

ICANNWIKIQUICKIE

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Currently Active ICANN websites

www.icann.org We all know this site, its ICANN's main web site. This site contains information about ICANN's general operations and policy-development activities. Everything yo always wanted to know about ICANN.

www.internic.net This web site is a public information resource for Internet users worldwide. It provides information on the domain-name system, the domain-name registration process, and domain-name registrars. A highly active site.

www.iana.org This web site is the site of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (the IANA), which is responsible for technical coordination of the assignment of parameters in over 120 identifier spaces used on the Internet.

alac.icann.org This web site is the web site of ICANN's At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC). The ALAC considers and advises ICANN on its activities as they relate to the interests of individual Internet users.

aso.icann.org This web site is the web site of ICANN's Address Supporting Organization (ASO). The ASO develops recommendations for global policies concerning allocation of IP addresses and autonomous system (AS) numbers.

forum.icann.org This web site is the web-based forum for community comment on various ICANN-related topics. Very general.

gac.icann.org This web site is the web site of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). It considers and advises ICANN on its activities as they relate to concerns of governments, various laws and international agreements or where they may affect public policy.

gns0.icann.org This web site is the site of ICANN's Generic Name Supporting Organization (GNSO). The GNSO develops recommendations for global policies concerning the net's generic top-level domains (gTLDs).

whois.iana.org This web site is the direct web interface to the IANA's Whois server. The Whois server provides basic information on domains in the root, .int, and .arpa.

How To Improve ICANN meetings

Original wiki material authorized by Susan Crawford

ICANN's approach to meetings must be determined by core organizational goals and principles. What are these meetings for? How can ICANN's meetings attract more constructive and effective engagement by members of the community? How can they be conducted more efficiently, at lower cost in time and money? How can they enhance the legitimacy of ICANN's actions?



This paper represents a first cut at working through these issues. It attempts to assess the operational goals of ICANN's meetings, address criticisms of these sessions, and present proposed solutions for consideration by the community. It is designed to be circulated in advance of the Sao Paulo meeting to facilitate a public workshop during that meeting that I will run.

This paper stems from my interest in improving the quality of ICANN's meetings. Some of the issues it covers are also touched on by the GNSO review report prepared by the LSE, and this paper is intended to complement that effort.

The paper is divided into three parts. Part I describes the goals of ICANN meetings and provides some factual background on these meetings. Part II lists criticisms and concerns about ICANN meetings. Part III deals with proposed solutions and alternatives designed to deal with the criticisms and concerns that have been raised.

This paper makes the following recommendations:

1. There should be a public forum at the beginning of each Large Meeting. (By "Large Meeting," I mean the three public ICANN meetings currently held per year.)
2. If ICANN continues to use local hosts for Large Meetings, the relationship should impose far fewer obligations on these local hosts.
3. ICANN should develop an online docket that shows clearly at all times the status of all decisions to be made by the Board and supporting organizations.
4. Agendas should be required to be posted online well in advance of meetings.
5. Agendas should clearly focus on the purpose of a presentation or activity, so that people know whether they need to participate. Then these agendas can tie directly to the results of the meeting.
6. All meetings should generate detailed minutes together with a summary of important actions or next steps. Everyone should be able to see clearly what arguments were advanced by particular people and how decisions were made.
7. As a default, ICANN meetings of all descriptions should be public. Those few that are private should be subject to clear guidelines about what can be said publicly about those meetings. ICANN should develop these guidelines promptly and advise all meeting attendees of them. For example, it would be good to make clear to all public meeting attendees that meetings will be recorded.
8. All correspondence to ICANN from any outside source, on substantive issues, should be publicized on the ICANN web site absent an express decision by the Board to authorize confidential treatment, in which case the existence and rationale of such a decision should be disclosed.
9. For 2008-10, ICANN should consider choosing in advance at least one hub city for one of the three Large Meetings, such as Vancouver, Frankfurt, Singapore, Paris, Hong Kong, or Los Angeles.
10. The number of Large Meetings should remain at three for the coming years.

The paper also raises questions about how the public forums, Board meetings, and scheduling assumptions behind Large Meetings could be improved, but makes no specific recommendations along these lines.

