

**ICANN Dakar Meeting
Registrar Stakeholder Group Meeting (2)
- TRANSCRIPTION**

Tuesday 25 October 2011 at 13:00 local

Note: The following is the output of transcribing from an audio. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the proceedings at the meeting, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

Coordinator: Excuse me, everyone, it's the operator. Just need to inform all participants that today's conference is being recorded, if you have any objections you may disconnect your line at this time. And you may begin.

Mason Cole: Thank you, Operator. All right, ladies and gentlemen let's come to order. I'll remind you that our session is being recorded and transcribed. The stakeholder group is now back in open session. And we are privileged to have the Policy staff here, David Olive and his team. David, everyone, thank you for joining us as always.

So I know that we've provided a list of topics that we'd like to cover. If I may I'll turn the floor over to you to run some of those topics and we can open our discussion.

David Olive: Great, thank you, Mason, Matt and Jeff and members of the constituency group. I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you. When I first joined ICANN about a year and a half ago I attended a meeting - my first meeting was in Nairobi and Mason was kind enough to invite me.

Since then I haven't been as regular because of other duties at ICANN meetings. But my team has been here and happy to talk to you and so I'm glad to be here in person.

The three areas, one would be the general overview of the policy work that's managed by myself, an update on the Whois policy activities including the costs involved and then a discussion of the policy team workload and capacity and how this is being managed internally and with inputs from the GNSO.

There was a fourth topic on the RAA that was discussed by Kurt this morning so we will not go over that again. So those are three - the topics and there's agreement on that we can proceed.

In terms of the overview of the policy work I manage the Policy Development Support Team at ICANN. There's about 18 people who help the management and facilitate the policy development processes in the supporting organizations, GNSO, ccNSO and ASO as well as the - some of the advisory committees, At Large and SSAC in particular. And we divide our time with secretariat support to manage the scheduling and programs and presentations of the various councils and workgroups and our subject matter experts.

Normally I divide the team into team leaders. And Liz Gasster is the team leader for the GNSO group. And you have here the three full time support staff devoted to that function. There are two others who are shared resources, Rob Hogarth and Julie Hedlund and of course Glen is our secretariat support in shared services with Gisella and some of the others on the support team.

That creates the group that we have. The other comment is that in terms of support for these SOs and ACs the trend is upward not downward and

therefore our focus has to be always to ask the various councils and working groups to prioritize because the staff resources are limited.

But more importantly the volunteer resources of you people and your times are also valuable and limited. And we have to focus the attentions on those priorities and we work with the various leaders of those groups including the GNSO leadership to do just that. And we'll talk a little bit later about that team load and workload capacity.

I think that is the general overview of the group that I lead and have the pleasure of working with. And I'd now like to turn it over to our team leader for the GNSO support, Liz Gasster, to talk about Whois as she is our primary expert at ICANN on that topic. Liz.

Mason Cole: David, I'm sorry, if I may? Did you have a question, Michele?

Michele Neylon: No it was more of a comment actually. David, thanks for coming here and everything as usual. But I just wanted to, just for the record, to voice my appreciation about the work that the staff do in this area and to also, you know, echo the feeling of several of the others who have worked with them on several of the working groups.

The policy support staff work ridiculously long hours. I've been - interacted with them on calls at all times of the day or night and most of them are only like one hour in time zone difference from where I'm based in Ireland. I just, you know, think that they should be appreciated for their hard work. Thanks.

David Olive: On behalf of the hard working team I accept that with gratitude and thank you for your hard work as volunteers on these processes.

Liz Gasster: Hello, I'm Liz Gasster. Before I go to Whois why don't I just quickly follow up on David's introduction to the policy activity? I'm assuming that those documents were distributed to the team.

So there's one on kind of our current workload, our current policy projects. And I'm certainly not going to go through that list or talk about them individually except to say that what I've tried to do in that report is really highlight not only the enormous amount of work that's actually been completed this year, if you look at all the working group activities that are in that kind of closed or completed category, but then all of the new work that's come in so far this year including quite a few projects that have just been initiated subsequent to GNSO.

