars for members of its Not-for-Profit Operational Concerns (NPOC) constituency, addressing topics around domain registration, domain name management, and security. The engagement team also embarked on a series of discussions with European Internet Governance Forums (National and Regional IGFs) on good practices and the effectiveness of their work. Adam Peake began his term as a member of the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group in preparation for a planned "hybrid" global IGF taking place in Katowice, Poland – and online -- in late 2021. He also delivered three university lectures during the covered period.

The run-up to ICANN 70 required engagement across the region, ranging from contacting new members of the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to addressing preparatory gatherings of national multistakeholder committees in places as diverse as the UK, Netherlands, Portugal and Italy. On a domain sector operational level, we addressed registry related issues, for example correcting contact information in the IANA database for a number of central Asian ccTLDs.

Team morale during the Covid-19 pandemic continued to be an area of focus. Confinements in much of the region continued while other countries fully emerged from lock-down. Both the Brussels and Geneva offices remained closed, progress on planning the eventual resumption of normal operations with the R-CMT continued. ICANN Europe's "All Hands" retreat is underway via zoom, in monthly one-hour installments, until September 2021.

Geneva Engagement Office

Mandy Carver, SVP, Government and IGO Engagement

Due to the ongoing restrictions under the Swiss COVID-19 lockdown, face-to-face meetings and conferences continue to be postponed and intersessional work has remained virtual.

The Geneva-based staff continues to pursue their virtual engagement work with relevant stakeholders in the IGOs and NGOs. This includes work with the IGF Secretariat and the organizational work for ICANN participation in the global IGF2021. GE continues to follow the work of the ITU and its resolutions and conference development processes including TDAG, TSAG and the ITU SG discussions, and the “WTSA-21” and “WTDC-21” preparation discussions⁴. Two topic areas continue to be an area of interest – DNS abuse using Covid-19 lures and the ongoing discussions about the concept of “New IP.” In that context, GE continues to promote awareness of the work done by OCTO on the questions of DNS Abuse and provide explanatory material on the technical underpinnings of the Internet.

Building on earlier successful engagements GE is planning with OCTO to organize another webinar for the members of the FRATEL (the global network of Francophone regulators) on new IP and ETSI NIN. This webinar was originally scheduled for February 2021 but now has been postponed to May or June of 2021.

Another area of ongoing work is monitoring the security dialogues currently taking place in several IGO. GE staff in Geneva and Brussels continue to follow the work of the ITAC-OECD involving the Committee on Digital Economy Policy and its working parties on Data Governance and Privacy in the Digital Economy (DGP), and the Working Party on Security in the Digital Economy (SDE) among others. As members of ITAC ICANN has submitted comments on proposed OECD publications relevant to ICANN’s mission.

Additional details on the work of the Geneva based GE team can be found in the Government and IGO Engagement section of the CEO report.

⁴ The ITU Council is still discussing the specific dates but the WTSA and the Plenipotentiary meeting of the ITU will all now occur in 2022. While the WTDC is still listed as November of 2021 it is anticipated this might formally change once the Telecommunications Development Advisory Group (TDAG) has its virtual meeting 24-28 May 2021

Middle East, Africa (Istanbul)

Baher Esmat, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement - Middle East & Managing Director - Middle East & Managing Director MEA

Overview of Significant Activities

As the pandemic and its effects persisted, the GSE Africa and Middle East teams continued their engagement activities virtually.

GSE Africa, targeted outreach to local communities, tailoring activities designed to meet their needs, especially on topics like DNSSEC deployment as well as projects such as DAAR and ITHI. They also continued to maintain close relationships with governments and engage with their teams on various issues related to ICANN's mission.

GSE Middle East, in collaboration with the OCTO Technical Engagement (TE) team in MEA, organized webinars and workshops around DNS Operations, DNSSEC, and DNS Abuse. These activities, combined, attracted more than 300 participants from countries including Afghanistan, Turkey, Palestine, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.

Key Regional Activities

Date	Event Name	Location	Remarks
18 Jan 2021	13 th MENA Working Group Meeting on Cybercrime for Heads of Units	Virtual	The objective was to engage with Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) from across the MENA region, showcasing our stability, security and resiliency work in general, and in the times of COVID-19 in specific. ICANN org staff delivered a presentation about DNS Abuse and its domain abuse reporting tool.
18-19 Jan 2021	DNS Operations Workshop for the .YE (YEMEN) ccTLD	Sana'a, Yemen (Virtual)	ICANN org organized a 2-day hands-on workshop on DNS Operations in times of COVID-19. This was the first hands-on remote workshop organized in the Middle East. It was led by the OCTO-TE MEA team and was attended by 8 participants.
21 Jan 2021	Webinar with the Association of African Universities (AAU)	Virtual	The main objective was to introduce the membership of the AAU to two key ICANN org projects / topics: ITHI and DNSSEC. The intention was to demonstrate to the Universities how they could participate in both projects. During the webinar some organizations demonstrated that their email systems were UA ready.
29 Jan 2021	Communication Working Group Meeting	Istanbul, Turkey (Virtual)	The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure initiated a working group to solicit stakeholders' input for its future vision and strategy. ICANN org joined the

			Communication Working Group and contributed to the working group sectoral report in the areas of Internet Domain Names and Cybersecurity.
4 Feb 2021	Webinar with African ccTLDs	Virtual	This joint webinar was organized by GSE Africa and OCTO-TE. The overall objective of the webinar was to mobilize the participation of the Africa ccTLDs in the DAAR project by having them sign-up and enroll their zone files.
23-24 Feb 2021	DNS Operations Workshop	Virtual	This workshop was dedicated to three Turkish Registrars and the (.TR) Registry Operator. The objective was to get new team members in these organizations up to speed with DNS technical operations.
4 March 2021	Webinar on Securing the Core of Internet	Regional (Virtual)	A joint regional webinar with RIPE NCC covering the respective technical hot topics and security solutions: DNSSEC, RPKI, etc.
15-19 March 2021	WACREN 2021	Virtual	This event was not sponsored by ICANN this year . The GSE Africa team participated without formal presentation.
29 March 2021	Webinar on Trademarks, IP and Domain Names Dispute Resolution	Virtual	This was a Joint Webinar with KeNIC, ICANN and LawyersHub – Kenya on Intellectual Property and Trademarks in the context of Domain Disputes.
29 March 1 April 2021	DNSSEC Hands-On Workshop	Rabat, Morocco (Virtual)	A 4-days hands-on workshop on DNSSEC for (.MA) Registry and DNS industry players in Morocco.

Other Activities

The GSE Africa team also collaborated with the MEA OCTO Technical Engagement team to support the development of technical capacities and local expertise in DNS operations and security. They facilitated online workshops to deliver trainings and webinars for Nigeria (.NG), Kenya (.KE), and Benin (.BJ) ccTLDs. GSE Africa has also provided updates on engagement activities during AFRALO monthly calls.

During this period, the GSE Middle East team was planning for the seventh Middle East DNS Forum (MEDNSF) that took place virtually for the first time between 5-7 April 2021.

