

**Transcript ICANN Marrakech
GNSO Session Saturday, 05 March 2016
IDN Variants**

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James Bladel: Our next session is IDN variants. We're going to get a status update from Sarmad Hussain who's joined us here at the table. And as soon as I get a green light from staff that the recording has started we'll begin. Thank you, we have a green light. So, Sarmad, you may begin. And if others could please just quietly find your seats we'll get started. Thank you.

Sarmad Hussain: Thank you, James. And thank you, again, for allowing us to give an update to the GNSO Council and members on the work which is being done by the IDN program.

So as far as the work projects are concerned – list of projects are concerned again we have the same projects which continue. We have a few projects at the top level. We have a couple of projects at the second level. And then we continue to do outreach to the community. And I'll go into these details in the slides. Next slide please.

I think the highlight for this particular meeting is that based on the work which has been going on by the communities we have finally released the first version of label generation rules for the root zone. They are now officially available.

There was two script communities which finished their proposals, Arabic and Armenian. Both of them were as per the procedure, evaluated by the integration panel and then based on that evaluation Arabic script has been integrated into the first version.

And Armenian script was not integrated at this time because Armenian generation panel shared some – indicated they had some variants with Latin, Cyrillic and Greek scripts so the integration panel decided to wait for those generation panels to catch up and see whether the – definition of variants is consistent across those panels before the integration. So we now have our first version and most scripts will be added as the other panels complete their work.

Next slide please. And this is a status of where things are. As you can see, this shows Arabic and Armenian have finished their work. (Hamir) and Lau script communities are – have finalized their proposals, it's being tweaked with discussion with integration panel and very soon they will be finishing up this work as well. And there are many other communities which are making good progress.

However, we are still looking for communities from Jordan, Hebrew, (unintelligible) to form their generation panels and start the work. So this work will continue as script panels make progress. Next slide please.

We are also happy to announce that the specification and tool set which were being developed to store these linguistic rules, which are being developed by the communities are also coming to final stages. The specification is being converted into a standards track out of (unintelligible) and it was in last call last week so that is being finalized as well.

And we've also developed tools based on the specification, the first three phases of the tool are available and show you just snapshots of this here. And then you can come and get more details during the IDN sessions on Wednesday. And once we've tested these tools they will be available not only online at the link which is shared here but also as open source distributions for anybody to integrate these tools into their own systems.

Next slide please. So this is just a snapshot of the tool itself. This tool allows you to define a label generation rule set. It's a very user friendly interface where you can enter data from IDN tables either manually or you can import existing

IDN tables in – if they're in formats which are already defined by previous RFCs.

Next slide please. Once the IDN table is generated you can load the LGR into this tool and then you can type in a name, so there is an example of an Arabic name which is typed in, and it tells you whether the label is valid based on that LGR and also lists variants of these labels. So if you see it says there are 1600 variants of this. But of those only 7 are allocatable and the rest are actually either invalid or blocked. So this data is based on the Arabic script LGR which the community has developed.

Next slide please. And then finally the third phase of this tool, which is also completed, allows you to compare LGRs – two different LGRs or for management purposes so you can take unions into section difference of these LGRs. So this tool is basically going to allow us as a community and also ICANN to manage these language tables which are being produced. And this tool is not limited with the top level, it's the same specification which can be used for second level as well. So same tool can actually be used for second level.

Next slide please. We also continue to work on supporting IDN ccTLDs. There are now 49 strings from 39 different countries and territories which are – been successfully evaluated. Next slide please. Of these 43 have been delegated representing 33 countries and territories and it covers 18 scripts and 27 languages.

We also are currently in the process of doing an annual review of the fast track process and there was some discussion around string similarity and there is actually now a working group at ccNSO which is looking at revising those guidelines on string similarity. And that work continues within ccNSO at this time. Next slide please.

We also initiated revision of IDN implementation guidelines. These guidelines are especially relevant for the GNSO community because these are second

level guidelines which become contractually binding to registrars and registries and are also recommended for IDN ccTLDs.

The last version was released in 2011 and GNSO community has indicated that that's – it's been a while that these have been updated and there's been work going on in the IDN area so these need to be updated. Based on the request we've actually went out and we now have formulated a working group which has six members from GNSO, two from ccNSO, two from SSAC and two from ALAC who are working together to review the guidelines and update them. Next slide please.

