CR - At-Large IDN Working Group
Monday, March 12, 2012 – 17:00 to 18:00
ICANN - San Jose, Costa Rica

Edmon Chung: …is working; oh, this one is working. So welcome everyone, thank you for joining. I guess the recording and everything has been started; thank you. This is the IDN Working Group of ALAC. Just a quick background for those who are joining us, I'm glad that we have so many people joining us actually.

So the background is that this group was restarted in Singapore. In Singapore the ALAC took a look at a number of standing committees, whether we should keep it or not, and IDN was one of them, and the decision at the ALAC was to continue to keep it going. We had an initial, the first meeting, a face to face meeting again in Dakar, where we sort of started to set out some work items. One of the key elements is to try to be a little bit more proactive in some of the issues, IDN related issues that ALAC is concerned with.

Unfortunately, we have somewhat failed in the way that we have been reactive more than proactive so far, but we did produce a couple of comments into a couple of comment period, including the comment into the VIP, the Variant Issues Project of the Internationalized Domain Names Variant Issues Project Final Report. As well as the joint group between the ccNSO and the GNSO on the IDNs, which is the JIG.

So we did produce a couple of that and we had a couple of conference calls between Dakar and here in Costa Rica to specifically sort of look into, both to produce those reports as well as to look into the agenda for today. In terms of today, I know that a number of our people from the working group have some conflicts and they won't be able to join us until 6:00. So originally this session was set up to be between five to six, and this is the time where we will have the staff support and transcription and recording. At six we will lose all of that, but

we will continue to go on. And hopefully at that time Cheryl, Olivier and some of the others in the group will join us then.

But at this time, I don't know whether the Adobe Connect can show the agenda, but in terms of the agenda, I sent it around earlier, that was what we discussed in our last conference call. And mainly, the main item that we want to work on is to talk about our response to the VIP project plan. And that went out for public comment about three weeks ago and it will end at the end of this week, I think it's Sunday, end of that public comment period, and we want to craft a response.

On top of that, the second item is to think about how ALAC is moving towards a more proactive approach and thinking about what At-Large, the type of issues, including this response to the project plan, how we would like to work with other parts of the community including perhaps for example, the GAC, and other parts of the community.

And then the final part of which we were hoping to touch on the issue of universal acceptance. I think that is an area that ALAC is very sort of close to what At-Large should be about, and to touch on that. Oh I do see the agenda, it's very tiny there. But anyway, I was wondering if I could use the projector or not; that would be very problematic right? Oh okay. No, I don't have a presentation; I just want to bring up the first item, which I sent around a number of notes for the working group.

By the way, I just want to apologize. I do see a lot of visitors have joined us, which I'm happy about, but I sent around a note to this working group on some of the items to be discussed on the first topic, which is the project plan. There we go. So I'm just showing the email in case you don't have it in front of you. It's not showing properly. There you go.

Okay. I sort of split it up. I apologize for those who just joined us. If you want to jump in and just raise your hand; this room is kind of not in the format that I thought it would be, but it's meant to be a more interactive discussion. What we discussed in the last conference call and I sort of summarized and put out four

main parts for our response, one of which our general – this is sort of a skeleton for our response to the VIP Project Plan.

The first one being the general ALAC position. Some of the things that we normally reiterate. Second one we identified was the budget, and the process that went through. In the ALAC response to the FY13, the Fiscal Year 201, we included a paragraph on the VIP Project Plan and so we wanted to elaborate on that. The third area is our concerns that were raised generally in the discussion last time. And then going forward as to what we would like to craft as ALAC advice.

So, instead of me doing the talking I was hoping the working group members could help me on a number of things. I guess unfortunately we don't have the full team here, but I wonder if Hong or Rinalia or somebody can – in terms of first area of our response to the VIP Project Plan I guess we would reiterate our support for IDNs; reiterate how IDN is important for multi-linguism; reiterate our concerns for the continued delay. Are there other areas we want to – please?

Thomas Narten: Thomas Narten here, and I haven't been following this working group very closely, but I just thought I'd drop in. But one of the things I'd kind of like to get some clarification on is what do you mean by "reiterate our concerns for continued delay" on the implementation of IDN Variant TLDs? Because the way that's written, it comes across as if somebody is intentionally delaying doing something that is straightforward to do. And if you're really just trying to express frustration that you wish we were ready to move forward that's one thing. But my understanding is there's still some real work that needs to be done and until the work gets done we can't move forward.

Edmon Chung: I understand, thank you. I guess the point here is that in our previous statements, in previous ALAC statements, before I was a liaison actually, [Sirholm] was the IDN liaison at one point.

[background conversation]

Female: I was not the liaison; there's a third one between us. I guess I should be…

Edmon Chung: James was before. And then before that it was you. But throughout the years the ALAC has issued a number of statements on these issues and have always urged to try to implement it as soon as possible. That was what we meant by reiterate some of the things that were said before. So, I had Dennis and then Tom.

Dennis Jennings: Yes, Dennis Jennings for the record. I think the use of the word "delay" is unfortunate. I understand what you mean, there's a great anxiety that this move forward as soon as possible, but I think one of the things that has come clear from both the case studies and the integrated issues report, is that this topic is incredibly complicated. And there is a significant amount of very detailed work that has to be done before it's possible even to consider the question of whether IDN Variant TLDs maybe be delegated.

So in that context I fully accept that there is a desire to have this happen as quickly as possible. And if there's any regret about delay it's possibly that this project should have happened a long time ago, but it only started 12 months ago. And believe me, it was a hell of a job to get the amount of work done by the community, with the community, supporting the community over the last 12 months.

So, I think I'm reiterating what Thomas said, I understand your frustration that it's going to take longer, but we're moving and we're trying to move with the community as rapidly as possible.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Dennis. I think Hong wanted to, but Thomas first. It was Thomas first and then Hong.

Thomas Narten: Yes, Thomas again. I agree with what Dennis said and I think the messaging is important here because if the implication is that there's needless delay or inappropriate delay then we should flesh that out; talk about it. But if it's just really a "let's get on with this because we can"; that's a reasonable message and I fully support that.

Edmon Chung: Hong?

Hong Xue: Okay thank you. If the word "Delay" is not appropriate it could be removed or paraphrased, but it shows a kind of frustration feeling from the community, especially IDN community. Edmon was asking anything else to be added from this, so I want to go back to this track. What I can think about is not a delay, but it's about something else it's very much timely, imminent; it's about action. Okay, the IDN Variant issue after several months' development it is still a document. And now it seems the window is going to close in three weeks. And the batching will be a critical issue with so many models to batch.

And which one should be prioritized, I see a clear proposal that's first batch should be IDN. The second one, community based. The third one, geographical names. And therefore IDNs when it involves the variant issues would it become a barrier, what is kind of batching. And I just want to open up minds to think about all the possibility. So IDN, would it be plagued because of the [environs]?