The Policy Team, based out of the MEA Regional Office, provided regular updates to the entire MEA team on activities pertaining to the various communities they support such as ALAC/At-Large, GAC, RSSAC, Empowered Community, as well as general ICANN policy updates.

Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo)

Rodrigo de la Parra, VP, Stakeholder Engagement & Managing Director - Latin America & Caribbean

Overview of Significant Activities

This quarter we focused on engagement activities for ICANN70 originally scheduled to happen in Cancun, Mexico. One activity that deserves to be highlighted is our GAC prep webinar. This time, we worked in close collaboration with the Policy Development Support and Government Engagement teams and the GAC leadership to organize this event. Over the last year there have been substantial changes in government administrations in various governments in the region which impacted the participation of Latin American and Caribbean governments at the GAC.

With this joint approach we were able to reach out to the new appointed officials and get them to participate at the prep webinar. Also, we managed to set up an agenda that could be meaningful both for newcomers and veterans from the region helping them navigate the GAC meetings during ICANN 70.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines joined the GAC and new governmental agencies different from the traditional ICT Ministers and Regulators were approached and got acquainted to ICANN. Academic institutions and ISPs associations from the region joined the different sessions and discovered the role of ICANN and the value of an open and interoperable Internet.

Finally, during the meeting we also held our traditional LAC Space session with great participation from our regional community. Other activities included our participation in two LACRALO activities, a session on Strategic Plans for the future and a truly fun social event with “live streamed” folkloric Mexican performance.

Key Regional Activities

Date	Event Name	Location	Remarks
27 Jan	ICANN LAC Talks	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Featuring LACRALO. During this session we got to learn more about LACRALO activities, particularly in two special projects: Universal Acceptance and DNS Women.
28-29 Jan	5 th Annual IGF Trinidad and Tobago	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ICANN participation was on the session “Cybersecurity: The New Norm” where we gave a presentation on DNS Security and DNSSEC.

13 - March	LAC Space during ICANN70	Online	Board Directors from the LAC region updated the regional community on relevant discussions at the Board. Presentations by LACTLD, LACNIC and LACRALO and a special session on EPDP 2 Final Report and Next Steps. •
30-31 March	CaribNOG 21	Online	Under the theme “Network Infrastructure Security.” CaribNOG 21 provided participants with the opportunity to network virtually and gain actionable insights into the technical elements of Network Infrastructure Security. The program addressed two critical topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Network Security Best Practices – assessing your network for vulnerabilities, protecting your networks from attacks 2. DNS and DNSSEC – Getting the most from the DNS Root Service

Other Activities

During the week of February 1st, 2021 the Montevideo Regional Office held its annual All Hands meeting. Under the theme “Advancing ICANN Regional Implementation in the LAC Region – Taking our Cooperation with Functions to the Next Level” the team attached to the regional office spent a few days reviewing the interactions with the different ICANN Global functions. The All Hands included strategic conversations with ICANN executives including Göran Marby and Sally Costerton. This event also covered a workshop on Social Media led by Sally Newell Cohen and a team building exercise facilitated by Global Human Resources.

North America (Washington, D.C.)

Jamie Hedlund, SVP, Contractual Compliance & Consumer Safeguards and Managing Director
– Washington D.C. office

Overview of Significant Activities

All staff based out of the Washington, D.C. are still working remotely. I continue to consult with the regional crisis management team to determine when it's appropriate to reopen the office and allow staff to return. While this closure continues to impact our ability to engage with local and regional stakeholders, we continue to find opportunities for remote engagement, where possible.

Key Regional Activities

Date	Event Name	Location	Remarks
16 March	IPv6 Presentation	University of Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborated with ARIN to deliver a presentation on ICANN and IPv6 to students at University of Colorado at Boulder
17-19 February	Telecommunications Policy Research Conference	Virtual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Presentations on a number of ICANN-related topics, such as “Changing Markets for Domain Names,” “What the DNS Goes Dark,” and “Exploring the Privacy Trade-offs and industry impacts of DNS over HTTPS”

ICANN Board Social Media Report

Covering Period from 1 January - 31 March 2021 and ICANN70, 22-25 March 2021

Social Media Metrics: Executive Summary

Social media plays an important role in our engagement with global stakeholders. The ICANN organization's Communications team continues to invest time, resources, and budget to expand our global social media reach. The team operates 17 accounts and pages in multiple languages.

ICANN Social Media Accounts

Platform	Accounts	Details	Multilingual
Twitter	8	English, French, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, ICANN President & CEO, and ICANN CTO handles	Yes
Facebook	1	Multilingual platform in the six U.N. languages, primarily focused on English	Yes
LinkedIn	1	English	No
YouTube	1	Videos in all 6 U.N. languages	Yes
Instagram	1	English	No
WeChat	1	Chinese	No
Weibo	1	Chinese	No
Youku	1	Chinese	No
Flickr	1		N/A
SoundCloud	1	English	No

Social Media Strategy

ICANN's social media platforms help increase and encourage engagement with and awareness of our content in multiple languages. Stakeholders also interact directly with ICANN to pose questions or send comments. This allows us to create a direct dialogue with stakeholders that would otherwise not exist. The Communications team responds to hundreds of direct messages posted to our social media channels each month.

The Communications team also amplifies messages from the social media handles and pages of ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees (SOs/ACs) and influential ICANN stakeholders. This allows for an even broader reach of content, leveraging ICANN's large follower base to reach a wider audience.

How to Measure Effectiveness and ROI?

Evaluating the effectiveness of social media ROI is not an exact science. The methodologies social media companies use in calculating and reporting metrics are fairly opaque, which can make it challenging to determine the quantifiable impact ICANN's social media activities have on engagement.

Furthermore, there is no **independent** verification of the data that social media platforms provide. It is in the best interests of the platforms to report **more followers** and more **engaged** followers. The data should be viewed with skepticism and used primarily to determine which posts lead to verifiable engagements (clicks to pages, applications, surveys, etc.) as mere awareness is difficult to measure.

The number of followers ICANN has on Twitter, Facebook, etc., should also be viewed with a critical eye as a portion of those followers will be bots (fake followers). Newsletter platform metrics are more verifiable, as subscribers themselves need to opt in and bots and honeypot email addresses will result in suspension of the account.

Although it is difficult to measure the exact effectiveness of social media versus the level of effort, we are able to show trends in the engagement rate of content posted to ICANN's social media accounts, gauge follower interest in a particular topic, and reach audiences outside our traditional stakeholder base.

Impact of COVID-19 on Engagement and Paid Posts

Globally, companies and institutions continue to report a decrease in engagement as user behavior has changed during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

Also, social media platforms have ramped up their prioritization of paid posts, meaning organic reach is declining. Newsletter platforms already have a paid model and the content served to the subscriber is independent from the platform's control.