You asked I think something about how we were prioritizing and the truth is that, you know, the GNSO Council has found it very difficult to provide specific guidance about, you know, what we should do, what is a top priority versus secondary. And as a result the staff is really trying to essentially do kind of first in first out; there's simply too much work for us to work on all of the things.

And there are some new issue reports as you know and other work. So I have assigned that work to individuals. I think I mentioned this on Saturday but just for the record the issue report on thick Whois Marika will do; the issue report on uniformity of contracts Rob Hogarth will do and the issue report on the law enforcement related RAA changes Margie Milam will do.

So that work has been assigned but I do not yet have the schedule for when you'll be seeing preliminary issues reports. But I will be updating the community regularly on our progress. And in the absence of, you know, specific guidance that says start this, stop that, we're just going to do the best we can to take the first projects, finish them up, go to the next one.

Mason Cole: If I may ask a question on that? Will that continue to be operating model or do you foresee a time where those kinds of procedures will need to be revised based on increasing workload flowing from the community?

Liz Gasster: I really hope that they're revised because, you know, we're bound to frustrate someone in the current approach. And we also can't make all the deadlines that are necessary. So to the extent to which the GNSO Council can agree on, you know, how work should be prioritized we will definitely support that.

We've tried to put forward some rules how they could go about prioritization, just the mechanics of, you know, how you would rate different projects. And they've only gone through that exercise once and they - and it wasn't a very satisfying one for them I think. And it did not lead to any specific guidance that said to do anything different so.

Go ahead on Whois, any questions or?

David Olive: I would just like to add that, you know, for me it's a staffing issue and resources issue from both sides both from the staff and our volunteers that if it can't be prioritized either something has to go slower or it's going to just take longer to do that.

And yet at the same time depending on the issues you want to get that right skill set of quality subject matter expert to be able to help lead and facilitate the areas and match those to the working groups. And that takes time too. So it is a constant challenge of with the limited resources we have to focus on that to make sure you have the right support and expertise going forward. So we work on that.

Liz Gasster: That's a great point. And also we've added staff - continued to add staff. I started at ICANN four years ago and we've more than doubled the size of the support staff supporting the GNSO since then so you see already just a huge expansion there.

Okay let me move to Whois. And I don't want to, you know, I've given a lot of Whois updates overall so if there's something that you particularly want to know or want me to deep dive into I'm happy to do it.

But just at the high level again I shared a document with all of you that essentially gives the update. The GNSO Council in 2009 asked us to look at several areas. We've done so. We've gotten the Council's direction to move forward with four of these studies, the Whois misuse study that Carnegie Melon is working on that will cost about \$150,000 US and take about a year to complete.

A registrant identification study that will be conducted by NORC. We originally prior to Council approval of this study estimated this study at about \$150,000; we've increased the cost of that study to about \$180,000 because the studies - we changed it from a hypothesis driven study to a data gathering exploratory study. And we had latitude from the Council to increase up to 20% without going back to them.

So we were able to work with NORC to bring the estimate for that in at \$180,000 so that is a little bit of an increase from numbers you've seen before. That contract is just finalized and they're going to be launching within the next couple of days really.

There is a Whois privacy and proxy abuse study that is looking at potential abuse - abuse of registrations using proxy and privacy registrations. We've estimated the cost of that study to be about \$150,000. Although we do have a signed contract yet from the perspective vendor to conduct that study I'm expecting that to be finalized by the end of the year and will probably take about a year to conduct that study.

And then lastly there is a Whois privacy and proxy relay and reveal survey. This is a pre-study to look at the feasibility of whether we actually could identify enough willing participants to have an effective study. So that is a pre-study survey that is underway right now.

We have a survey that is posted. I can circulate the link to you. It's also accessible from the ICANN blog and also from the RSS Feed, the announcements. I encourage any of you who have any experience or function within your organizations to handle relay and reveal requests if you offer a privacy service, etcetera, to please participate in this survey; it will only improve the information that we have available and I think will be very helpful.

And that study is - survey is only open until the end of this month so just a few more days to do that. Interisle Consulting is actually going to be formulating a report and the target for the report will be around the end of the year, probably - or January timeframe.