Edmon Chung: Thank you Hong. I want to clarify what you're suggesting, and I don't quite get the relationship. So you think that – we're talking about the general ALAC position. How does the Variant and batching relate? So you're saying that we should say that variant issues shouldn't cause certain IDN applications to be prioritized later?

Hong Xue: What I mean is that if this kind of a tier batching is really going to be adopted, and IDN would be at the front, at least IDN policy and technical readiness should have been done. But it's saying for Variants there's still some gaps to be filled in. So in that case, I guess there should be serious concerns whether IDN as a group should be prioritized in batching. I hope I've answered your question.

Edmon Chung: I guess I get it. But for those joining I'm just jotting notes in this format because this is intended to be a working group meeting and the setup is a little bit strange. Okay, on that, I guess I wanted to come back to one of the issues about delay or not or how ALAC generally; I probably can't speak for ALAC, but I think there is a general feeling that this could move faster. One of the key elements being, how much ICANN, both the Board and the staff, trust the bottom-up community efforts that are already in place.

Whether that is sufficient to drive towards implementation could be a matter of perspective as well as a matter of fact. There are people who feel that it's a matter of fact; there are people who feel that it's a matter of perspective, whether we could move faster. Dennis?

Dennis Jennings: Thank you, Dennis Jennings again. I want to emphasize that the two phases of the VIP that have taken place have been very much driven by the community. The case studies were driven by the community. The issues were identified in the community. The community team drawn from the six case studies advised

the ICANN team to produce the integrated issues report. And I refer to that to emphasize how serious this project is about being driven by the community.

When we look forward to the work that needs to be done, that too will be community driven. And that doesn't lessen the amount of work. In fact it – one of the key questions I think is how we're going to involve the community sufficiently to actually address all the questions, all the issues that have arisen. And to cover all the projects that we now see need to be addressed before we can even consider proposing to the Board that IDN Variants should be delegated.

But unless, I emphasize in case there's any misunderstanding – this will be driven by the community, supported by ICANN.

Edmon Chung: Okay Dennis, thank you. Thank you actually for that clarification. When we first looked into the project plan, it appeared, at least in the writing; it appeared to us as reading it as driven very much by staff and consultants that will be hired. And that drove the response that ALAC wrote in response to the FY3 budget allocation of about two something, about three million dollars on these set of projects, which are I think personally, I think they are very important. But we had some concerns about the process that came to being.

I wanted to, since we have so many from the VIP and also from the Board here, perhaps we can move to the meat of the discussion which we'd like to have in terms of how we feel about the project plan. I know Thomas wanted to add, but before that I just want to get a sense whether the working group people here have had the chance to read thoroughly the project plan that was put out for public comments. Just want to make sure that…

[background conversation]

Edmon Chung: Okay, at least we have a few people who have read it. So Thomas, you wanted to add something?

Thomas Narten: Yeah thank you. Just to go back a little bit on the chart, the last thing that was just added, "batching priority," could I get a little clarification of what's being asked for? Is this referring to the batching of, in the case of the new gTLD program there's more than 500 applications and the batching process gets a vote to tell us who gets processed first, second and third? Or is this referring to something different.

Edmon Chung: This is a comment from Hong which I added in. So Hong do you want to elaborate? I guess my understanding is Hong was saying that as we go into, one of the things that we might want, from the ALAC, we might want to say, is that as we look into the batching process the IDNs should not be de-prioritized because Variant is not ready yet. That's just the idea so far.

Thomas Narten: Right. And I guess my response would be, at least as I understand the batching process, which has been presented by Kurt earlier today, is its IDN agnostic. It doesn't favor or disfavor IDNs.

Edmon Chung: Cheryl?

Cheryl Langdon-Orr: Thank you. Cheryl Langdon-Orr, for the transcript record. Olivier is frantically on his laptop there trying to get permission to table to this work group a document that has been circulated, but it is in close circulation to members of the ALAC and some old fogeys like myself. And what it does is take a very non-agnostic approach to batching and it is something that we had been wanting

in Costa Rica to try and look at and socialize with communities. If we can get that released with a tick from the people in GNSO who've written it, I'd like to table it later in this meeting. I think it's fairly important.

It's still fairly agnostic, but it is a very different approach to batching than is currently under review. It's something that I believe other constituencies will be bringing up for conversation during this meeting, it certainly was the plan, but I haven't seen it go live yet. And I think this group needs to know about it, if that means we have to do a pre-emptive introduction, I just want to put that in your agenda as a marker.

Edmon Chung: Dennis, you wanted to respond or?

Dennis Jennings: I'm just a little confused in that as I understand it, the current guidebook says that there are no Variants. An application for an IDN may declare, may propose that there is an associated Variant which will be noted, but there are no Variants going to be delegated in the first round. And therefore I'm wondering at the association of Variants and any batching methodology and whether that's helpful to introduce a discussion of batching, when we're supposed to be having a discussion on how to get to Variants in the future. So I'm just a little confused. I'm just flagging that.

Edmon Chung: And that is the reason why I suggested we move on to the other parts and I think Hong raised the issue and I just jotted the note there and not saying that it will eventually make its way into the final document, I just wanted to, that's the part I wanted to let people know. I just jotted a note there that it was an issue that was raised.

Okay, so coming back to some of the meat of the discussion, I hope you have this set of notes, and also the VIP proposed project plan with you. So we were

looking into providing some actual comments into perhaps each of the projects that were identified. There were eight projects that were identified. I think some of them, we had a brief discussion in our last conference call, some of them seem to, may not be what we think are so important or maybe different types of approach could be taken.

So I jumped to this particular section that I sort of drafted some notes on. One of the things that I think I would like to get the sense of the working group is on – let's go project by project if people are okay with it. Okay. So, in the project plan, project three was identified as – where's my mouse – project three was identified as "examining the feasibility of a whole string variant." One of the things that we observed is that in the case study team reports, I think there was only one case study team that identified this as a potential issue.

And one of the feelings is whether it should be, what the priority it should be or shouldn't be taken into consideration at all. And also, if I remember correctly, it's from the Greek case study report and it seemed, the Greek report seemed to indicate that the variant issues might not be as mature as the others, like for example, Chinese and Indic and Arabic ones.

So, one of the first ones that I wanted to raise and see what the others have any sort of comment on, is whether this is useful. Just to clarify on this, and Dennis or others from the VIP team please help me out. The idea is this is a, instead of when we talk generally about IDN Variants we talk about character to character sort of a comparison, replacement, but this is the case where the whole string is taken into consideration and another whole string. Not necessarily character to character conversion be considered.