Industry Average and ICANN Key Performance Indicator Targets

Platform	Industry Average Engagement Rate**	Industry Average Click Rate	Industry Average Open Rate	ICANN KPI Targets*
Twitter	0.045%	N/A	N/A	0.5%
Facebook	0.09%	N/A	N/A	1.0%
Instagram	1.22%	N/A	N/A	2.5%
LinkedIn	0.54%	N/A	N/A	2.0%
Newsletters	N/A	17%	10.65%	20% Open Rate 5% Click Rate

*ICANN KPI targets for social media engagement fluctuates based on industry data and changes yearly. ICANN aims to overperform versus the industry average and bases targets on the engagement rate considered “good” for specific platforms for that specific year. ICANN KPI targets for newsletter open and click rates are similarly based on industry data a change yearly. ICANN sets its target to overperform on open rates and while setting a more realistic click rate that is below the industry average.

**The Industry Average Social Media Engagement Rate documented above is based on findings from ICANN’s social media publishing platform HootSuite data and [Sprout Social findings](#). The Industry Average for Newsletter Open and Click rates documented above is based on ICANN’s newsletter publishing platform [Constant Contact](#).

Key Findings: Cross-Platform

Each platform measures engagement rate differently, but it remains a meaningful metric we are able to use to observe trends and the effectiveness of platforms:

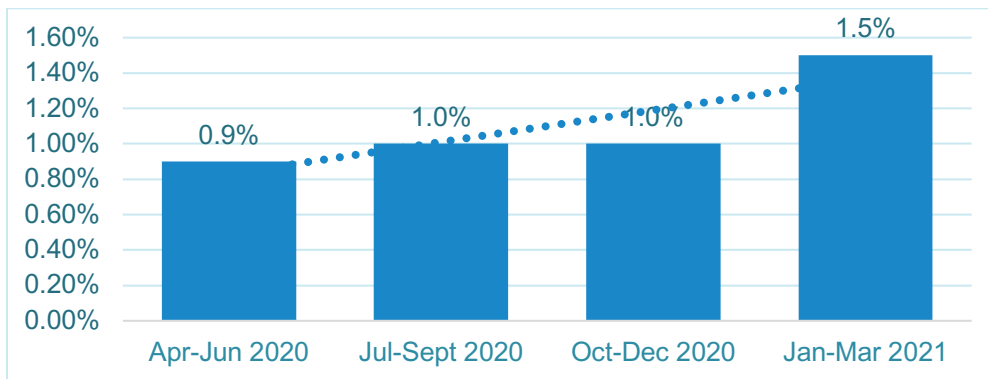
- ⦿ Given the pause on travel and all in-person meetings, this has had an impact on our follower growth and engagement rate. Without the benefits of in-person engagement and ability to capture photos, our level of engagement will remain stagnant or lower.
- ⦿ Despite the impact of the pandemic, ICANN continues to overperform against its KPI targets. And Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, continue to gain followers in 2020, a notable achievement as many businesses and nonprofits are currently experiencing a decrease in followers.
- ⦿ We do anticipate an increase in social media activity when in-person activities resume.

Twitter @ICANN Highlights

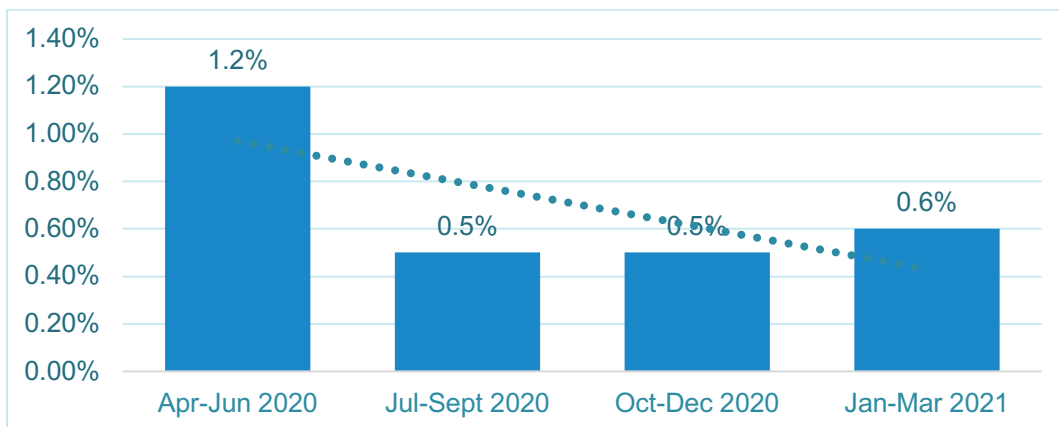
1 January-31 March 2021

- ⦿ The industry average engagement rate is 0.045% and our KPI target is 0.5%.
- ⦿ ICANN earned a 1.5% engagement rate from January-March 2021, overperforming on our KPI target. The engagement rate is also showing a slight uptick in activity over the previous three quarters.
- ⦿ The account earned a slight increase in follower growth over the previous quarter but there is an overall downward trend.

Twitter @ICANN Engagement Rate



Twitter @ICANN Follower Growth



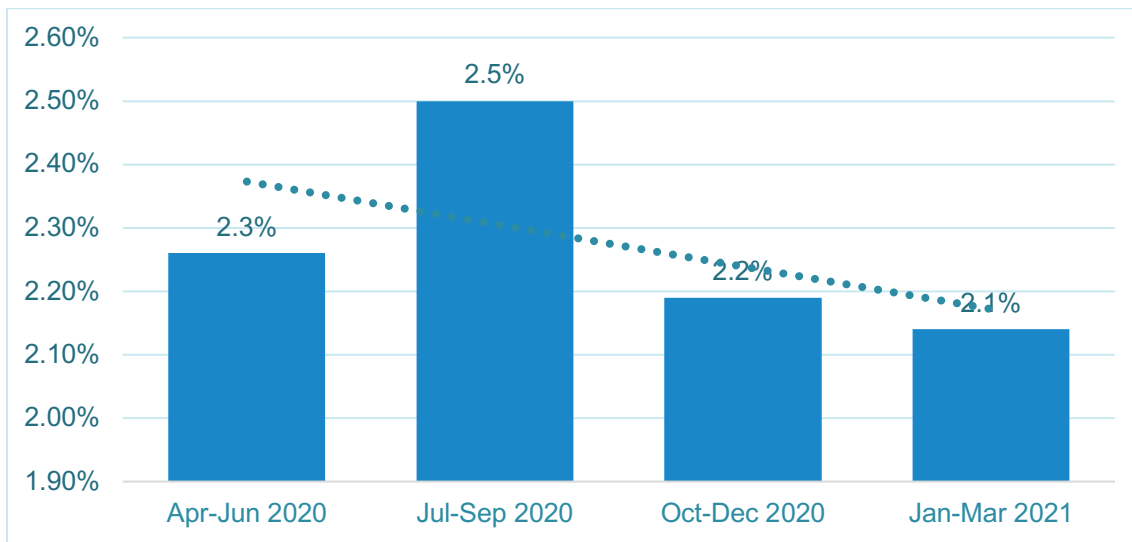
*Note: We did not include data for our other Twitter handles.