Since then there is one more study that the GNSO Council - or survey that the Council has asked us to do. This is picked up from a report that ICANN staff did in 2010 which essentially was an inventory of potential technical requirements that would be required in order to support various policy proposals that have been suggested in the past.

This survey will be developed by a working group. This working group is just getting started so - and I think we lack any registrar participation right now in that working group. So to the degree that there are interested participants who would like to participate this is - I think the expertise we most need in this survey group are people with a real technical understanding of Whois and the Whois protocol and also people who are proficient in survey design.

It's not really a policy development group it's just a group to formulate the survey and then to ask the community how they actually feel about the different requirements. And we estimate that there will hopefully be a draft survey for the Council to review in March. We would conduct the survey immediately thereafter and then the same working group would stay together to analyze the results of that survey and hopefully have that done by October of 2012.

Happy to answer any questions about any of this.

I do not - now it's the first four studies, the cumulative total. I know you asked specifically about money. There's \$560,000 US for the first four studies. So if the Council, after the fourth study, the relay and reveal pre-study survey, concluded that we should move ahead with the study there would obviously be another study that would have incremental costs to be determined. And so that's a cost that's unknown at this time.

And then also on this inventory of Whois service requirements one of the things in the charter that the Council approved was to have an independent assessment of that survey before it's launched and before it's given to the GNSO Council.

So I do think there will be costs associated with that independent assessment of that survey. And I don't know who would do that or what the costs are at this time.

Mason Cole: Any questions for Liz on those items? Okay can you see on Adobe Connect?

((Crosstalk))

Mason Cole: Okay all right so far so good. Thank you, Liz. Was that everything on that section?

David Olive: That is on that section. If we wanted to go back further discussion on the team policy workload and prioritization...

Mason Cole: That would be - that would probably be useful, yeah. Any comments, questions about workload? I'll open it up by saying that personally this has been an area of concern for me for the last couple of years mainly because the amount of work seems to be exceeding ICANN's capacity; and I don't

even mean policy staff I mean the community itself to thoughtfully consider all that policy.

And there seems not to be much of a barrier of any kind. I'm not really suggesting there needs to be a barrier per se but a capable way of managing the workload. But I think our concerns - or mine are in parallel with some of those in the community which are - you're going to have volunteer burnout, the burden on staff is significant and, you know, it may cost ICANN, the organization, in its capability to really put out useful - the types of policies and outcomes that are most useful to the community.

A bug just flew right into my mouth.

David Olive: Desert.

Mason Cole: Yeah. So maybe you could comment on that?

David Olive: Thank you, Mason. Yes indeed these are issues that we have to grapple with on a daily basis of how to allocate the limited resources we have in staff to meet the priorities or the preferences of the various support organizations.

What we've tried to do is, one, encourage the various decision making bodies of the councils to either prioritize or give us some indication of the priority nature. And sometimes, as the GNSO has tried to do that, that is not always a successful method.

So we're now also taking to revealing and being very honest that if you have the two or three projects that are being proposed there are some gives; we cannot do all that in the timeframe or in the - with the existing workload and something will have to be delayed or put aside.

Or indeed if working teams need to proceed it might be without staff as subject matter experts or even staff support to go forward because they just - they have to be shifted to other areas.

Now of course many don't like to hear that but the fact is that we try to make that known in a very open and honest way that we don't have unlimited resources, we can't shift things quickly and we try to accommodate the priorities of the various councils as they see it.

And that is at the moment where we are on that. Some of the other things we try to encourage, the EC and other support organizations such as the ccNSO, although it's different I understand, but they do a work plan - a six month work plan or a one-year work plan. This seems to be another trend that may help at least focus the timelines and the staff resourcing.

We - the GNSO and Stephane is here I know, have the project list that he has been trying to pare down or move into certain priority areas versus less priority areas; it's been helpful.

But that's also - we try to bring that to the Council's attention each time they meet so that they know there's a huge workload that's there. And so in the combination of making them aware that we have limited resources and urging them to prioritize at the moment that's how we're trying to cope.