So, that's I guess the main issue that I want to raise is since we went down the path of having multiple case study teams, and only one of which, and perhaps not even the most mature one, raised this issue, is should this be prioritized or should this really be done by the community and let the community continue to work on it, rather than be taken up by ICANN or VIP at this point. So, that's one of them.

I'm seeing that people are a little bit lost. So perhaps rather than doing this, I'll go back to our more general principles, or some of the things that we had talked about, rather than going deep into some of the issues because it seems difficult given this particular setting to do that.

There are a couple of issues that we talked about last time, which is one, the finances of the project and whether that's appropriate. The other part is what existing, in the project plan it doesn't talk about existing experience in implementations that are already in place and acknowledging them and probably utilizing them. So I guess my question to the group is, how do we want to go about this in terms of coming up with our advice, especially on one of the items, which is, the original VIP split it out into language/script study teams. In the new project plan, in the phase two project plan, that approach is no longer taken.

In our previous comments into VIP, the ALAC has reiterated a couple of times that we see that there are different languages or scripts may be further down the path or have dome less work in terms of the community. The current plan doesn't seem to reflect that. Is that something we want to reiterate? And I think Andrew wanted to add, before we talk further.

Andrew Sullivan: Hi there, I'm Andrew Sullivan. I just have a question about what you were saying. You said that the project plan doesn't seem to be taking advantage of other experience, things that people have done. Now, I recognize that there are people who have registries that have been doing some sort of variant technique. I'm unaware of anybody who has a global infrastructure role and that has to support every linguistic community in the world that is also doing this. So if you're aware of such a thing, it would be really handy to know who they are, because I really want to talk to them.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Andrew. And that's probably, I think that's the reason why we are having this discussion is that whether that experience is relevant. That's what you're saying right? There's no relevant experience is your point of view.

Andrew Sullivan: No, I would not say it's not relevant. I think it's clearly relevant. I mean there are ways in which some people developed some techniques and we need to pay attention to things that people have already done. It would be completely insane not to. The question is whether there are, from my point of view anyway, the reports that we have so far, indicate that the global context of the root and the fact that we're trying to do both localization and internationalization in the very same zone at the same time, mean that the root is even more special than we thought. And therefore those special considerations need to be front and center in making any kind of determination.

And that's the reason why doing something for some communities and not the other may be more difficult. it's certainly true that in certain linguistic communities, at least it seems true to me so I shouldn't say it's certainly true, I think it is true that some linguistic communities have enough of an isolation from the rest of the sort of lingual world that there is likely to be cross-contamination.

But the problem is that almost every one of the cases that we looked at actually do have that kind of problem; it's a shared code point space. And even the ones that are most likely not to have these kinds of problems because there is the greatest maturity, and I think the obvious example of that is in the CGK space, there's still the problem that there are potential cross-contaminations here and if you don't have very, very clear rules and a really solid understanding of how to solve those cases, then you're going to run into difficulty.

One could argue that the current proposal prioritizes some of those issues to be too late, and that seemed to be part of the point that you were making here with the remark about whole string variants for instance. You take one that is maybe not as central and you put that kind of too early in the timeline. And it seems to

me there's a distinction to be made between when should these items happen, and the other question of whether there's an overarching problem here that really needs to be tackled. And I'm not sure which of those points you were trying to make and that was really what's driving my question.

Edmon Chung: Well to be quite honest I was hoping this to be a more interactive discussion then me talking a lot. Because of this setup it's very difficult. But, Sala?

Andrew Sullivan: Somebody else can answer it, I don't care.

Edmon Chung: No I'll get back to you, but Sala.

Salanieta Tamanikaiwaimaro: My first caveat is I'm not an engineer. Certainly not an IDN expert. Bu the comment I'd like to make is, is there a possibility of the creation of a synthetic root?

Edmon Chung: Sorry?

Salanieta Tamanikaiwaimaro: The creation of I don't know, the creation of a synthetic root within which to experiment on; an alternative synthetic root so to speak. I don't know the proper lingo for it. I'm just thinking – yes, a test root, test bed. Thank you. The reason why I'm asking is I think it's critical to address whether the barriers are technical. And if the barriers are technical then it's also important that we create a culture of innovation, of innovation where things are allowed to develop, things are allowed to – I mean we will make mistakes and that sort of thing, but I'm also hoping that the barriers are certainly not…how do I put it, I have t be

careful how I put it. That the barriers are not commercially driven, meaning that with all the new IDNs upsetting the supply and demand in relation to the TLD space and upsetting the value of gTLDs for example. So, that's just a comment.

Edmon Chung: Dennis?

[background conversation]

Dennis Jennings: No, I'm certainly not a techie. This whole project is not driven by commercial concerns. It's driven by trying to find out whether there are solutions to the issues that have been identified. And to try it in to sort of layman's context for myself, here's how I characterize where we are in relation to IDN and IDN Variant TLDs. It's like as if in the ASCII world we hadn't yet decided on which 37 carriages to have and none of the applications work anyway.

That's where we are. That's my mental picture of where we are with the IDNs and Variants. So there's an awful lot of basic work – which code points are valid, which are permitted, which are variants, what type of variants, how those variants are generated, what are the rules – all that stuff needs to be put together before we can address "these are the," in ASCII terms, "the 37 characters that we're going to permit." So we're way, way back at some very fundamental R&D work with the community, with the linguistic community, to establish some basic facts and basic rules before we can move forward.

Edmon Chung: Andrew?

Andrew Sullivan: To respond, it's Andrew Sullivan again. To respond to your question about whether it is technically possible the answer is yes and no. On the yes side it is trivial. I could set it up right now on my laptop and you could use it, no problem. We could go ahead and do that. We could configure everything and it would work. On the no side, everybody else in the world would not be doing it and that's what the problem is here. The problem with all of the variant issues in this, is that everybody in the entire world when they do anything on the internet have to use the DNS. And most importantly they have to use the root zone.

And that means that if you make a change to the root zone, to the policies about how the root zone works, and it badly affects a bunch of people over there, to whom you're not even talking right now, you don't know they exist and you don't have any way of contacting them. Then you will break their internet. And most of the time when we hear "the internet is broken" that means something sort of local or something like that. No, you will break their internet. That's a big problem. You can't do that.

And that's the reason why this is difficult and that's the reason why caution is one of the overriding principles here. So, yes we can do some limited test bed work. Yes we can do things that indicate stuff. But the fact is that if you really want to know whether this works on the internet, the only way to do it is to turn it on. And once you've turned it on you cannot turn it off. This isn't even like signing the root.