Facebook Highlights

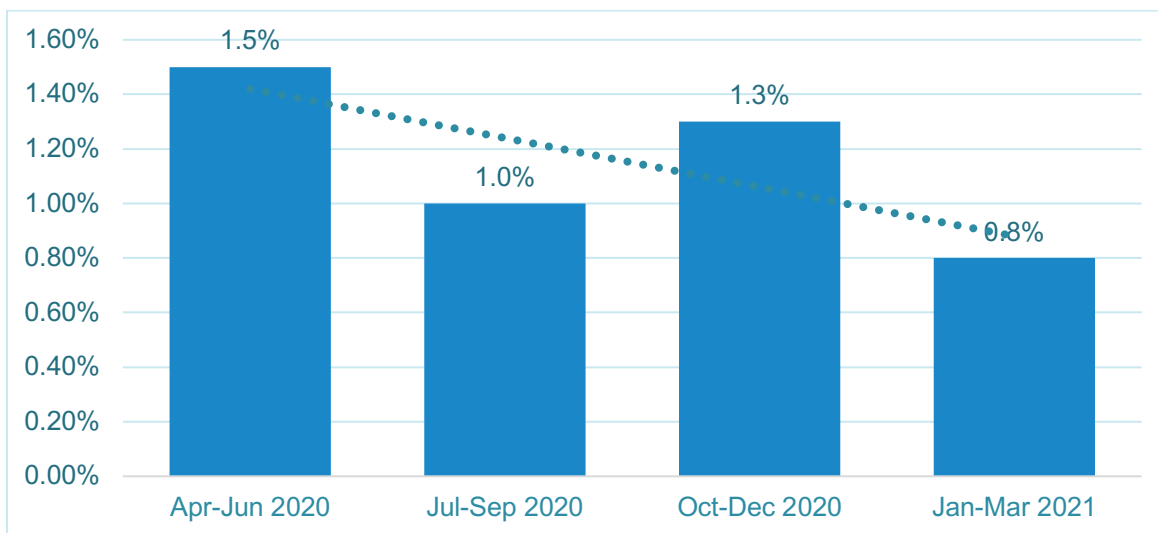
1 January-31 March 2021

- ⦿ The industry average engagement rate is 0.09% and our KPI target is 1.0%.
- ⦿ ICANN earned a 2.1% engagement rate from January-March 2021, overperforming on our KPI target. The engagement rate is showing a downward trend in activity over the previous two quarters.
- ⦿ There was a decrease in follower growth over the previous quarter and an overall downward trend.

Facebook Engagement Rate



Facebook Follower Growth

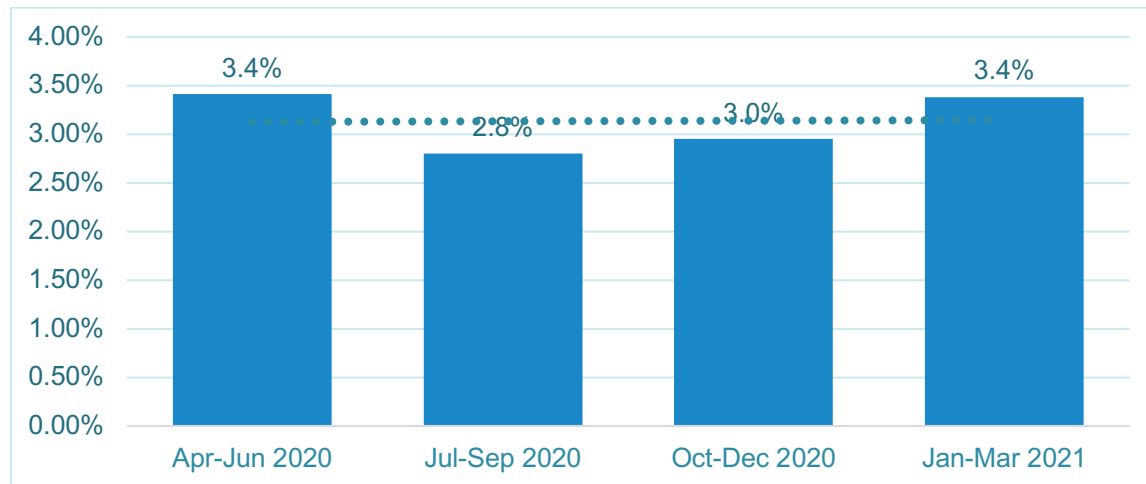


LinkedIn Highlights

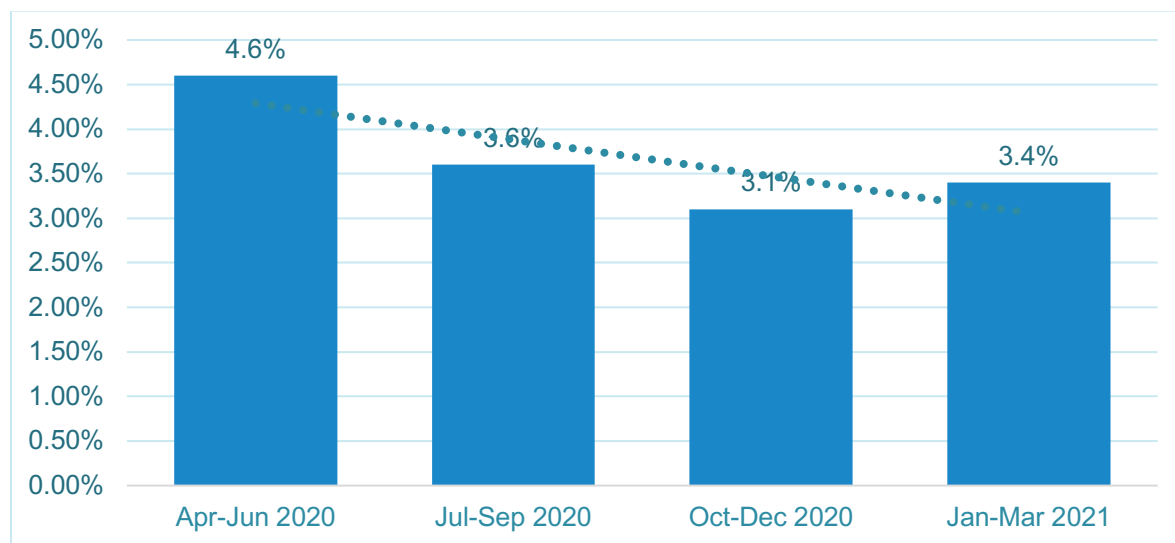
1 January-31 March 2021

- ⦿ The industry average engagement rate is 0.54% and our KPI target is 2.0%.
- ⦿ ICANN earned a 3.4% engagement rate from January-March 2021, overperforming on our KPI target. The engagement rate is showing a slight uptick in activity over the previous two quarters.
- ⦿ There was an increase in follower growth over the previous quarter but an overall downward trend.