And at this time in this meeting they are actually having a face to face session on Wednesday. If you're interested please come and join us. They are currently considering what are relevant issues which should be considered for second level. And they've currently short-listed six items which they will be discussing with the community and also within the working group to see which of these to take forward and which of these to exclude from IDN implementation guidelines based on relevance of these topics.

Next slide please. So I'm not going to go into details of these topics. But these have been shared with the community through the working group members themselves. Next slide please.

So this is information about the face to face session. Again, please come and join us if you have – if you like to know more detail about what the current status is. Next slide please.

Another project at second level which was initiated was to look at second level IDN tables as reference tables and the motivation came from the fact that the – all the new gTLD – for all the new gTLD applications which are offering IDNs at the second level they have to – the applicants have to submit IDN tables and these tables are tested against the criteria. However, it was not clear – there were no reference tables available to undertake the testing and to just be more open and transparent about it.

Some reference tables are being developed. There are 29 languages in the current where we have developed these tables. They will be used as an open reference for the community for doing this testing and also for any RCEP processes. And just to give you an update on where we are on this, next slide please.

The process of developing these tables was shared back in March 2015 based on which a process was finalized in which for a set of guidelines will be developed to make these tables. Based on those guidelines obviously authoritative sources will be looked at and IDN tables will be developed in NGR format. And then they'll undergo a linguistic and stability review. And finally all this will be released for public comments for the community to look at these tables and evaluate them and give feedback and based on that feedback these tables will be finalized.

We have – we finalize the guidelines after the process was finalized and released them for public comment. We did get significant input from Registry Stakeholder Group and other community members on those guidelines. And we are currently engaging obviously with the Registry Stakeholder Group to address the public comments and the best way which is possible. Next slide please.

Just to go into a bit more detail, next – yeah – basically three of the points – main points which were discussed first, there was a comment on waiting to develop language based LGRs for the second level until the process for root zone is completed. And I think one constraint with that is that the root zone LGR may actually take a very long time to develop because there are many different scripts.

And if we wait for that process to actually conclude that may actually delay this project significantly. So that's something which is – this was shared with the Registry Stakeholder Group representatives and they said they would obviously consider this feedback.

There was also concern raised about changing the reference LGRs because that may have implications on existing implementations. So one of the things which we are doing is we have the 29 new – the current reference tables which have been developed. And we are actually going and comparing these tables with the ones we were using before internally and seeing how much actually is an implication of using – switching to these reference LGRs.

And doing a table by table analysis, once we've actually done the table by table analysis we'll also look at some of the deviations which were approved and see whether there are any significant stability concerns. And if there are any significant stability concerns we'll bring that back to Registry Stakeholder Group who initiated this concern and talk about each particular case in more detail. So this is work which is ongoing.

We are analyzing the data and based on data after the Morocco meeting we'll actually engage with the Registry Stakeholder Group to see who how significant those implications are and what should be the way forward based on that.

Also there was a concern raised by the Registry Stakeholder Group which said that this reference tables process should not be very rigid and registries should be able to have variation in their IDN tables. And it was clarified in the call that registry scan have deviations from reference tables. These are just references, they're not requirement. And there was a question about what would registration to deviate because registries which are deviating would – may need to provide some justification for their deviation.

So we are now at this time – excuse me – working on that justification criteria to share back with the Registry Stakeholder Group. It will largely be based obviously on (unintelligible) considerations but also stability, consistency and usability are important factors to consider in this context. Next slide please.

Finally we continue to outreach to the community to vote for information informing the community about what IDN program is doing and also to engage the community into the various working groups which are being currently supported through the IDN program to actually develop board guidelines and also the linguistic data which we need to enable the top level domains as well as the work on second level.

We have been engaging community directly and we also are – have information available through our Website and wiki spaces. Details are available here. Next slide please.

So that's just a brief update on what we are doing at the IDN program. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

James Bladel: Thank you, Sarmad. It's an important program. So any questions from the table? I see Edmon coming up to the mic so I'll give him – I'll stall for just a moment here and see if I can give him time to get up there. Edmon, you're up.

Edmon Chung: Edmon Chung here. Thank you, Sarmad, for the update. Two questions, actually, one on the justification on deviating from the reference. I'm actually quite supportive of the reference tables as you know. However, when we talk about deviation, when you talk about the few criterias, I'm a little bit concerned that it kind of once we set some reference then anything that deviates needs to be specifically justified.

