

Personas of Visitors to ICANN.ORG

ROLE-BASED NAVIGATION

We have identified user roles based on site metrics; a survey that ran on ICANN.ORG drawing 230+ user responses; and 17 interviews of carefully selected stakeholders. Navigation of the site should support role-based access, geared toward the following archetypes:

- Insider
- Learner
- Conference-Driven Visitor
- Global Visitor
- Relief-Seeker
- Journalist

More detailed descriptions of these types follow.

INSIDER

The ICANN Insider works in the domain name industry and visits the site daily with a variety of needs and goals. This archetype represents roughly 40% of all visitors to icann.org Typically, he or she visits the site to get work done, following policy development on an issue of interest. Insiders use the site often and have learned where their most-used content and features reside, and can get to them quickly. Often, they also need to know the latest information across the board without wanting to search for it.

User surveys have revealed that our “power users” mostly have laptops and access the site on the way to or during meetings. A mouse is not always at hand. They have strongly expressed a preference for clicking over scrolling; this should inform the information architecture, where feasible.

Key Characteristics

- Daily interaction; has learned where content and features are found.
- Is familiar with terminology, acronyms and jargon.
- Is visiting site for a purpose; therefore *amount of time to complete tasks* is critical to their daily work.
- Involved in policy in varying categories and disciplines.
- Are often vocal about their frustrations due to higher touch on the site.

Objectives

Insiders who are using the site as part of their jobs are the most directed users of the

site with the clearest needs (though the range of their needs varies greatly).

- Resolve domain disputes and transfers
- Track policy processes
- Check site calendars for next meeting or minutes of previous meeting
- Comment on open policies and processes
- Find latest and most updated content
- Submit Statement of Interest or Disclosure of Interest

Features

Insiders closely monitor the activities of the ICANN Board of Directors, the GNSO Council, and selected Working Groups. A smaller contingent also watches the ccNSO Council closely.

- Event Calendar
- Board Resolutions
- Minutes of Board meetings
- GNSO Council resolutions
- Minutes of GNSO Council meetings
- Official statements and correspondence to/from the Board, GNSO Council, ccNSO Council, and GAC
- Working Group wikis, meeting agendas
- Issue Reports and Working Group official reports (Initial, Interim, Final)
- Public Comments forum

LEARNER

Periodic visitor (weekly and monthly) with a general interest in policy and proceedings. This persona represents about 33% of visits to ICANN.org. They come to ICANN.org to learn but do not have an immediate need or deadline. They are not as sophisticated in terms of low level concepts or jargon, and therefore often need more reference material and help.

Key Characteristics

- Periodic visitor with fuzzy understanding of the site and its organization; often needs a few moments to re-learn these facets.
- Interested in policy, processes, and conferences, but is generally looking for the summary, not the dense full text.
- May be interested in a career in the field and wants to learn more about what ICANN itself does day-to-day at the people level.

Objectives

The general public, students, and other academics are looking for information and to learn what is currently going on. Sometimes they have clearer, more defined objectives as well.

- Learn about ICANN and domains

- Find out what is currently going on
- Look for trends to help predict the future

Features

Due to the research and learning aspects of these users a lot of their features focus on compiling information and filtering it.

- About ICANN - what it does, who it is, how it works
- Glossary of terms
- Acronym Helper
- Documents by subject matter
- Easy bookmarking
- Recent additions and updates listing
- Print and download site pages for further review
- Print and download documents for further review

CONFERENCE-DRIVEN VISITOR

This user is driven to interact with the site due to one of our three yearly international conferences. They may become involved because the conference is in their region or because the topics of discussion at a specific meeting are pertinent to them. Planning and participating in short-lived events drives a very different set of needs than the general day-to-day needs of the site. They are often the general public or academics; sometimes an ideologue or activist; and depending on where the conferences are held, often non-native English speakers.

Key Characteristics

Some of these users are only driven to act or become more deeply involved when they feel there is a high chance that their issues will be resolved. Visiting a meeting in person gives them greater confidence that they can control the probability of their success.

- Interest driven by geographic proximity of upcoming meeting and general interest; or by particular pertinent topics at the event.
- Often local to the region where the conference takes place.
- Policy and process involvement related to issues that directly affect them and their region.
- Less interest than the Learner in ICANN generalities – largely focused on “their” issue(s) and logistics of a particular meeting.