I. Background and Core Goals

A. Large Meetings

ICANN's function is to coordinate policy regarding domain names and IP addresses. Because the ICANN community is international, ICANN has had a practice of meeting in different regions of the world (and different cities in those regions) three or four times a year since 1999:

1999: Los Angeles, California, USA; Santiago, Chile; Berlin, Germany; Singapore

2000: Marina del Rey, California, USA; Yokohama, Japan; Cairo, Egypt

2001: Marina del Rey, California, USA; Montevideo, Uruguay; Stockholm, Sweden; Melbourne, Australia

2002: Amsterdam, Netherlands; Shanghai, China; Bucharest, Romania; Accra, Ghana

2003: Carthage, Tunisia; Montreal, Canada; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2004: Cape Town, South Africa; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Rome, Italy;
 2005: Vancouver, Canada; Luxembourg City, Luxembourg; Mar del Plata, Argentina
 2006: São Paulo, Brazil; Marrakech, Morocco; Wellington, New Zealand
 2007: [Asia Pacific region]; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Lisbon, Portugal

Each of these meetings costs between US \$600,000 and \$700,000 in total to hold. At the moment, local hosts cover expenses relating to venue costs, registration, audiovisual equipment, security, internet access, insurance, signage, coffee breaks, a gala reception, and other miscellaneous items. Local hosts bid to run ICANN meetings, and typically find sponsors to cover many of the expenses associated with each meeting. (ICANN's RFP for local hosts, which sets out the requirements ICANN has for meetings, can be seen at <http://www.icann.org/meetings/rfp/rfp-2006.htm>.)

It is fair to say that local hosts find the burden of hosting a meeting to be substantial. The meetings have grown quite a bit over the years (currently about 800 people attend each meeting), and professional assistance is often needed by the local host to tie everything together. Local hosts need to arrange for large meeting rooms and hundreds of hotel rooms to be available. Equipment costs sometimes turn out to be high (printer/copiers, microphones, projectors). ICANN brings the webcasting equipment, but local hosts are responsible for the rest of what is needed to project a meeting. Local hosts often end up spending a good deal of money on the web site for the meeting and on registration services. Last-minute changes in the schedule of the meetings frequently are needed by members of the community, which makes life difficult for local hosts. ICANN meetings have bandwidth needs that are extreme, and the size of the meeting dictates that a major conference center with hotel rooms be secured. Most local hosts underestimate how much effort and money will be needed to make all of these arrangements.

ICANN, for its part, covers the travel and hotel expenses of Board, staff, and many community members to these meetings, and pays for meals for the Board and staff (and some members of the community). ICANN's 2006-07 budget for all meetings (including regional outreach meetings, which are separate from these three large meetings) is \$5.9 million (of a total budget of approximately \$30 million).¹ No one on ICANN's staff works full-time on meeting arrangements. There are two ICANN employees who spend at least half their time on meetings and one who spends a piece of his time on technical/security arrangements for meetings. ICANN has also retained an independent contractor who spends 70% of his time on ICANN meetings. For shorthand purposes, we will call the current set of three large meetings Large Meetings.

The core goals of the Large Meetings, each of which lasts a week and currently attracts approximately 800 participants, are (at least):

1. Work on policy development in face-to-face meetings. Indeed, a central purpose of meetings is to reach and demonstrate the kind of consensus needed to adopt binding rules -- and/or to determine that that is not possible and thus to make clear that the issues on which consensus cannot be reached will be dealt with by decentralized decision-making and local laws. ICANN is supposed to be a forum for the discussion of policy, and these meetings provide opportunities to advance those discussions.
2. Inform Board and Staff and members of the community regarding key domain name policy issues. (As a practical matter, addressing policy is not made at ICANN meetings.)
3. Hold Board meetings.

Large Meetings generally include several public workshops, meetings of various support organizations and advisory groups (some of which are public and some of which are not), and public forums. The Board meets to debate and take action as a Board in public. The GNSO meets to develop consensus policies. The CCNSO meets to educate and coordinate. The GAC meets to formulate advice to the Board. Other groups, such as the NRO, the Nominating Committee, SSAC, and various task forces use the occasion of ICANN meetings to consult with their members. There is no registration fee required for members of the public to attend Large Meetings.

It would be worthwhile to discuss in Sao Paulo whether the goals listed in this paper for Large Meetings are the right ones, and whether they reflect reality. Should Large Meetings be more like trade shows? Should we encourage more businesses to attend that don't necessarily involve themselves in policymaking? Are they networking events or policy events or regional outreach events?

To read it in its entirety, please visit:

http://icannwiki.org/Sao_Paulo_Session_on_how_to_improve_ICANN_meetings

Rock Soup: A Fable (or simply said, The Wiki Way)



The war had been long and hard, scarring the countryside, the villages, and the people --both soldiers and citizens. Finally, it was over.... though some claimed victory, no one really won except the winter which now held them all prisoner.

A lone soldier, trying to return to his far-away home, had wandered through the cold and snow for days. He was tired, but more than that, he was literally starving. At last he came upon a village. He picked a house and knocked on the door. When someone came to answer, the soldier explained his plight and asked for a little something to eat. The little man behind the door shook his head saying that he had a family to feed and they were hungry themselves and they could give him nothing. The soldier pleaded that he would eat any scraps, but the villager again said he had nothing to spare --there were no scraps. This scene was repeated house to house but always the answer was the same. It had been a hard winter and the soldier found that the villagers were all hungry too.