The third element is extra resources which we can't do in a quick fix. We have some leeway in terms of professional services to help out for subject matter experts or specific expertise. But that's not a real solution going - over time. And so we do a combination of looking at that and trying to scope out additional staff that's needed as we see the trend going upward.

We also had a recent team leader meeting in Washington with the policy team where we're trying to look ahead; trying to if we could get a little bit

ahead of the curve in terms of what might be new policy development areas or issues within the launch of the new gTLD program.

And again that adds another level of complexity and projects that we see coming in the near future and that we're trying to plan our resources and alert others to the priority needs as that goes forward.

Mason Cole: If I may? We have a question from Tim. Tim, please go ahead.

Tim Ruiz: Thanks, Mason. Yeah, just a comment I guess - actually just having been involved in the prioritization exercise on the Council and seeing the kind of limited success I guess we really had with that working well it kind of struck me that part of the problem was that the entire Council was trying to prioritize the entire list of projects.

And I wonder if to some extent - and the issue is that there's just so many different interest groups, constituencies or stakeholder groups, involved in the Council versus the ccNSO for example. So that has to be taken into account.

And I wonder if, you know, a more appropriate way going forward or at least a way to explore going forward might be to have each stakeholder group look at their priorities and then pursue things based on that matter so that, you know, there's, you know, a top priority from each stakeholder group that's being paid attention to in the queue with other things behind that.

And, you know, giving deference right now of course we've got things already in process. You know, I think there's a possibility some of those things we might want to look at and reconsider. But certainly when we start something we should finish it.

But looking at it on a per stakeholder group and trying to prioritize that way might be a more practical or efficient way going forward. Thanks.

Liz Gasster: It's Liz. I just really think Tim's in the right direction in terms of trying to think creatively about the community participation issue and the community burnout issue. We have talked a lot about staff burnout and thank you, Michele, for your comments about the policy staff. But this issue is very difficult for the community as well.

So to the degree that we could be creative about - I know for example when we discussed this on Saturday a council member suggested that we do more to publicize the attendance records. The attendance is all public who, you know, the participation basically in each of our groups and to make it better known, highlight where there is actually participation today and where there isn't really participation today.

That's, you know, another piece of information that just might be useful to the degree that stakeholder groups and constituencies may not be aware of how much or how little there is participation from the community.

And to the degree that there are other ways to expand participation we have many of the same regular faces in all of our groups being, you know, also spread very thin and I think in danger of burnout. So to the degree that we could expand the participation I think that'd be incredibly useful too. Thanks.

Mason Cole: Adrian.

Adrian Kinderis: Yeah, I just wanted to build on what Liz has just said there. We were talking about this on Saturday. And it occurred to me that in my organization we, for example, when an RFP comes up to be responded to I pull in all the departments that are going to be impacted by the RFP and we do a briefing process to find out whether it's something we want to embark on at all. And then that finally gets signed off by the CEO.

And I think a similar approach, you know, may well work here where you've got all different stakeholders from both within the Council and then of course stakeholders being ICANN staff so on and so forth.

And so maybe there's got to be a better briefing process before work is decided upon. And I think that the Council tends to shoot from the hip and pass a motion and get it done. And we've been guilty in the past of not understanding the bandwidth of staff. And I think now we're becoming what's becoming more apparent is we're not taking into account the bandwidth of volunteers that are available.

And so I think when - if we were able to sort of dovetail in a briefing process that before a motion was passed or as part of the motion there should be a little step in there beforehand that says, you know, there'll be a briefing process that pulls together all the interested stakeholders to see whether this work can - well wants to be carried out and then can be carried out by all the groups.

So that's something I'm certainly going to be pushing within the Council in my remaining day. But hopefully it's something that can be picked up on by my fellow councilors and hopefully from this group and pushed through.

And just be - please. What I was going to - no.

Marika Konings: So this is Marika. Just to respond because we did have discussions, you know, going down that path for example in the PDP work team talking about whether - when you start a new PDP, you know, before you go ahead you should make sure that you have enough volunteers.

But I have to say there there was some concern that of course it could be used as well to delay work on certain issues that some might not consider important or don't want to do anything about.