The last time we tried to de-delegate a TLD it took what, five years? It's not a trivial problem. And we can't do the gradual rollout we did with signing the root zone; we can't do any of that stuff. So every time we turn one of these things on, it's for good. And that means that, that's why that cautionary principle is so important.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Andrew. Just one point and I have the gentleman in front and then Sala. I think in terms of the experiment, I think that that's probably a good idea

to explore. Today we have at least a few TLDs that are considered, at least by the users of those TLDs, to be variant TLDs, even though I think the Board or the technical community doesn't at this point consider it as maybe variant TLDs. Those are the examples of .china and Taiwan. In the user point of view they are variant TLDs, and for the operators they are variant TLDs that are in the root right now.

So on the conservativeness principle we probably should monitor that a lot more. There's also one of the test bed ones, the .test in Chinese, in simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese, they in a way could be considered, but it depends on the perspective of course. So, please.

Pedro Chou: Hello, thank you. My name is Pedro Chou, I am from Costa Rica. I have some questions about regarding the IDNs for example, currently, I mean right now, is there any code that involves all possible kind of characters, I mean it can be Latin characters, Chinese characters, Arabic characters, any kind where we are currently implementing iPV6, which expands far beyond the capability of IP addresses. Is there any way to address regionally a set of IP address and therefore use this IP address as correlated with some sort of character?

For example, in this area the Americas, Europe, we can use the Latin characters, therefore the IP addresses locate in those areas that we can correlate to them and therefore create some sort of coded to use for every one of these possible characters. I don't know if I'm clear about my question but is there any process being undertaken to create a code to involve every possible character from every language? Not only for example the [ID record] correlated to ASCII; I mean beyond that.

Edmon Chung: Well I'm not sure whether Unicode is the answer that you're looking for. I didn't get it.

[background conversation]

Edmon Chung: Oh okay. So IDN is based on what is called the Unicode which tries to capture all the characters of all the languages around the world. It's not fully finished yet, I guess. There are some arcane languages that are not quite in yet, and there are certain languages that are not fully functional yet. And IDN is based on that, the current discussion is based on what's called the Unicode which does catalogue all the characters in the world, in a way. Sorry. Okay.

So, perhaps let the gentleman – he needs the mic.

Pedro Chou: Another case is for example the characters, for example in Chinese, the simplified and the traditional. I mean is it possible to use the same character which in one case to be traditional and in the other one is simplified, in order to represent a different IP address on the internet; is that possible?

Edmon Chung: Yes, that's the kind of policy that we're talking about actually. What we're talking about is the potential in a TLD level, top level domain level, if let's say it's a simplified Chinese character and then for a lot of Chinese users the traditional Chinese version would appear to be the same right? And whether we delegate it to the same machine or same IP address is part of the discussion that we're having in terms of variants.

Pedro Chou: Correct. So it means for example, in Hong Kong they use traditional characters right, and in China for example they use simplified, but if one character is the same it has the same meaning but different written, is it possible regarding to the location, the geographical location to correlate it to a different IP address? That's kind of my question.

Edmon Chung: Yeah I guess that's precisely the topic we're trying to talk about in terms of variants. So yes and whether the policy, how the policy should be developed is what we're talking about. So I have Sala, Dennis and then Thomas and Naela as well.

Salanieta Tamanikaiwaimaro: I think I'll start out by saying at some point the New York City Council, one of their biggest problems was dealing with [post-excretions]. And they probably never imagined that one day they'd have trains pulling trains whatever and vehicles and that sort of thing in a whole new complex layer of problems. And I think with the evolution of the internet and something like the IDN of course there are going to be problems. And yes we've heard that there are capacities to be able to test it.

I think a critical thing that the At-Large community particularly should consider is that at all times technology exists to serve men and not the other way around. And man's greatest need is to be able to communicate, and to be able to communicate in your own language. I don't see why TLDs, especially those who are willing to volunteer, can't create test roots to actually test the system. And even if it's isolated so that it doesn't fragment or pose a security risk. And this is something that I'm sure the experts can sort of look into.

But in terms of policy considerations, I think that at all times the spirit of innovation should be encouraged. And yes there should be caution, but at the same time we shouldn't let caution hinder or restrict us from flying. After all if people never stepped out of their comfort zone, you wouldn't have seen Wilbur and Orville and we wouldn't be flying on Boeing 747s and we wouldn't be in this meeting. It would probably take us 80 days to travel right?

Edmon Chung: Thank you Sala. We are running out of time in a way, but as I mentioned when we lose the staff support and the recording and everything, we'll continue the meeting, at least for another half an hour to 45 minutes. Dennis?

Dennis Jennings: I would like to encourage everybody to read carefully the integrated issues report. It's the outcome of a year's intensive work that I tell you, has been one of the most head wrecking experiences that I've been through. This is not easy stuff. And I think anybody who comes to a discussion about the next steps must have read carefully that report. And there's some background questions being raised here, which I'd be very happy to have sessions on and so on, but there's some people who have come here who clearly have not read or understood that report.

Now I don't blame people for not understanding because it's bloody hard stuff. I mean I really seriously mean this. But to continue the analogy on flight, we're still at the point where the Wright Brothers are arguing about whether a curved wing actually creates an up force on the aerofoil or a down force. We really are very early on in this stage. For those of you who find the integrated issues report very difficult, then maybe we should be doing something about maybe going through that in more detail. Because it's important that people really internalize the R&D nature of where we are with variants.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Dennis. I have Thomas, Naela, Cheryl and then Olivier. Okay, Thomas you? No, okay, Naela.

Naela Sarras: I really couldn't have said it any better, that's exactly what I wanted to say. We've previously distributed the six case study reports and an integrated one; if you guys want we can reforward those links. But just like you here, we struggled with these issues all year long last year. Oh and the other thing I wanted to say, in the project plan, the first phase of the next phase that we're proposing is

exactly doing feasibility studies of all the stuff that was already identified in the integrated issues report – what of these are even feasible.

You brought up the whole string – that study isn't saying "let's go ahead and delegate whole strings," it's talking about studies of feasibility really.

Edmon Chung: Yeah but one of the questions, "why spend the time and effort, let's do the other things first; this is not prioritized," but anyway that was, I'm just giving you the context of that discussion. Olivier? Yep, we can hear you.

Olivier Crépin-Leblond: You can't hear me? Oh now you can.

Edmon Chung: It's good, it's good.

Olivier Crépin-Leblond: It was off originally.

Edmon Chung: Oh.

Olivier Crépin-Leblond: It turns off when I get a mic; it turns off, but anyway, Olivier Crépin-Leblond. Just a couple of things listening to the discussion that was taking place here. Of course, historically I think that At-Large and the ALAC has been firmly behind pushing IDNs forward because of their benefit to the internet and to the people, to the users out there. However, having spoken to Dennis earlier in the week, I have invited him to come over to this session specifically because of his knowledge and the fact that we was so close to the whole, well he managed I guess the IDN Variants.

