



Canadian Internet
Registration Authority

Autorité canadienne pour
les enregistrements Internet

March 17, 2006

Open letter to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) from the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA)

CIRA is a respected and influential player in global Internet governance. This has been especially true when it comes to ICANN, where CIRA's involvement has included: participating actively in events leading to the creation of ICANN; helping create the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO); chairing the ccNSO working group on IANA; voluntarily contributing funds to ICANN; hosting the ICANN Montreal meeting; supporting the ICANN Vancouver meeting in many ways including being its main sponsor; and generally promoting the value and benefits of ICANN to the world community.

CIRA remains committed to global Internet governance. Notwithstanding this commitment, CIRA, including its Board of Directors, has grown increasingly concerned with ICANN's departure from a number of its core values. The process by which ICANN renewed its dot-com agreement with VeriSign is illustrative of this departure.

It is in this context that CIRA, wishing to see ICANN succeed, and expecting ICANN to follow accountable, transparent and fair processes, makes the following recommendations to the ICANN Board:

1. Accountability

ICANN's accountability to its stakeholders, including to the global Internet community is critical because ICANN's legitimacy is premised on stakeholder trust. When ICANN is seen to be unaccountable it loses stakeholder trust and therefore its legitimacy.

ICANN must change its structures, formally and publicly (including its by-laws), to ensure that ICANN and its Board are accountable to stakeholders, and that Board decisions are subject to formal checks and balances. A veto of Board decisions by a super-majority of Supporting Organisations would be an acceptable change.

2. Transparency

Many important Board discussions are held and many decisions are made behind closed doors. There is little or no formal record kept of these meetings beyond publishing the agenda and reporting the decisions made.

We accept that the ICANN Board should be able to hold non-public meetings if necessary and should be able to meet *in camera* to discuss specific issues. However, the basis for any such action must be justified and that justification reported publicly.

More importantly when reporting significant matters, in minutes or otherwise, ICANN must provide sufficient information on the deliberations leading to a particular decision. This includes summarizing the discussions, the questions asked, the answers provided and the rationale for following a particular course of action. These reports must be publicly available in a timely manner.

3. Fair Processes

In order to build and maintain trust and legitimacy, ICANN must establish and follow publicly documented and formally approved processes. These processes must be created in consultation with its stakeholders, in an accountable and transparent manner. It is important that ICANN adhere to, and be seen to adhere to, these processes at all times.

While the ICANN Board considers these concerns, and until they are remedied, CIRA will as of this date:

- Suspend its voluntary contribution of funds to ICANN;
- Hold in trust CIRA's voluntary contributions to ICANN;
- Suspend consideration of any Accountability Framework;
- Decline to host or be a major sponsor of any ICANN event; and
- Cease chairing the ccNSO's IANA Working Group.

We remain optimistic that ICANN can live up to the multi-stakeholder, bottom-up, principles on which it was established. We welcome ICANN's efforts to reform and will make ourselves available to assist ICANN in this regard.

Yours very truly,

Canadian Internet Registration Authority



Clyde Beattie
Board of Directors, Chair



Bernard Turcotte
President and Chief Executive Officer