So that was one of the issues where at least in the PDP work team, you know, we discussed maybe when you start at least each group needs to appoint someone or indicate that they have volunteers available. That it could be abused as well but saying oh, you know, we don't have anyone so let's wait; let's wait a bit more. So that needs to be part of that balancing act.

Adrian Kinderis: Yeah.

Marika Konings: But I agree it would be really good if at the start of a process, you know, we go around the table and everyone at least assigns someone - and it doesn't even need to be an active member but someone on the mailing list that at least has the responsibility to maybe keep the stakeholder group or constituency informed and, you know, raise a red flag if they see that something is being discussed that is of crucial importance to that group.

And I absolutely agree with, you know, that that would be...

((Crosstalk))

Adrian Kinderis: Yeah I think so. And I really think it's (unintelligible) at the thresholds, right, for how you're going to do this. So there's some, you know, the devil will be in the details here. I don't purport to have the answers.

But I think you're right, I think where the process is broken down in my experience with the Council and - consider it please, a lightweight comment - is that far too often things go along the process and you guys do a hell of a lot of work.

And then someone at the 11th hour comes forward and says oh what the hell? You know, we didn't know this was going on or whatever and then tries to, you know, and then you've wasted a whole lot of time, you know, doing that.

And I guess that's we're trying - going back to my internal process we have in my organization is, you know, like going through an RFP and then finding out that there's a clause that we cannot meet.

And so we've gone and done all the work and pulled it all together and then suddenly legal comes up and says oh by the way we can't respond to this because it's, you know, you have to be located in South Africa or something. And so we're like well that was stupid; we just did all the work for nothing.

So it's about trying to cherry pick, you know, and get everybody's - all the stakeholder's buy-in and so that you can't say at any given time that you didn't know because you had someone in there.

And so I think that were it possible to happen, you know, if it was able to support staff and make you more efficient that that's something that the Council could take on board is to have - you must have someone from every stakeholder group appointed at least on the list for everything and then, you know, something like that. Just an opinion of mine.

Mason Cole: Stephane.

Stephane van Gelder: Thanks. Yeah, so I'd say that actually although the discussion that's just been had is very useful I'd possibly encourage staff to do what they have been doing in parts which is first of a lot make it very clear to the Council that there is a problem.

And I'd encourage staff to continue doing that and maybe even do it more thoughtfully because you're the guys that are actually ending up with the problem.

As Adrian described earlier on, and you responded to, Marika, so far it's very easy to pile on work, to add new work. And there's - if we are going down

then on the path of discussing the possibility of some people being reasonable about that I think we're just kidding ourselves.

The thresholds - the voting thresholds are what they are. As you said, Marika, it's a question of balance between not blocking the system and not piling on too much work. I'd say at this stage from what you've been telling us so at the Council level the balance has shifted and now it's less about not blocking the process and more about actually getting anything new done because you're just overworked and not able to meet the new workload.

So I would certainly encourage staff to make that point very clearly to the Council when you do have an opportunity to do so. If there's an issue that's important to one of the parties, one of the groups on the GNSO that issue will come up and you will get a PDP or a motion on that issue. I mean, you know, a PDP, the threshold for an issue report is the last threshold we have. And that means as soon as you get an issue report that's a lot of work for you guys.

Marika Konings: Yeah, just to respond. I think in the cases where the point has been made - actually it has been made by the chairs of those working groups, not staff. And I think those chairs have been very vocal or very forceful about the fact that there was no participation, that they really needed more people. And I think, you know, staff has as well been trying to reach out to those groups not participating. Just...

((Crosstalk))

Stephane van Gelder: But that's not what I'm saying, Marika. What I'm saying is before it comes to a working group it needs to be addressed. And if you're talking about working groups the work - exactly what the situation Adrian's just described; thumb the RFP and you find out you can't do South Africa. That's the situation you're in.

Marika Konings: But the thing is often at the start of a working group there is quite a broad number of people that signs up. It's more down the road where you suddenly see that half of those people are actually on the mailing list.

But there's another point I wanted to make is I think if you look now at the current project list of the GNSO you'll see that there are actually relatively few working groups ongoing now. But I think that will change pretty quickly because there are a lot of projects that are currently in the staff development stage so a lot of issue reports that are being prepared.