And having also followed much of the work taking place in the IETF, IDN [Abis] and the follow up to IDN [Abis] with all of the complexities of the variants and of the different scripts that you have out there. There is currently a comment period that is open until the 18th of March, and what I was going to suggest perhaps, was that the ALAC would ask for an extension of this, because it looks as though there's still a lot to discuss and this session is not long enough for that.

I certainly have, after hearing what's being said here and with the number of experts we have in the room, have great doubts that pushing IDNs on a religious basis might be the right thing to do, if technically speaking, we are endangering the stability of, perhaps not the stability of the domain name system itself, but certainly introducing something that might not be correct when we introduce it. Because certainly yes, I totally agree that once you introduce something in there, it's very difficult to take it out.

Edmon Chung: Thank you Olivier. And I think that's precisely where we want to figure out whether it is at the point, whether it's the risks versus the benefits, I guess, which ones weighs stronger. And I totally agree, in terms of the religious view of things is probably not the best in this context of discussion. So, I wonder in terms of the extension, I wonder how we can, since we have the team here, I wonder if I can take the opportunity and see if Dennis or Naela or somebody can actually say if it could be extended, in your view.

Dennis Jennings: Thank you. I cannot comment on what ICANN can or cannot do and I'm a consultant to ICANN. But let me say this, that if the community feels that they must have more time to comment on this, they must make that statement loudly and clearly in the comment period and to so that we understand that this is a genuine request from the community. Now I'll hand over to Naela who will actually give you an ICANN based response.

Naela Sarras: Far from it, well as an ICANN employee I guess I should. So I totally agree, if you're requesting an extension please put that through the comment period, but maybe also help us by giving – so, a lot of the project plan is laid out based on getting started fairly quickly after the Costa Rica meeting based on the feedback we gather here. So in your comment, if you request an extension, please give us an idea of how long. I mean there's certain rules. We can't really extend it forever.

And tehn another things is what would help for us to help the communities that need that extension because some of these issues are not clear or it's not clear what's in these projects, what would help us better explain them?

Edmon Chung: Olivier? Why don't you go ahead?

Olivier Crépin-Leblond: Thank you Edmon. It's Olivier Crépin-Leblond for the transcript. Just putting my ALAC head on – ALAC head, ALAC Chair head on – hat whatever! It's too late to make sentences these days, must get water, must get rest. Webinar sounds like a good idea to me ASAP, so as to really clear up what the misunderstandings are for our community of course, because I see there are some discrepancies in what people understand by what's going on. Webinar ASAP. Perhaps not next week because I don't think anybody's head will be back home by then, but the week after. And then an extension to, well I can ask for that right away, and send this out right away. And I'll email you over for that.

[background conversation]

Olivier Crépin-Leblond: We can submit a comment to ask for this, but ALAC can submit anything it wants about anything without comments directed to the Board or whoever is in charge. So we will just be submitting a statement to ask for that if you wish.

Edmon Chung: Okay, thank you Olivier. And if those, since I have so many of you here, I've been trying to be sort of Chairing this session and be a little bit more neutral. If people are okay with it, I'll take my Chair hat off and probably ask a few questions of the team since we have you guys here. A few items, one first one is, the ALAC put in a couple of comments before and one of which is quite important is, the view that the issues need to be separated into different scripts or languages and allow those that are more ready – I understand that there are overlaps and I understand that there are cross issues, but it's again, the matter of cost versus benefit and risk versus benefit. Is it worthwhile for the community to go ahead?

So I guess, from the follow up documents I haven't seen any response to those questions. I wonder what the team thinks or you know.

[background conversation]

Dennis Jennings: One of the points that's made very carefully and very clearly is that the whole zone has to be considered and how do we approach considering all the code points in the whole root zone. And in the integrated issues report is quite a long section on approaches to building the code point repertoire and the labor generation rule sets that's really well worth reading.

At one extreme, everything has to be sorted out before you can do anything. The other extreme, I'm just paraphrasing roughly, but you need to read it carefully, it's complicated. You take those code points that are requested and check that everybody agrees that those code points are valid and that the variants

are agreed across by everybody, and then you might be able to move forward for that subset of the zone.

But that question, how to approach this, is the first and most important question that needs to be answered, and I'll refer to Andrew who can much better explain.

Edmon Chung: Can I jump right into that before…I think you nailed one of the issues and that might be the suggestion. Let's take it one TLD at a time. And if that's what you're suggesting that the very particular subset and if everyone and the community agrees, then we take that small step. That allows the program to move forward without the whole repertoire. Did I get what you said correctly?

Dennis Jennings: Yes. I outlined that one extreme approach and there's another extreme approach, and the first question is which is the right approach. Because none of these scripts as defined fully cover the needs of a language; there are other things are being dragged in which are shared or common points. And therefore – Andrew, you need to explain this better than I.

Andrew Sullivan: Okay, so we're going to have some Unicode fun I guess, I'm sorry for this. Unicode has a number of, every code point lives in exactly one script, and I know I'm telling you something you know, but not everybody maybe knows this. So, every code point lives in exactly one script. So it may be a Hong, it might be Latin, it might be Arabic; one of these things, but every code point lives in exactly one. And there are two scripts in Unicode, common and inherited. And these are special scripts.

Common means that more than one linguistic system depends on that. So for instance, all of the digits are in common. If you have a number "1," it's not in English, it's not in Latin, it's not in Arabic, it's in fact used across these things and so it's in "common." And the other one is inherited and inherited ones

actually get their property according to the code points that are around them, which is a little tricky of course because now you need to know what else is in the string before you can evaluate those ones.

No fortunately the inherited ones are not completely, but mostly not really a problem for us, but common are going to be a problem. One way to do this is to say – and in fact the current applicant guidebook says this – that an application ahs to be in one Unicode script, which is going to be very bad for anybody who wants to use something that is officially a letter in their normal writing system, but as a matter of fact is in common script, because it won't satisfy this condition.

So one answer is to say, "Well no, things just have to be in one script, and then you just eliminate all of the common code point and you can't use those things." That would work fine, although it makes Japanese rather hard to write because Japanese tends to be written in more than one script, although frequently a given string could be all in one.

So we have one extreme is at that end. The other extreme is to say we'll just get a bunch of experts together and they'll build up these subsets of the repertoire piece by piece. And then now we have the problem of who they experts are and how you're going to build them and everything like that. And I seem to recall that there was in fact, one of the comments is that those kinds of expert groups need to be open and transparent and so on. I fully agree, but the fact of the matter is when you've got experts, they're sometimes going to have things that are only intelligible to the experts and you're going to have to accept their expert opinion or stop asking experts.