The soldier had a thought, and then it somehow formed a plan. He looked about, and spotting something nearby, his eyes brightened. He quickly went off to the nearby woods. Soon, he returned with all the sticks and pieces of wood he could find and built a campfire in the village square. Then he went over to the large, black iron pot resting against the wall of the empty blacksmith shop. Dragging the pot over the fire, he filled it with snow. At this point he had drawn a large crowd of onlookers who stared at him with curiosity. They talked among themselves and wondered what he was going to do with the pot of now-boiling water. Then the soldier ferreted about the ground below the eaves of the villagers' cottages until he had gathered a dozen or more smooth, dark stones. He inspected each closely, smelled them individually, sometimes comparing one stone's fragrance (fragrance???) to that of another. When all was done, he had kept only a few. He polished them with snow, wiped them clean, and then placed them gingerly, one by one, into the pot. Now the onlookers were really getting curious --more than that, they were sure the soldier was mad with hunger. The soldier then took a big wooden spoon from his knapsack and began stirring the water in the pot and occasionally taking a taste. Mmmmmm, he finally said, this is the best Rock Soup I have tasted in a long time. The villagers couldn't believe their ears. Rock Soup? Surely he was mad!

The soldier took one more taste and then said, This is good soup but it needs something, perhaps a carrot.... Yes, that's it, a little bit of carrot would make it perfect! An elderly villager stepped forward, looked into the pot, leaned over and inhaled deeply. When he stood up, he closed his eyes and remembered the aromas of soups and stews long gone. The villager paused a moment, then said, I think I might have a couple of carrots in my cellar, I will bring them. On his return the carrots were added to the Rock Soup.

Again the soldier continued to stir and taste and stir and taste. Finally the soldier said, This is pretty good Rock Soup, the carrots made it better, but it is still missing something. Perhaps a few onions would make it even better. No sooner had he said it, than a few villagers scurried off. Upon their return, the soldier was given more than a few onions --but it was a big pot, so in they all went.

Again the soldier continued to stir and taste and stir and taste. The soldier said, This is very good Rock Soup, the carrots and onions made it better, but it is still missing something. Perhaps a few potatoes would make it even better. He let two or three of those that had drawn near sample the ever-steaming brew, which by now was starting to smell delicious. A good number of villagers bustled off. Upon their return, the soldier was presented with a potato here and a potato there until he had enough to fill the pot. As he let it simmer, others brought bits of this and that to add to the flavor. Tasting it one more time, he exclaimed it was Perfect! Starting with the children, everyone had a bowl of this wonderful soup. Everyone in the village exclaimed that it was the best Rock Soup that they had ever eaten and they all ate their fill. What about neighboring villages? someone asked. They are hungry, too. Saving a rock for themselves, the others were cleaned, placed in baskets, and sent out by messenger. The soldier's recipe was attached....

- Gather a few local stones..
- Clean them well....
- Add this stone to them....
- Next,....

Five Days in Domain Name Heaven – Tastes Good to Some Folks

What has been buzzing around the Internet lately is that the top-level domain name registrar agreements provide for a mandatory five-day grace period before the registrars have to pay the registries for the domain names. This policy was put in place by ICANN to protect clients who may have made a mistake in a registration (or a spelling error), allowing them to get a total refund for the domain name. However, domainers, those that wheel and deal in buying and selling domains (many of them multi-registrars) have taken advantage of this business opportunity by registering many thousands of the expiring domains that are released every day and using the grace period to see if a domain generates traffic and revenue over the base registration fee.

If it appears that a domain doesn't generate enough real traffic to warrant a monetization process, the domain is returned to the registries within the five-day grace period for the refund. If the domain does appear to attract traffic, it's linked to pay-per-click advertising from one of the prominent providers typically seen at a conference like TRAFFIC. The operators of the registries are spending time and effort to process these temporary registrations, and they aren't complaining as they benefit from access to the increased credit deposits they hold on behalf of their many registrar clients that are participating as domain tasters. If it weren't for a high degree of automation, this business technique would not work.

As usual, the trademark owners are the primary critics of the current system, as they complain that it creates a unfair secondary market for marks that might otherwise be available and registered to them. They feel this propagates cyber and typo-squatting, an ongoing yet important issue to be resolved. It has been proposed that a restocking charge might curtail the behavior. I think there is a "neutral space" where a minor fee might slow the tasting down, and yet the domainers can still profit from what some people call a valid opportunity.



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