But I think the Council will really need to look very closely once all those reports get to the, you know, vote for a PDP stage, what that potential impact that might have in addition to all the other groups that are still ongoing because I think we have, you know, three or four issues reports that either are, you know, are in the drafting phase or in the almost, you know, initiation or vote on initiation stage.

Stephane van Gelder: So that's what I'm talking about, the issue report stage means that you are having to face a situation where you're going to have a lot of work down the road.

And if you wait, I mean, really in this discussion there's really two issues, the one about participation which is something to do with workload but also something to do with possibly interest and on each issue you're going to have a variety of interests anyway and some issues may be of more interest to one group than another. And you can't really do anything about that.

What I'm saying judging from what you, the Council support team, have been telling me as chair is that there's just too much on and you can't cope. Liz has been very vocal in our private conversations in saying that it's now a case of we'll do what we have on our plate and if anything new comes in it's going to wait until we finish what we're doing.

What I'm saying, you know, I'm very much with you guys on this. And I'm saying we all need to make that message clear. I've been trying to do it and I know you have. I'm just saying it needs to be extremely clear because there are some groups out there that frankly don't care.

Margie Milam: It's Margie. Stephane, I think we've done it in some areas. I think in - at least in two issue reports that I've written I've had a section on resources - staff resources. So it's still we do it and it essentially gets ignored when the, you know, when the Council reads the report.

We also did it when we had the morality and public order working group which wasn't even a PDP, you know, we emphasized we didn't have staff resources to do that, we got assurances from the group that they would do the substantive work and there'd be very little for staff to do.

And in reality what happened was it was more work than I even imagined, you know, during the Christmas holidays and right afterwards.

And so even when you have that discussion and you get commitment that the working group is really going to step up and do, you know, the bulk of the writing, for example, it actually doesn't happen because people have so many things to focus on and that's part of the, you know, this is the other side of the coin now that the participation levels are really low.

We have calls where we have one or two or three community people on and they're not even prepared to come to the call they just show up and haven't done any work since the last call. And we also have situations where I think some of the council members don't even read the reports before they get voted on. And that - it becomes clear when we get questions raised about what's in the report.

And so it's, you know, it's a substantive issue for the volunteers as well. And what it does is it may lead to bad policy because if people aren't paying

attention, they're not reading the reports, you know, you may end up with a policy that hasn't been well thought out and really affects especially you guys, the contracted parties.

Stephane van Gelder: Yeah, what you just said strikes me as crucial. And the problem is the way you're saying it in my view because you're saying it like okay some people don't even have time to read issue reports before it comes to the Council and you can tell that by the questions they're asking. And I dare say that's very true.

The problem is - the problem with the situation we're facing now is that rather than just stating that we actually need to work to find a solution towards that. Why? Because the reason why people can't read issues reports or don't have time to read your comments or catch up on your work is that there's just a limited bandwidth. And you know that.

You get - obviously you guys are paid to do this, you've done it, you've gone through the detail of the process and everything. You're facing volunteers that really do have other things to do and just deluged by the amount, I mean, we've had this back and forth, you know, all through the years so you know where I'm going.

But the sheer amount of work is just too much. So we can't blame people for not having time to read. Indeed this is why at the Council level we spend so much time at ICANN meetings, for example, going over stuff again and doing update sessions.

And I'm often asking you guys to give us updates on work that's ongoing because just to try and drum it in. And you've seen me put a regular agenda item on the agenda to update the Council on pending projects.

But the real problem is that one; how can we - I don't have a solution as yet but how can we face that bandwidth problem? Because until we do you will still be in this rut.

Marika Konings: This is Marika. I actually just have a question because how to do it as a stakeholder group. Do you appoint someone that - or is someone tasked within your group to, you know, at least inform the stakeholder group on a regular basis what is happening in the working group or indeed when a report is about to get voted upon?

Do you get someone to present it or, you know, tell people look, you know, this recommendation really worries me or we should comment. Do you have any kind of system that, you know, allows you to, you know, spread yourself wider without necessarily, you know, having to dedicate more resources to it?