So that's one set of problems and that only covers what code points are we going to allow in here. Now I agree with you that we could probably build that up over time, but the danger, and this was in fact raised in the public comment period also, I think by John Clenson, if you build those things up piece by piece using, according to different linguistic communities, the danger is that you're going to approve something that later has a problem for someone that you

haven't talked to yet. And that is a decision, it may be a legitimate decision, but it's a decision that has to be made by the entire community.

Because we have concerns about that already right; that what we're effectively doing is setting up a first come, first serve arrangement for people who are ready to go. And then people who haven't been participating in this, or who are not technically ready yet, later will come along and they'll find that they can't actually write their language anymore. That is surely going to be a problem, a political problem down the road. So that's one of the considerations.

Then we've got a second dimension here, which is actually a separate question and I think actually separating this is one of the things the report has doen well, if I may say so myself. But I think that this question if we separate it and think about them independently, we can start to come to some conclusions about who would have to be involved. And this has to do with how you generate variants, or what qualifies as a variant and so on. That in particular is one of the areas where I think the existing experience in actual operating domains who are running with different kinds of variants, I think that expertise would be extremely useful.

Part of the reason it's extremely useful is because it's experience on the ground we can derive great benefit from that. The second thing is that under those circumstances we can actually evaluate that against counterclaims by other people saying "No, that variant relationship that you are doing in your domain is actually going to be a problem when you do it in the root," and we have then concrete examples that we can test. It's a little bit harder in cases where we're dealing with communities that maybe have not had very much experience with this, you alluded to one earlier.

So I think that by separating those issues it does mean that it takes more time, but it means that when we actually turn these things on in the root, we are more likely never to have to turn them off again. That may mean that you can't actually do anything with a variant very early. It may mean that actually the first step is to pick the repertoire that you're going to permit and you permit a

conservative repertoire at the beginning. You say we've got a smaller number of code points that we're going to permit in mew labels. We've got a number of things that we think are very important, but we don't know what to do about those, we don't understand the issues, and so those are definitely out.

And so the only ones that we permit, you heard this earlier from Patrick I think in the last meeting, the only ones we are going to permit are ones that we positively know for sure we don't have any problems with. And anything that is a corner case or if there's any doubt, there's no doubt; it's not allowed yet. And if we come up with a simple set of things where we can say "These ones we know absolutely for sure," I don't see any problem with that stuff going ahead first.

But in order to do that we have to have a project that says "Okay, we understand how we're going to build up these sets," and that problem is one that we don't have at all. We don't have a procedure for developing the procedure; that I think is the biggest gap.

Edmon Chung: Okay, thank you Andrew. And I think those are very good points. But a couple of items in terms of practicality, we're talking a lot about a theoretical kinds of threats and risk and stuff and I think a couple of things I'd like to get a sense of, from the team is, whether you view the .china and the .taiwan as variants at this point? It's important information for me.

Andrew Sullivan: This is Andrew again. I can't speak for the team, but I can say that from my point of view there appears to be at the very least an administrative control in those systems that links them in an important way. I actually really dislike this word variants and I'm keen to avoid it because I think it's been abused very badly. I think that there is an algorithmic relationship that is deterministic between two different labels in those zones. And at the very least, I understand the administrative relationship between the operation of those zones.

I don't think I understand actually consistently the technical delegation relationship because they seem to change sort of over time. But I definitely understand the algorithm between those two zones and how things appear in both. And I definitely understand that they are linked together administratively. That is a long way ahead of what zones are talking about. Most of the time people use variant…

Edmon Chung: Sure, but I guess on a high level do you consider them variants? I think it's important.

Andrew Sullivan: To me that's a meaningless question and I'm going to defer to Tom here.

Edmon Chung: Well I guess it's important because that is a part of, part of project plan is to take a look at how users react to these things right? I think it's six or one of them, so that's why I think it's relevant.

Thomas Narten: Thomas here. I guess I don't understand why it's so important to get an answer to "is it a variant or not" because it sounds like a bit of an [adoption] game.

Edmon Chung: No, because it is. If we view it as then we have a case where we can take a look at how user experience is, right? Because that's one of the important aspects of this whole project is to understand the user experience.

Dennis Jennings: I think that [four hand] code points have been identified as variants of each other and there has been no dispute about that and therefore to that extent they are variants. But that's a long way from dealing with 100,000 code points or

whatever the number is. So yes, I think those have a defined code point variant relationship that is understood and is not contested. That's a drop in the ocean compared to the problem we're trying to solve.

Edmon Chung: So back to the point. Why I think it's important is because then those are cases we can draw experience from, or we can't draw experience from; that's why its' critical.

Andrew Sullivan: So that's fair enough. Are people suggesting we can't look at them or that we can't draw experiences from what they've done?

Edmon Chung: No, I'm not saying that.

Andrew Sullivan: Okay.

Edmon Chung: Okay.

Dennis Jennings: But the point I'm trying to make is that we cannot go from the particular to the general, right? We have to be really, really very careful. And that's why I made a very particular statement. If the world could agree that there are 10 code points or 20 code points and there were variant relationships in what's called the handset of scripts, and no one is disputing it, and we're kind of confident that that is a full statement about the variant code point relationship, then we could start with those 10. Right? We've done a tremendous amount with 37 ASCII characters, so maybe we can do a hell of a lot, even with a very conservative approach.

Edmon Chung: Right. And that's my second question actually on Andrews point, are we using the same test for ASCII delegations as understanding ASCII and how it works. Of course for those we're not even talking about variants. But you're talking about tests of certainties and that's the part where I've got to…

Andrew Sullivan: This is Andrew again. The problem – so we know in fact, in the DNS today, that ASCII delegations are frequently dangerous. Application designers are visibly trying to make ASCII delegations less easy to use, like in Firefox for instance your URL bar has different colors for the different characters so that it will ring out to you that this is the TLD and this is the delegation right underneath it. Which means that all of the tree structure of the DNS is being broken in the user agent, and is being broken in the user agent on purpose, for security reasons.

They're doing that for the small subset of DNS delegations that we have today, right, just LDH. If we give them – I don't even want to say the entire Unicode code range – is we give them like 1000 characters, there is no telling what kind of mischief the application designers are going to get up to, unless we have a very, very clear understanding of what it is we're doing.

So I agree with you that there is reason to suppose that existing experience should inform this; I completely agree with that. That's the running code part. And I think that it's very, very important to take that information and say "Well we have learned something from this and we can do some things." But one of the things actually that we have learned from the actual experience with the delegations, is that keeping those trees synchronized is damned near impossible. And therefore, the idea that what you're going to have here is a completely predictable user experience is in fact belied by the evidence.

