
Briefing | Strategic Outlook Remote Trend Session

Background

With the rapid evolution of the Internet, and the variety of influencing factors, trends may change rapidly in unexpected ways, and new trends may emerge. To give the community an opportunity to provide input into how those trends are evolving, ICANN org will hold a series of remote [Strategic Outlook](#) Trends Sessions in March 2020.

In recent years, ICANN org initiated an annual process to identify and monitor the evolution of trends that affect ICANN and its larger ecosystem. The process entails collecting inputs from the ICANN community, Board and organization which ensures ICANN has a consistent way to:

- Identify and track trends.
- Prepare for opportunities.
- Mitigate or avoid challenges.
- Inform strategic and operational planning and prioritization.

Coordination also occurs with risk management and short-term opportunities. For example, ICANN's new [strategic plan](#) is based upon and reflects the Strategic Outlook work conducted over the years.

These sessions and resulting outputs are intended to capture the community's input on new trends and on the evolution of previously identified trends. This will serve as an important resource for the community, the Board, and the organization while helping to ensure that adjustments to trends can be factored into future strategic planning and operational planning work.

Structure of the Session

[Note: due to the breakout format, **participation will be limited to 40 participants per session, on a first come, first serve basis.**]

[Note: **participants should be ready to turn on their video when they join**]

Participants will be presented with trends the community identified in previous years as a starting point for discussion.

The group will be divided into virtual breakout rooms, in groups of five to eight persons, to engage in an informal brainstorming discussion. Participants in each subgroup will collaborate and type their inputs on a shared on-line document.

Once the full group reconvenes, each subgroup will then be invited to share a couple highlights, focusing on new trends and shifts in existing trends, for further discussion and group confirmation.

The session will conclude with an opportunity for each participant to weigh-in on what they see as top priorities for ICANN.

How to prepare for the Session?

In preparation for the session, participants are encouraged to consider the following questions:

- **Trends:** [see previous years' trends listed further down this document]
 - Are there new relevant trends that need to be considered?
 - Do the previous years' trends still apply?
- **Impacts:**
 - What impacts do you foresee for ICANN, by when?
 - What are Risks or Threats associated with these trends for ICANN?
 - What are some Opportunities or Suggested Actions?
 - How might the trends affect ICANN's strategic objectives?
- **Priorities:**
 - Considering the trends, risks, and opportunities identified, which do you suggest as top priorities for ICANN to consider?

Next Steps

Remote trend sessions will be facilitated with the community in March 2020, as delaying to ICANN68 would not be compatible with the overall annual planning timeframe.

Trend analysis & impact assessment will follow in April/May, under oversight and leadership of the Strategic Planning Board Working Group (BWG).

The Board can then use these inputs to evaluate if any changes should be made to the strategic plan or other plans.

Previous Years' Trends

The community identified the following key trends in previous years:

- On **Security:** The exponential growth in security issues is challenging the stability of the domain name system and the root server system, as well as ICANN's ability to finance increasing investments required to ensure continued stability.
- On **ICANN's governance:** ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance, which grew to fit ICANN's needs, has the potential of becoming less effective and more expensive as it matures and scales up to respond to increasing needs of our community.
- On **Unique Identifiers System:** The rapid evolution of new technologies requires ICANN to be responsive to these changes and ensure that the unique identifiers system evolves and continues to serve the global Internet user base.
- On **Geopolitics:** The increasing importance of the Internet across all sectors increases the possibility of governments intervening to gain control over the DNS

through legislation and regulation. At the same time there is an increasing risk of Internet fragmentation as a result of geopolitical, technical, and organizational pressures.

- On **Financials**: Consolidation in the marketplace, continued uncertainty surrounding the expansion of the gTLD name space, and other factors are putting pressures on ICANN's ability to support the growing needs and demands of its global community.

Reference Points: Trends, Risks & Opportunities

What is a **trend**?

- A trend is a general direction in which something is developing or changing, that has or could have an impact on ICANN, its mission, its operations, or its ecosystem
- Trends should be formulated as a sentence, with at least a subject (the matter discussed) and a verb (indicating the movement of the matter)
- Trend example: "*The percentage of non English-speaking Internet users is increasing*".

What is a **risk**?

- A risk is a potential for loss. Risk is the possibility of events to have an adverse impact on the organization's ability to achieve its mission and could even prevent the organization from continuing as a going concern.

What is an **opportunity**?

- A set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something.