Mason Cole: We don't have a formalized procedure. When there's an issue that requires our participation or it's recommended to ourselves that we have participation then we usually have - sorry the bugs are all over me - we have - we'll have a member or two join a workgroup or, you know, whatever team is being formed to address the issue.

Generally we do a good job of keeping each other through our mailing list abreast of what's happening. When something becomes critical we usually do notify one another. And feedback is exchanged in that way.

The Ex Comm also sort of serves as a manager of various items of importance and keeps the things that are timely and critical in front of the broader stakeholder group. Anybody want to add to that? Does it seem like a fair representation, Adrian? Yeah?

Adrian Kinderis: Yeah, I think you're pretty much spot on, there, mate. I would just add that I think the councilors also bring back to the stakeholder group, you know,

whenever there's a working group we email that to the list and so on and so forth.

So it is probably, you know, I think the - it's not formalized as Mason said. Could it be better? Possibly. You know, and when we had an advocate it was a lot easier to pull those documents together and make sure that we weren't missing anything. And we've lost our advocate for the time being and we're in the middle of sort of resolving that issue about how we're going forward. Is that fair, Mason?

So having a resource like that, you know, a staff of their own would certainly help with that management. And that's something we're conscious of.

Mason Cole: David, yeah, and then Tim, I have you in queue. Go ahead, David.

David Olive: Yes thank you very much. I do have a suggestion or an idea that really is not original to me but it's occurring at the Board level that any Board resolution proposal must have a section that talks about is there any impact on the organization in terms of resources, staffing real money.

Maybe something like that in draft resolutions before the Council might be another way of focusing on the staff impact and the community impact of such a resolution.

Mason Cole: Thank you, David. Tim, go ahead.

Tim Ruiz: Yeah, you know, it strikes me that some of this - and I'm not blaming anyone in particular because I've been on the Council for the last two years myself. But I just think maybe part of it is we just haven't come up with a way to do planning appropriately at the Council level.

You know, for example, you know, ICANN, you know, staff and Board they do an extensive amount of work on putting together a strategic plan and then

building off that, you know, what's necessary as far as budget and resources, etcetera, are concerned.

And in the theme of that, you know, the Council should take a similar approach. You know, on a regular basis, you know, look forward at, you know, what are the issues that we're facing and what are the things that we may need to want to address. We can create what might be considered a strategic plan.

Then as we move forward through the year we can look at the things that are raised and, you know, do they fit within that plan? That doesn't mean there aren't going to be things that don't come up that we're going to find might be critical or unexpected and things that we need to address.

We'd have to look at those and perhaps decide, you know, what we're going to de-prioritize as far as the strategic plan was concerned in order to address those things or maybe to override something like that if it's a higher threshold of approval to get something like that done.

I know that sounds easy to describe. I know it can be difficult in practice. But it seems that until, you know, there's some sort of planning done ahead of time, you know, we're just going to continue to run into these problems because things just keep cropping up continuously and, you know, I'm sure in the next month, you know, we're going to see two or three things that are going to come up.

So figuring out how we can create some sort of plan to live by year to year I think is really key.

Mason Cole: All right, Tim, thank you. All right anyone else on this issue? Okay. Did we cover everything on the list? Wow with 15 minutes to spare. Outstanding. David...

((Crosstalk))

Mason Cole: Yes exactly, yes, David, Marika, Liz, Margie, thank you for coming as always. Appreciate your time.

((Crosstalk))

Mason Cole: You bet. All right we'll see you next time. All right we'll go ahead and break now then unless there's anything else anyone wants to use the 15 minutes for? Okay why don't we use that time to get caught up on email and prepare for our discussion with the Board.

We're going to be meeting with the Board in their meeting room which is (BNC) 12, right, Tim?

Tim Ruiz: (Unintelligible). Follow the red carpet (unintelligible) elevator at that end (unintelligible).

Mason Cole: Okay.

((Crosstalk))

Mason Cole: Okay all right so we're meeting there at 2:15 and we have an hour with the Board. We will - we'll have a break at 3:15 and we'll meet back here at 3:30. All right. Thank you all. Okay.

END