The evidence is that users are sometimes surprised by these things. And as a matter of fact, in these systems that we know are there on the internet, it just so

happens that the administrators of those zones are in a position to enforce the rules tightly enough that those problems are self correcting. But not every TLD delegation is going to be like that, and we can be pretty certain that there are going to be people who are just not going to enforce those kinds of rules. I mean we can't even get people to check delegations from the TLDs down. So the idea that we're going to get consistent checking is asking for it, for the world.

So I think that that means that if we're going to have a general purpose answer for this, if we're going to talk at the level of "do we have a variant solution or not," then by definition we are automatically saying that we need to have a complete solution. If what we're going to say instead is, "I'm going to do this case by case and each case is subject to its own review," that's okay with me too, but it's a completely different proposal than we're going to have a variant system.

We don't have a solution for variants then. We have a solution for each individual case and we're going to do them case by case. My understanding from the Board's direction so far, is that the Board is unwilling to evaluate every one of these questions case by case because they said so the last time. Maybe they will have changed their mind in the future. But it seems to me that if you're going to do it case by case it's not a variant system, it's just another case.

Edmon Chung: Okay. But my earlier question was when you talk about I guess the certainty in terms of the risk factor, we're not using the same test for ASCII delegations today.

Andrew Sullivan: I don't see that. In the DNS right now, if you enter a string, that string is entirely on its own. It is a distinct label. It is unrelated to any other label. The assertion behind variant, behind the very idea of variant, is that the string that you entered and some other string that you entered in some other way, there's a

link between in some important sense. It may be administrative, it may be technical or whatever, but there is a link between them in some important sense. We do not have that rule whatsoever in the DNS root today, we simply don't.

We know that there are people who have the same delegation, but we don't consider those things to be linked in any important way; it's just an accident that they happen to be the same delegate.

Edmon Chung: Okay so that's very interesting. So perhaps then, I'm kind of curious, if that is the crux of the issue then perhaps part of the study needs to be taken – so you're actually suggesting that that particular administrative effort is the criticality of variants rather than the language or anything that we're talking about? It's just too – regardless of what – we don't need to think about what those strings are; of course that's another element of the variant issue. But at least one of the issues is the administrative part of linking two particular TLD strings and how ICANN should deal with that.

Andrew Sullivan: No. What I was saying was, the claim in, anytime that you assert that there is a variant relationship between two strings that are candidate labels, what you are asserting is that there is some user expectation that these things are going to be linked together somehow in their behavior, and therefore there needs to be some, at least some administrative link behind the scenes between these alternatives for one and other, these alternative names in the DNS.

In the current LDH regime that we have we do not have that assertion anywhere. Nobody is claiming that – I shouldn't say this. There are people who claim that if .business were – there are at least two entities I think in the commercial world that claim that if .business were delegated tomorrow they would have first dibs on it; I'm sure there are people who are claiming that. But we do not actually believe that in the current DNS. Despite the fact that adobeupdates.com causes

people to go and download malware, we do not assert that it's automatically somehow linked to Adobe.com, we just don't.

And yet it is obvious that users are expecting that. Users are taking raw strings out of anywhere they get, from email and random places, and they're interpreting those things as though they are meaningful, as though they are words. That fact of user behavior is what drives this idea about variants. And I completely agree with it and I actually understand why people – and in some language communities it's even tighter than that. Because like for instance in the traditional Chinese versus simplified Chinese these are just different ways of spelling it.

But of course in English we don't actually do it that way. Color and color do not go to the same place. So we have a break in the history here in the way that we expect it. Maybe if we had gone back in time and we had done things differently, maybe we would decide that the British spelling and the American spellings really should have been the same registrant. What the Canadians would have done I don't know – that's right, that's right.

But the problem in these other cases is you've got a much larger repertoire from which you're working and you've got a lot of other issues. I understand all of the background. We are not doing this today in the LDH realm. We simply aren't. And if we are to tackle this, maybe we will find that we have to. And there is that additional risk that I think that maybe we haven't thought about very carefully. But I think that in the root we probably don't have this problem because the answer is we just wouldn't allow it; we would block those things instead.

Edmon Chung: Thomas, very quick question on that. So, is part of the project plan to address that issue?

Andrew Sullivan: I am not in charge of the project plan.

Edmon Chung: Okay. Because I didn't see it. Because that seems to be quite central to the issue and I don't think I see any of the projects that focus on that particular issue that Andrew just mentioned.

Dennis Jennings: I was distracted by one of your community and I did not follow the question that led to Andrew's answer. But just to embroider it, it took me a while to discover that LDH means letter, digits, and hyphen. So I've come out, I've struggled hard. Thank you.

Naela Sarras: As much as I love Andrew he loses me very quickly. So tell me the problem and I'll tell you if it's in the project plan or not.

Andrew Sullivan: If we take seriously the idea that user understanding of a string that is a candidate label is the fundamental test of whether something is a variant or not, that means that American spellings and British spellings in the DNS, of strings that go into the DNS are variant on that principle. And we have not, my understanding is that we have restricted our definition such that we're not going to include those.

Edmon Chung: No, actually Andrew, I was touching on the other point that you say how two strings are administratively linked together and how that can be done, because right now there isn't that concept at all in the DNS.

Andrew Sullivan: So administrative linking is not related to the DNS, right, that's sort of only to the level of allocation.

Edmon Chung: But that's what you're talking about right?

Andrew Sullivan: If what you're talking about is sort of technical linkages, that is some sort of link either by parallel delegation or…

Edmon Chung: No, no, no, we were talking about administrative linkage and how that could be done; that's the ultimate goal of variants right?

Andrew Sullivan: Well so that claim, that bold claim that you have just made, is much clearer than any statement I've ever heard. Because some people say "No. no. no, it's got to be parallel delegation" or they've got to go to the same place. I've heard like eight or nine different views about this, and in fact, our survey of this in the integrated report, points out that this is one of the fundamental problems with this word "variant"; people use it and if the moon is full then variant means something new, and that is a frustrating, very, very frustrating experience.

If I'm the geek who has to create the DNS support for this, I need to have a stable definition of the thing I'm trying to implement. And we don't have that stable definition, and it's partly because every time you encounter a new language group, what they do is they say "Oh these other guys have this thing called variants, we have something that is kind of like that so we're going to call it variant also."

And that's how we get things like "whole string variants" and like the thing that I meant when I typed it but I mistyped it, that's a variant too. No, no that's not a variant.

Edmon Chung: Well that's a core issue, again, that's not in the project plan either.

Andrew Sullivan: It is a core issue, I agree with you. But the answer in the project plan, this I can say about that project plan, the answer in the project plan is in fact that you don't have to worry about those things because what you're supposed to do is stick to narrower definitions. We've been very clear about that I think.

Edmon Chung: Okay.

Andrew Sullivan: Naela had something that she wanted to point out.