LinkedIn Engagement Rate



LinkedIn Follower Growth

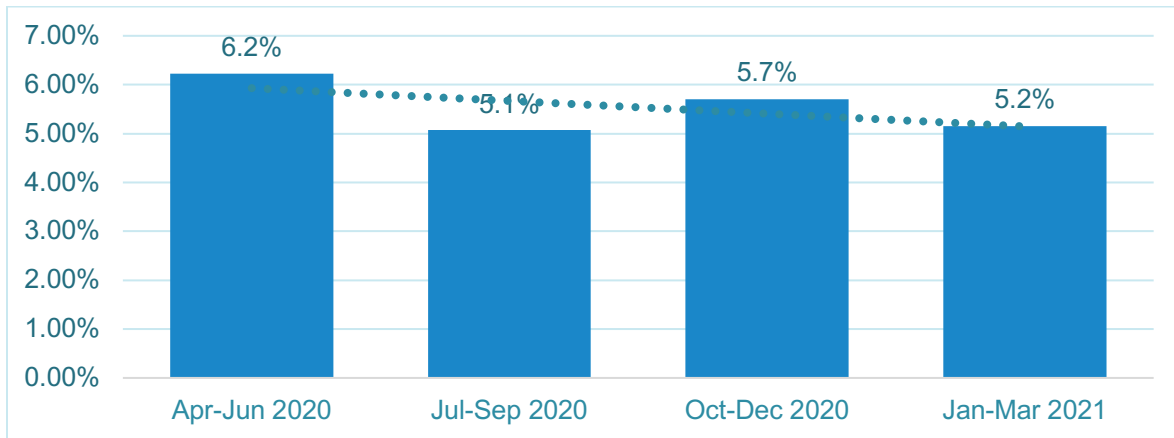


Instagram Highlights

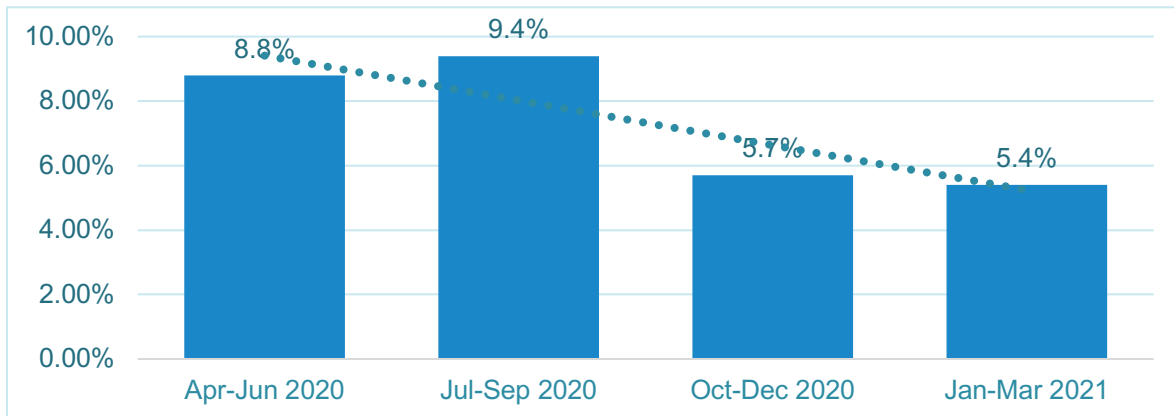
1 January-31 March 2021

- ⦿ The industry average engagement rate is 1.22% and our KPI target is 2.5%.
- ⦿ ICANN earned a 5.2% engagement rate from January-March 2021, overperforming on our KPI target.
- ⦿ There was a decrease in follower growth over the previous quarter and an overall downward trend.

Instagram Engagement Rate



Instagram Follower Growth

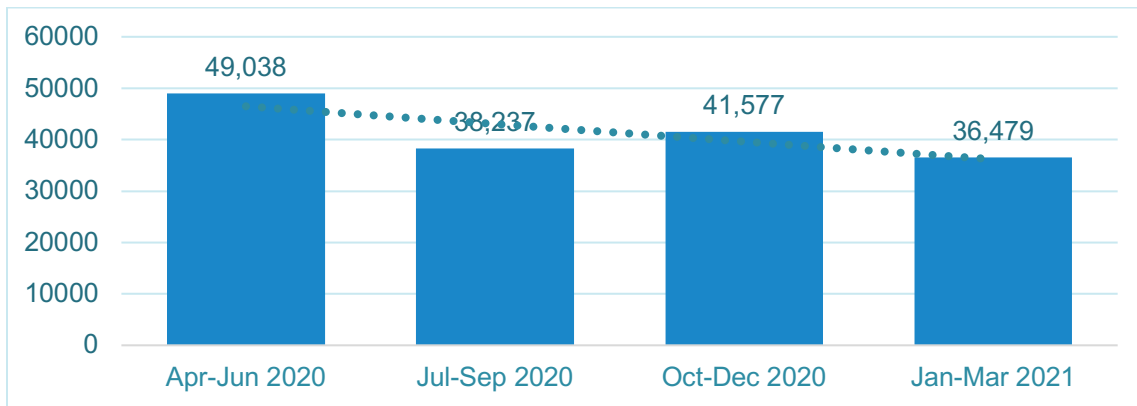


YouTube Highlights

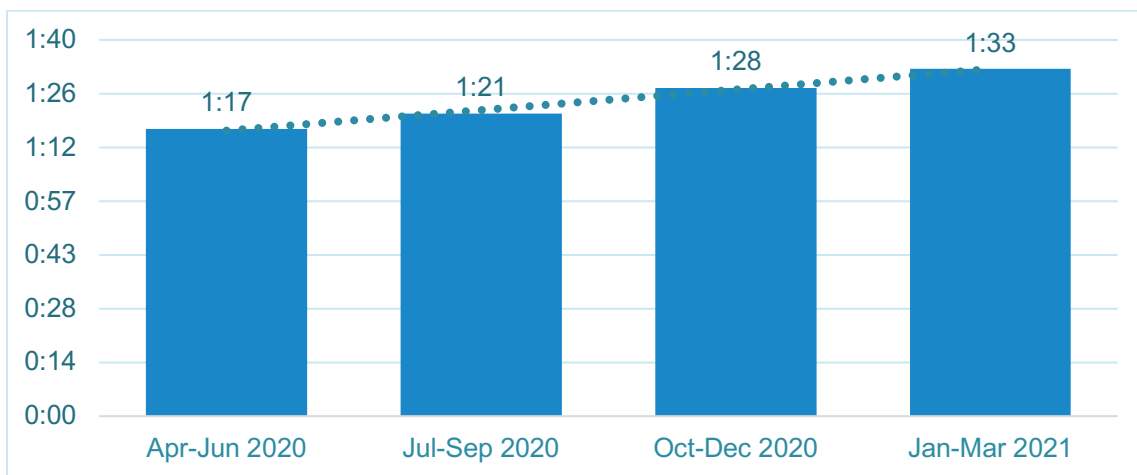
1 January-31 March 2021

- ⦿ YouTube measures performance using number of views and the average duration of a view. It is difficult to set KPI targets as there are no industry averages.
- ⦿ YouTube views were lower in January-March 2021 (36,479) versus the previous quarter (41,577), a decrease of 12.3%.
- ⦿ The average duration of a video view was slightly higher, 1:33 versus 1:28 in October-December 2020.
- ⦿ The ICANN YouTube channel earned an increase of 735 subscribers from January-March 2021, for a total of 11,996 subscribers.
- ⦿ The ICANN70 Website Feature Demonstration was the top viewed video posted from January-March 2021, with 931 views.