That kind of thinking is probably not quite correct, it's probably that it's just easier for the reference tables because you don't need to go through the RCEP. But nothing that is beyond the current RCEP should be in place probably for if you want to deviate. That's I guess a comment on that. The other thing is of course my – one of my favorite topics which is missing here which is the implementation of IDN variants for gTLDs at the top level. Where are we with that project?

Sarmad Hussain: Thank you, your first comment is noted and we'll engage with the Registry Stakeholder Group with the justification which is developed and we'll make sure that it is something which is acceptable.

As far as the implementation project is concerned, we've actually made reasonable progress. We will – we are aiming to come back to the community in the next meeting. And I'll – what we're doing right now is we've identified the risks and based on the risks we have actually identified some of the issues which need to be answered.

And one of the things we are now starting to do is between now and next meeting is we are actually going to do a detailed report on what those issues are, what are possible recommendations on those issues and based on those – that analysis we'll actually release the report to the community to get their feedback into it.

As soon as community input is devised and we actually have answers to how some of those issues need to be addressed, then obviously we'll go into the next phase, which is actually implementation of the variants based on eventually whatever the recommendations are finalized.

Just to give you an example, one of the issues is that the LGRs generate allocatable variants and in some cases those allocatable variants are over-generated just because the way automatic processes. And not all of those allocatable variants actually should be allocated because some of those are just not possible to type from a single keyboard, for example.

So there has to be some next layer which defines what should be a restriction on what (unintelligible) of the allocatable variants should be actually allocated or can be actually allocated. So we are – so that's one of the questions. We have about 18 different questions which need to be answered. But so at this time we are actually going to be doing homework on all those 18 or the issues and coming up with very concrete possibilities and recommendations on what would be a better way of addressing it given the options.

And then come to the community and get feedback on what is the best way forward on it. So we will have something more concrete with you in the next meeting.

James Bladel: Just a brief follow up?

Edmon Chung: Yeah, just a brief follow up on that. As you look at those 18 issues, it's great to know that that's moving forward. As you look at those 18 it's probably useful to also look back at the GNSO recommendations – policy recommendations both the IDN outcomes report and also the new gTLD recommendations and see if we might need to deviate from that at all because if there is then a PDP or some kind of policy developments needs to be – needs to happen because that's, I guess, you know, the earlier the better that we know.

James Bladel: Thank you, Edmon. Thank you. And, Rubens, you're next.

Rubens Kuhl: Rubens Kuhl for the record. During the 2012 new gTLD round we had to do a manual review on security and stability of IDN labels. After the label generation rules for the root zone are complete we will be able to algorithmically identify which ones are valid or not?

Sarmad Hussain: So that's one of those 18 questions. And I guess the answer is that we really need to see how much of the security stability concerns are automatically handled by LGR and what – obviously whatever is left over needs to be then handed down to a DNS stability panel which actually used to be – do the security stability review.

So that's exactly the kind of questions we are currently trying to answer and come up with possible solutions based on what LGR is actually already providing us. And so I don't have an answer to that question at this time but that's a issue which has already been raised internally for discussion and we'll have something more concrete for you hopefully in the next meeting.

Rubens Kuhl: Thank you.

James Bladel: Okay thank you. Any other questions from the room – or hi, Marilia.

Marilia Maciel: Thank you, James. This is Marilia speaking for the transcript. My question is related to the process that we are starting right now on the working group on new gTLD subsequent procedures. We are requested to look at the directions ah the GNSO developed in 2007. And one of them is related to the demand for new gTLDs and the business opportunities and competition it creates both for us and also for IDNs.

And looking at the data that has been produced and will be analyzed by different groups, the metrics, the (Nielsen) report and the report on competition that has been produced in September, my feeling is that from this report I cannot get a feeling or a sense with regards to competition on new gTLD sector with regard to IDNs. If this is correct how could we, at this stage, improve the metrics in order to pinpoint the results better?

And if it's not correct then maybe you can point us to the right place to get this information because there are a lot of metrics and reports being produced. Maybe I'm not looking at the right place. I focus on these two reports. How can we get more information just particularly about IDNs and competition and acceptance and consumer choice? Thanks.

Sarmad Hussain: So I'm not directly (unintelligible) involved with that particular report but I'm happy to follow up with you and actually try to answer your queries as well after better understanding what's actually in that report and also maybe also connecting you with other relevant people within ICANN who can better I guess answer that question. So is it possible that we can follow up on this?

James Bladel: Thank you. Okay it looks like the queue is clear. So I would say thank you for your update.

Sarmad Hussain: Thank you for having me.