Objectives

- Know when and where events are taking place
- Raise awareness of championed issues
- Resolve grievances
- Participate in person in general policy development
- Learn more about how policies affect the real world
- Follow up on results of their meetings and comments

Features

- Calendar of events
- Public Comment forum
- In person Q&A; have an actual person talk to them in their own language about issues
- Multi-lingual support across site
- Post conference tracking of issues, documents and policies
- Conference message boards
- Wiki space of specific Working Groups related to “their” issue
- Board minutes and resolutions pertinent to “their” issue

GLOBAL VISITOR

Based on IP addresses, global (that is, non-North American) visitors account for over 40% of site traffic. While each region and country is different and has separate needs and concerns, there are commonalities among all non-English guests that can be addressed as a whole. This persona often has a level of distrust about ICANN’s neutrality and may be inclined to perceive ICANN as a puppet of the US government, because ICANN is based in the US and both ICANN and the Internet have historical ties there as well. For this reason, the aesthetics of the site should avoid explicit or implicit echoes of American sensibilities; for example, the color scheme should not be primary red, white, and blue, and not all faces shown on the site should be white North Americans.

Key Characteristics

- Needs and concerns are often focused on locale
- Limited English reading ability
- Internet infrastructure may not be robust – low bandwidth user
- Computer may not be powerful or may even be a mobile phone
- Potentially the largest growing segment

Objectives

- Find all issues and policies that affect their region and/or country
- Determine status of policies and issues
- Follow local discussions on topics and issues

Features

- More translations of documents
- Localized message boards
- Thin and fast mobile version of site
- Location/language specific documents
- Tracking of issues and comments

RELIEF-SEEKERS

A surprisingly high amount of visitors to ICANN.org have no interest in ICANN, its community, or its issues. They are driven to the site due to a domain name dispute or a registrar problem, and they heard that ICANN might have the answer or have clout over the registrar. Our survey, backed by site metrics, indicated that 25% of visitors to ICANN.ORG were first-timers or only visited once a year; many of them fall into this disgruntled category.

Key Characteristics

- Typically on the site for one or two reasons and want to act on them quickly.
- Often look for action-oriented navigation options and have short tolerance levels for finding what they need.
- Many use search immediately upon entering the site.
- Probably a first-timer on the site, and needs orientation clues and implicit and explicit descriptions of content categories.

Objectives

- Find the right contact name or form that might help them resolve their dispute
- Find information (such as the Registrar Accreditation Agreement or a Bylaw) to assure themselves that they know the rules/have rights in their dispute
- Move their issue forward with an absolute minimum of fuss, search, and folderol

Features

- Clear action path for problem resolution, from the home page inward
- Link to the registrar complaint form
- List of the four ICANN-approved Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy service providers
- The internic.net site for a more accurate WHOIS tool, list of ICANN accredited registrars

JOURNALIST

We call out Journalist as a separate user type because ICANN is committed to doing everything it can to help the press understand and report on what we do. The role is also slightly unusual in that this archetype is in a hurry for both the big picture and for finding the heart of the matter.

Key Characteristics

Today's journalist is not only deadline-driven, but is also expected to write an article, blog about the article, tweet about the blog, and perhaps even create web video about the story. The key need is for fast, accurate information from a reliable source.

- Deadline-driven: speed of finding resources matters.
- Unique among other site personas, keenly interested in quotable material.
- Extremely pragmatic. Not typically here to explore. Hunting for a certain factoid, then will leave.

- Needs self-explanatory, well-labeled, intuitive navigation
- Industry reporters have some familiarity with ICANN and its technology, but general press typically has little

Objectives

- Less “techie” journalists want clear, lively explanatory material for context
- Industry reporters simply want to know the latest – “what just happened”
- Most would like help understanding who to talk to within the ICANN community (both staff and volunteers) about a given topic

Features

- Press release page
- Announcements
- Resources and contacts, or, where to turn if they aren’t finding what they need on the site
- Issues-oriented nav, rather than department-oriented
- Acronym Helper
- Glossary
- Board resolutions
- GNSO Council resolutions

To conclude this Personas section: the site should support the behavior of users who self-select their role, by making most convenient the features that each role wants. A Learner should have convenient access to their most desired features, whereas an Insider should have a different experience using different features.