YouTube Video Views



YouTube Average Duration

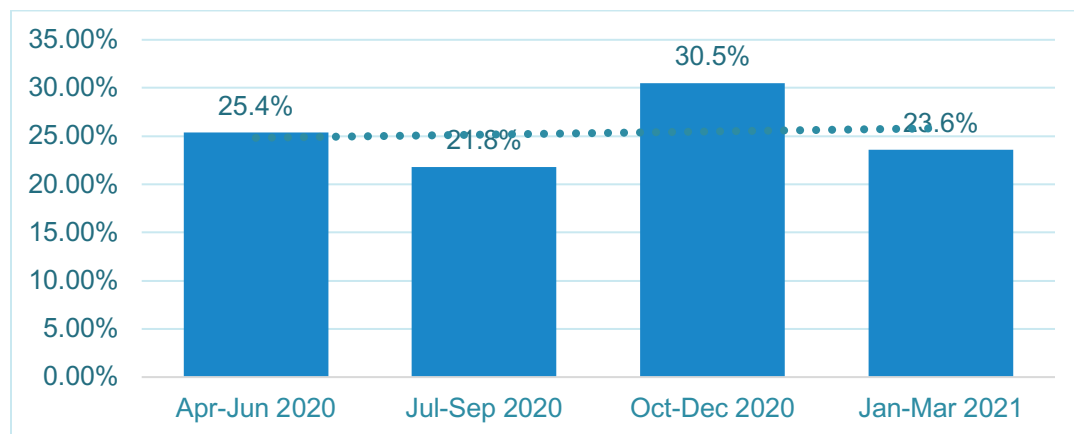


Newsletters Highlights

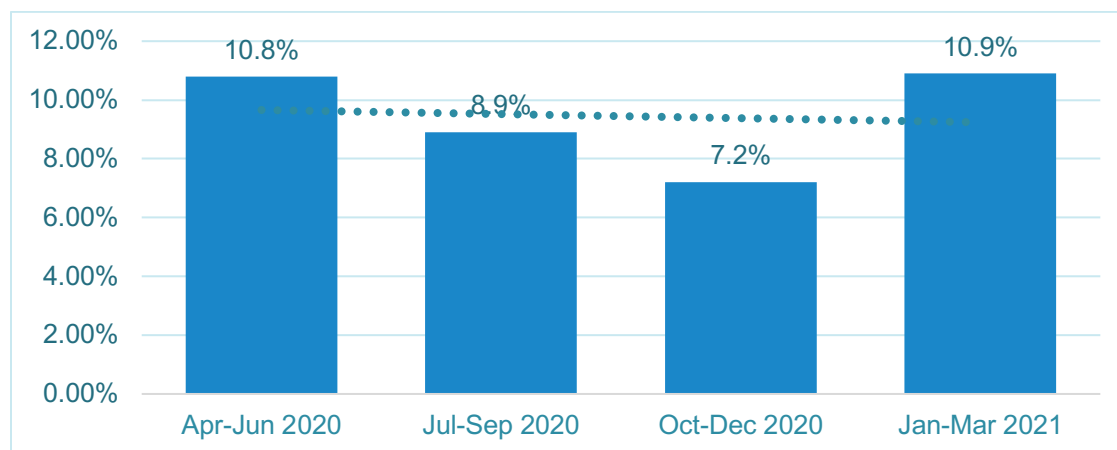
1 January-31 March 2021

- Newsletter performance is measured by open rate and click rate (the number of subscribers who click on links within the newsletter). The industry average is 17% for open rates and 10.65% for click rates, and our KPI targets are 20% open rates and 5% click rates.
- The average open rate for ICANN regional newsletters was 23.6%, exceeding our target but lower than the previous quarter (October-December 2020, 30.5%).
- The average click rate, 10.9%, exceeding our target and higher than the previous quarter, which earned a 7.2% click rate.
- Our Public Meeting newsletters continue to earn higher open and click rates compared with our regional newsletters. The Public Meeting newsletter with the highest open rate was the ICANN70 24 March newsletter, earning a 40% open rate.
- The Public Meeting newsletter with the highest click rate was the ICANN70 22 March newsletter, earning an impressive 32% click rate.

Newsletter Open Rate



Newsletter Click Rate

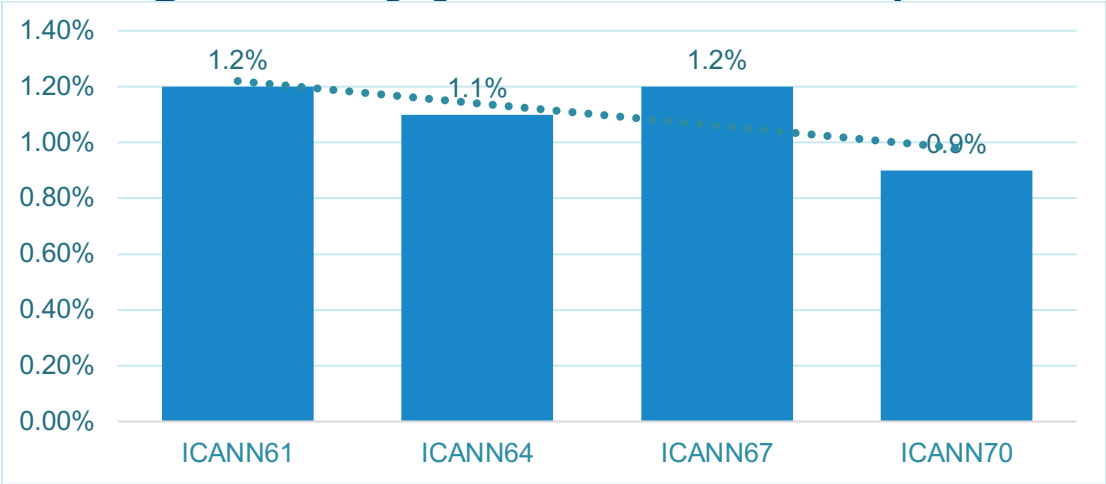


Key Findings: Public Meeting Community Forums Social Media Highlights

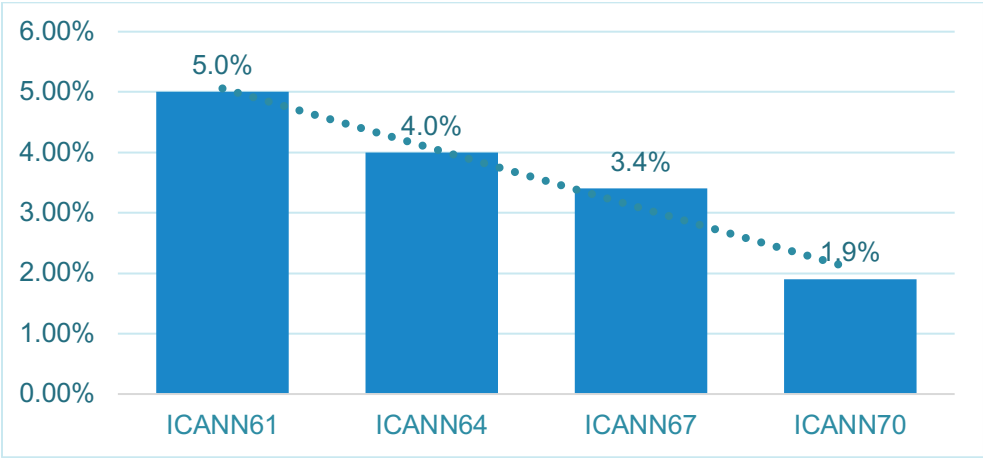
The following data reflects ICANN’s social media performance during the previous four Community Forum Public Meetings:

