

12 June 2013

via email

Christine Willett – Vice President, gTLD Operations

ICANN

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Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

USA

Cc:

Akram Atallah – Chief Operating Officer

Cyrus Namazi – Vice President, DNS Industry Engagement

Dear Christine,

Re: Scheduling times for new gTLD update webinars

We are writing to voice our concern about the inequity in scheduling times for New gTLD Update Webinars. As you will see from the table accompanying this correspondence depicting the scheduling of calls since the beginning of 2013, anyone outside North America is considerably disadvantaged by the timing of most of these calls. We understand the challenges of operating in a global environment and understand that there will be occasions where we will need to participate in webinars that are outside our normal hours of business operation; however, we also believe that the bias towards scheduling calls to suit those based in North America is not acceptable.

It is a fundamental principle of excellent customer service that the needs of the customer are understood. We would like to remind ICANN that the audience for their webinars is primarily new gTLD applicants that span the globe with less than 50% from North America, approximately 35% from Europe, 15% from Asia/Pacific and the remainder from Latin America/Caribbean and Africa. With regard to the timing of ICANN webinars, North America is receiving excellent customer service, while the rest of the world is in receipt of very poor service.

Most business days are between 8 and 10 hours long, Monday to Friday, and generally cover the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm with some flexibility around the edges of an hour or two for start and finish times. However, it would be reasonable to say that most businesses do not operate between the hours of 10.00pm and 5.00am. Based on this premise we believe that people based outside North America are seriously disadvantaged by the scheduling of the new gTLD webinars, and not just by the order of an hour or two but on a regular basis are required to attend webinars at times when most people are sleeping.

We appreciate that one argument in support of the current scheduling practice could be that the power-point presentations and recordings of all webinars are posted in a 24 to 48 hour period following a webinar and made available to anyone who wants to listen. However, as we all know there is always a new piece of critical information relating to the program that is provided during the webinars. A recent example is the change in

the evaluation process as it applies to Q50; however it is the webinar of 5 February 2013, where changes to the Registry Agreement were announced that is perhaps the most useful example.

As these webinars are the primary means of interaction between the New gTLD staff and applicants, being able to hear the information first-hand and ask questions in order to understand new information is critical—it simply is not the same as listening to a recording some 24 hours later. We would also add that the absence of agendas prior to the webinars does not give applicants the option to pick and choose what is important. Experience tells us that all of these webinars are extremely important to our applications and businesses.

The table below represents the schedule of New gTLD Webinars conducted since the beginning of 2013. We believe the table speaks for itself and we will not provide any detailed analysis; however, we will say that this is not a new problem for ICANN. It is one that has existed for many years and both the GNSO Council and the Board, and more recently the NTAG, have adopted the practice of rotating the time for calls to ensure that no one group is unfairly disadvantaged more than another.

| Date | Webinar | Time UTC | Los Angeles | Washington DC | Beijing | Tokyo | Melbourne | Brussels |
|--|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 11 January 2013 | Applicant Webinar | 20:00 to 21:30 | Friday 12:00 Noon | Friday 3:00pm | Saturday 4:00am | Saturday 5:00am | Saturday 7:00am | Friday 9:00pm |
| 29 January 2013 | New gTLD Objection & Dispute Resolution | 16:00 to 17:30 | Tuesday 8:00am | Tuesday 11:00am | Tuesday/Wednesday 12:00 Midnight | Wednesday 1:00am | Wednesday 3:00am | Tuesday 5:00pm |
| 05 February 2013 | New gTLD Applicant Update Webinar | 16:00 to 19:00 | Tuesday 8:00am | Tuesday 11:00am | Tuesday/Wednesday 12:00 Midnight | Wednesday 1:00am | Wednesday 3:00am | Tuesday 5:00pm |
| 13 February 2013 | IDN Variant: Examining the User Experience Implication of the Active Variant TLDs | 13:00 to 14:00 | Wednesday 5:00am | Wednesday 8:00am | Wednesday 9:00pm | Wednesday 10:00pm | Wednesday/Thursday 12:00 Midnight | Wednesday 2:00pm |
| 06 March 2013 | New gTLD Applicant Update Webinar | 00:00 to 01:30 | Tuesday 4:00pm | Tuesday 7:00pm | Wednesday 8:00am | Wednesday 9:00am | Wednesday 11:00am | Wednesday 1:00am |
| 26 March 2013 | New gTLD Applicant Update Webinar | 22:00 to 23:30 | Tuesday 3:00pm | Tuesday 6:00pm | Wednesday 6:00am | Wednesday 7:00am | Wednesday 9:00am | Tuesday 11:00pm |
| 09 May 2013 | New gTLD Applicant Update Webinar | 22:00 to 23:30 | Thursday 3:00pm | Thursday 6:00pm | Friday 6:00am | Friday 7:00am | Friday 8:00am | Thursday/Friday 12:00 Midnight |
| 05 June 2013 | New gTLD Applicant Update Webinar | 16:00 to 17:30 | Wednesday 9:00am | Wednesday 12:00 Noon | Wednesday/Thursday 12:00 Midnight | Thursday 1:00am | Thursday 2:00am | Wednesday 6:00pm |
| 13 June 2013 | New gTLD Contracting Webinar | 21:00 to 22:30 | Thursday 2:00pm | Thursday 5:00pm | Friday 5:00am | Friday 6:00am | Friday 7:00am | Thursday 11:00pm |
| 19 June 2013 | TMCH & IDNs | 14:00 to 15:30 | Wednesday 7:00am | Wednesday 10:00am | Wednesday 10:00pm | Wednesday 11:00pm | Wednesday/Thursday 12:00 Midnight | Wednesday 4:00pm |
| 27 June 2013 | IDN Variant TLD Program | 23:00 to 01:00 | Thursday 4:00pm | Thursday 7:00pm | Friday 7:00am | Friday 8:00am | Friday 9:00am | Friday 1:00am |
| Number of occasions outside normal business hours | | | 2/11 | 2/11 | 10/11 | 9/11 | 7/11 | 6/11 |

Therefore we request that ICANN either adopt the practice of the Board and the GNSO Council and rotate the schedule of these webinars; or consider conducting the same webinar twice in a 24 hour period in order to remove the unfairness associated with the current practice. We sincerely appreciate and understand the challenges this may cause for the New gTLD staff who run these webinars; however we would note that there are many other staff that support Board and GNSO Council meetings who have to present on difficult and complex issues and who do so admirably.

We are all in this game together and we often talk about the importance of geographic diversity to the multi-stakeholder model. Considerable outreach is being undertaken by ICANN to encourage more active participation across the globe. We speak from experience when we say inequity of conference call scheduling is a sure way to deter active participation. We look forward to ICANN addressing the concerns we have raised and we would be willing to assist.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian Kinderis
Chief Executive Officer
ARI Registry Services