Naela Sarras: Sorry, I have to leave in four minutes. Okay, good, then I'm going to take up the next four minutes. I think what you're trying to get at might be what we're proposing in project six, which is examining the user experience, implications of active variant TLDs. And so if you would like to maybe read up a little bit on what we have in that project plan, and give us feedback and say "Hey these things must come up in this examination or in these feasibility studies," then it will help direct that study, because those studies haven't been planned individually yet, right.

Edmon Chung: Thomas, you wanted to add before you go. Thomas said no, Dennis?

Dennis Jennings: We do want you to look at these things, understand them and come up with comments like that. So for example, one of the projects is examining the feasibility of whole string variants. If you read the integrated issues report, you'll find in there that, if you read it in a certain way, that the report says "this

is impossible" and you might ask the question "Well why then are we putting a whole project on whole string variants." I'm not leading you to any answer; I'm just saying you need to read the documents.

You need to examine the projects, and you need to give us feedback and say "Does this cover this? Does this cover that? Why are you doing that? What is the justification for doing that?" Yeah, I mean…

Edmon Chung: That's precisely what we hope to do, but the setting didn't quite allow us to. That's what we wanted to do is to go project by project and say "what are the things that," in our response. That's why we needed more time. What we wanted to do was look at each project and say "why are we doing it; what should we do it."

Dennis Jennings: I, for one, would like to facilitate that as much as possible. Because this is not amenable to sound bytes I'm afraid. This is hard work. Yeah. And by the way, there is no technical solution. I've learned that. And therefore I'm wondering, one of the projects is exploring technical solutions for mirroring. And you might ask well why are we doing that because all the indications are that stuff doesn't work, so maybe we shouldn't. So we're – I'm just making illustrations of what we need – we need examination, we need questioning, we need to understand the priorities and the issues, and we will try and take those into account in formulating a project.

The other point I want to make is this, ICANN has spent, by my reckoning, at least 50 million dollars on preparing for the new gTLD Program. I could think that this is almost as important as that, and therefore we should be talking, now I'm speaking as an outsider, not an insider. ICANN should be spending whatever it takes over the next whatever it takes time, to get this project done, in my view. So anyway, that's my view.

Hong Xue: Okay, I got a last minute. Thanks the technical expert is here. I guess it's a rare opportunity for the layman to learn from you four. Okay, now I'm not going to return to the variant and administrative level, now we understand why the Chinese community has been yelling so many years is actually only at an administrative level and shouldn't go to the DNS level. Okay, clear that part.

But when you say that variant should not be the issue to the DNS, I do have a very strong concern. Say the variants – oh forget about Chinese. I'm not talking about simplified and traditional; just think about Arabic or something like that. If variants is not an issue it means that their design string could be delegate and the end design string could also be delegated to somebody else. If variants is not an issue you wouldn't think about it reserved, the reservation of the end design (inaudible). So how to integrate that part? I hope my statement was clear enough. I'm not a technician.

Dennis Jennings: I think your concern is very clear and very well put, but what we were just talking about before you just sort of reacted to that, was that there may not be a narrow technical solution to variants in the DNS. That's what we were talking about. Of course at the level you're talking about variants are extremely important, at the delegation level. We were talking about the narrow question of the implementation of the delegation; whether there's a technical solution in the DNS for that or whether it's outside the DNS.

Now in so far as I understand these things, talking to my good friends who really understand these things, I think it's likely that there is no technical solution. There's something in the DNS to make this work; that there have to be other mechanisms, administrative to make it work. But we're not talking about not making it work; we're talking about making it work. So we are addressing your concern, we're just highlighting that it may not be simply to say throw this problem over the wall to Suzanne to do an evening's work to fix it. That may not work.

Andrew Sullivan: So if you have a technical, if you have the narrow technical answer of how these two things are linked together, then what you have is the ability to say "Well if I put this thing in the DNS then automatically somebody else is blocked from doing it," and the fact is that we do not have that ability in the DNS. We simply do not and we're not going to get it. But what we have is the ability to say in the registration database that allowed you to get there, we could put rules. Those are however exactly what we were talking about before right? How do you decide which code points are going to permit at all in the first place? And then secondly, how do you decide that there is a relationship between these two things.

And those are, in their way, also a technical consideration. But they're not a technical consideration in the DNS sense; they're a technical consideration in the sense of linguistics and in coding systems and so on. And so unfortunately, instead of getting one or two people from the DNS community to come and tell you "Well these are the things that we know how to do and these are the things that we don't know," what you've got to do is go and get people who know about linguistics and people who know about encoding systems and people who know about operating systems and how displays work. There are maybe 40 people in the whole world who can answer some of these questions, and that makes them really, really hard, but that's the problem that you have when you're running a global space that everyone depends on.

Dennis Jennings: I started this project with the view, as they say, surely this is just a technical problem and the technical people should just get their finger out and fix it. It took a while because I'm slow, but people like Suzanne and Andrew and others convinced me that actually it ain't as simple as that. It would be lovely if we could just say "fix it." You technical…

[background conversation]

Dennis Jennings: One at a time. You know, really you should just be able to say that this is a variant and tell the DNS it's a variant and it's automatic. Well, I believe that that's not a possibility. One of the projects does say explore the technical feasibility and one of the feedbacks that I hope, that I expect to get from the technical community is that that's a dumb question. There's no point in even exploring that. There isn't an answer. But I'm not going to put words in Suzanne's mouth or anybody else's.

So there's a lot of examination to be done on these projects that we have. I wish it was a C-D name record in…

[background conversation]

Edmon Chung: But even with that we're talking about variants more than them.

[background conversation]

Cheryl Langdon-Orr: I never shout, trust me. Cheryl Langdon-Orr, for the transcript record. I think that the transcript needs to know that this is the end of the formal conversation after the next speaker. That other conversation may go on, but the room is clearing now. And obviously you're going to thank everybody but we are losing people very quickly. I think I've had my finger on the pulse of this stuff, I even read you list for heaven's sake. I know; this is an insanity thing. I'm trying to get treated; it's just hard to find the experts, technical or otherwise.

But we really have, I follow a huge amount and I didn't think I was a total dumbass. So we really need to get this webinar and probably a 21 day

extension, despite the fact, despite the fact that ALAC can just advise the Board is they so desire. We are trying to put things into public comment, because that is a nice transparent way of doing things.

So, Edmond if you don't mind me taking the Chair hat off you for a moment; I think this is the formal close after the next speaker, and really thank you, thank you, thank you.

Female: Can I resist the last word? The technical document or the technical analysis that Dennis referred to is actually undertaken; it was started a while ago and then we stopped and said wait a minute we need a better report to know more about what the question really is. And now that you guys have done your job, I have to go back and finish that job. So there are pieces of this that we can make progress on. A lot of the answers are not going to be what people want to hear, but there are places where progress can be made.

[End of Transcript]