- Twitter and Facebook engagement is trending downward over the previous four Community Forums, while LinkedIn engagement is trending upward over the same four Community Forums. This may be a result of LinkedIn paid campaigns launched for the NomCom Open Leadership positions during these periods.
- ICANN70 newsletters earned mixed results over the previous Community Forums, trending lower in open rates but higher in click rates.

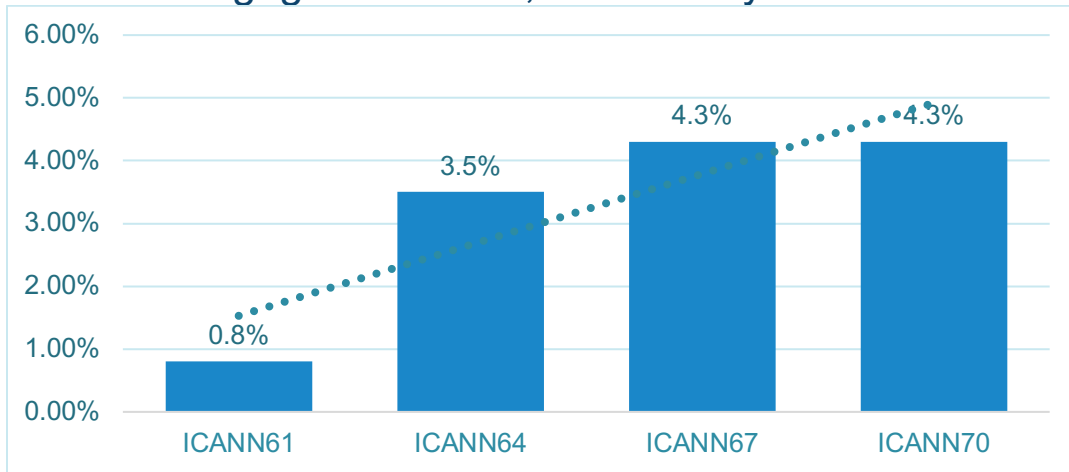
Twitter @ICANN Engagement Rate, Community Forums



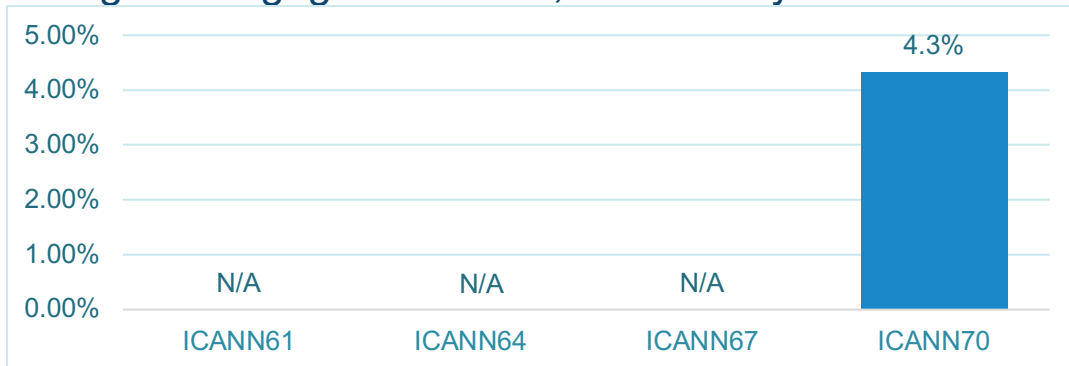
Facebook Engagement Rate, Community Forums



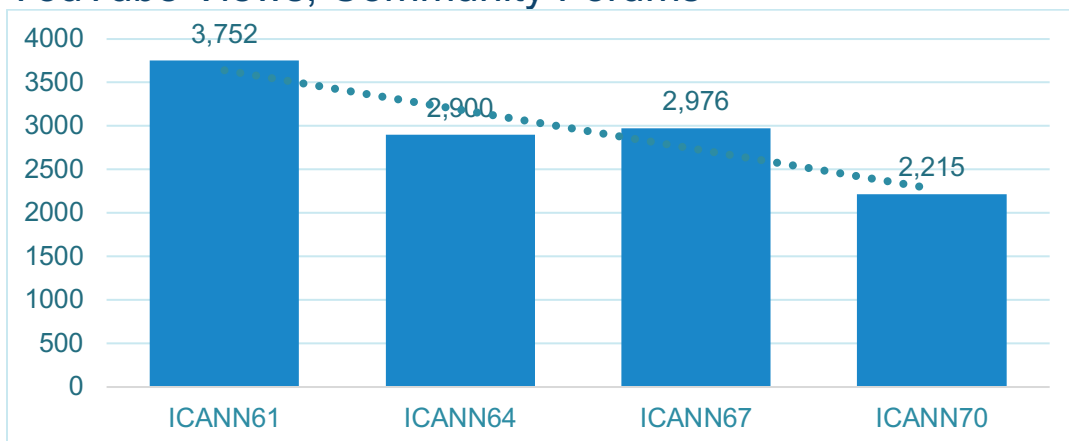
LinkedIn Engagement Rate, Community Forums



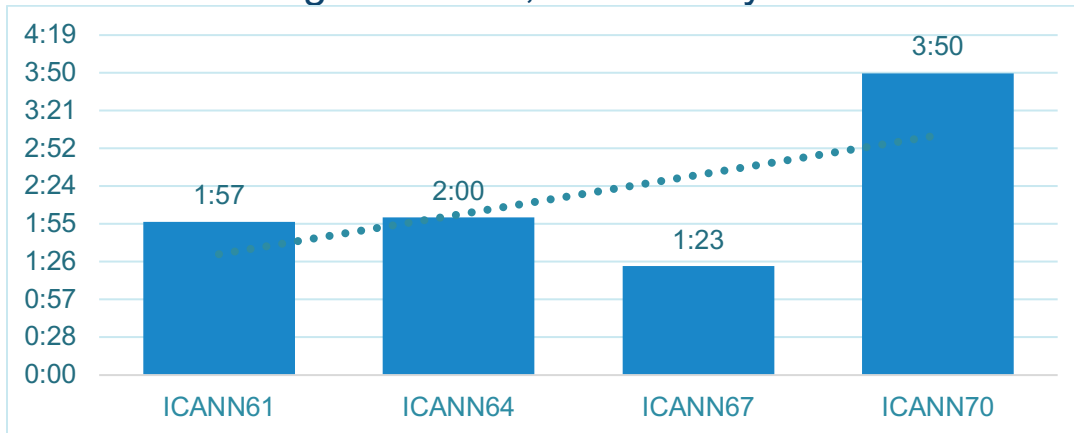
Instagram Engagement Rate, Community Forums



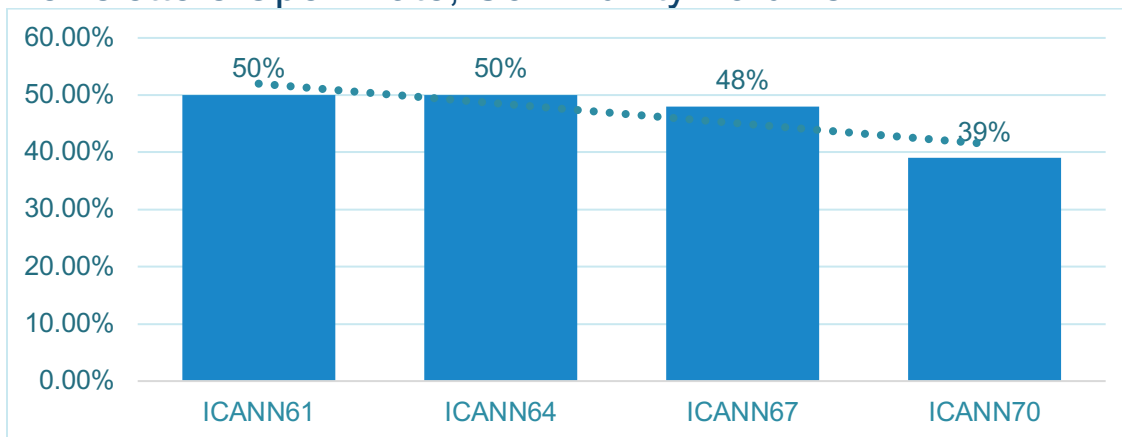
YouTube Views, Community Forums



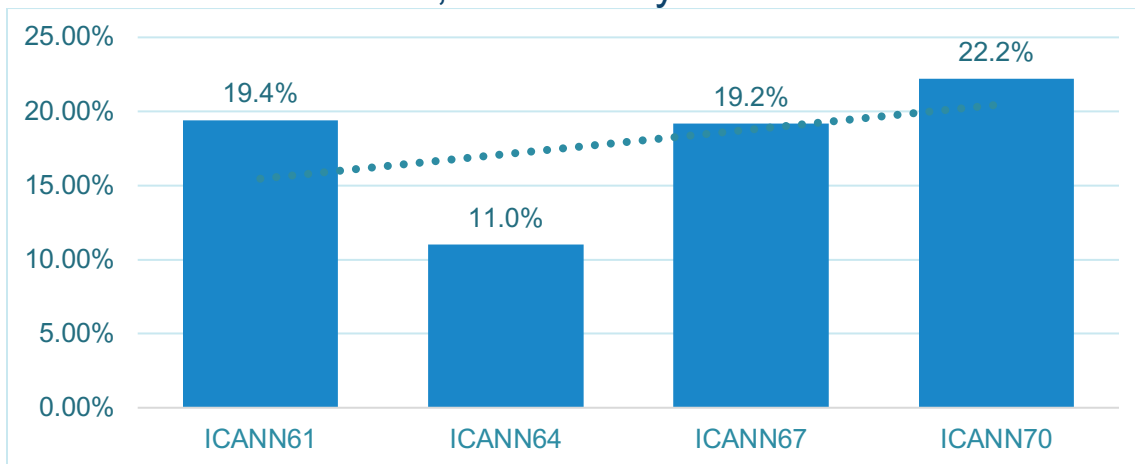
YouTube Average Duration, Community Forums



Newsletters Open Rate, Community Forums



Newsletters Click Rate, Community Forums



Glossary

Audience

The people you reach with your content, which includes all of your followers plus people who see or interact with your posts.

Average duration

The average time someone spent watching a video on YouTube. Typically calculated by dividing the total duration of all sessions divided by the number of sessions.

Click rate

The percentage of subscribers who clicked on links in the newsletter. (Multiple clicks by the same subscriber are not included.)

Engagement

Engagement is any form of interaction with ICANN's content on social media; likes, comments, reactions, and shares are all forms of engagement. The more people engage with your content, the better, as it means your content is relevant to your audience. One of the key indicators of success on social media.

Engagement rate

Engagement rate is an important social media metric that measures how many people interact or "engage" with ICANN's social media content via likes, shares, comments, or reactions versus how many people saw the post. A higher engagement rate typically indicates that people found the content more relevant or compelling.

Followers

People who have liked (or "followed") ICANN accounts on social media. Essentially, this is your core audience, although anyone can view a public profile or page. (Sometimes referred to as "fans" by Facebook users.)

Follower Growth

Indicates how the number of followers on ICANN's social media accounts has changed over time. Follower growth is a key metric for determining if your social media account is adding or losing followers over time.

Hootsuite

A social media management tool.

Link clicks

Link clicks refer to the number of times someone clicked on a link in your post (or in Instagram, how many times they clicked the link in your bio).

Mention

A mention is a way to tag a user or account in a social media message. They always start with @ followed by a social media handle. The other person or account that you tagged will get a notification that they were mentioned. A high number of mentions indicates good brand awareness.

Metric

In social media, a metric is a statistic (or data) that measures performance. Engagement rate, link clicks, and followers are all examples of key social media metrics. Evaluating metrics allows you to see what part of your content strategy is working and where it may need improvement.

Open rate

The percentage of subscribers who opened the newsletter in their email.

Page

This is your business profile or main landing page where customers can find your posts and business information on Facebook and LinkedIn (on Twitter, this is your profile; on Instagram, it is your bio).

Platform

A platform is a social media network or a component of a social network. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram are all social media platforms. Each platform is unique in some way: Facebook is structured like a “feed” and promotes general sharing; Twitter posts have limited characters, making the platform popular for sharing things quickly; LinkedIn is business-oriented; Instagram is primarily for sharing photos.

Post

A post refers to content shared on a social media platform (Twitter users also call this a tweet).

Retweet

A retweet is a way to share another Twitter account’s Tweet with your followers. Twitter posts have a retweet button, where you can choose to retweet as is or add a comment before posting.

Subscriber

YouTube’s version of a “follower.” These are people who have subscribed to ICANN’s YouTube channel.

Tweet

A Tweet is a post on Twitter. Tweets are limited to 280 characters and can include photos, videos, and links.

Video views

Number of views your video content gets on channels like YouTube, Vimeo or Facebook.

