

Statements in Support of the IANA Stewardship Transition

On March 10, 2016 the ICANN Board of Directors submitted the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), an agency within the Department of Commerce. In response, a number of businesses, trade associations and other organizations, including [Intel Corporation](#), [Amazon](#), [Google](#), [Facebook](#), [Microsoft](#), [Hewlett Packard Enterprise](#), [Dell](#), [Cisco](#), [Yahoo!](#), [Cloudflare](#), the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Internet Governance Coalition](#) (AT&T, CISCO, Comcast, Disney, Facebook, GoDaddy, Google, Juniper, Microsoft, NCTA, Time Warner Cable, Telefonica, Verizon and 21st Century Fox), the [U.S. Council for International Business](#), the [International Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Internet Association](#), the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), the [Information Technology Industry Council](#), the [Software & Information Industry Association](#), the [U.S. Council for International Business](#), [Access Now](#), [Article19](#), the [Centre for Democracy & Technology](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [Open Technology Institute](#), [Public Knowledge](#), [Ranking Digital Rights](#), [Internet Society](#), the [Internet Infrastructure Coalition](#), and the [Los Angeles Times Editorial Board](#) announced their support for the bottom-up multistakeholder process responsible for the development of the IANA Stewardship Transition and Enhancing ICANN Accountability proposals.

On June 9, 2016, NTIA announced that the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal met the criteria outlined in its March 2014 announcement. In response, many of the businesses, trade associations and other organizations that supported the development of the proposals, reiterated their support for IANA stewardship transition. Additionally, a number of other individuals and organizations, including [Michael Chertoff and James Cartwright](#), the [Mercatus Center](#), [Freedom House](#), [David Ignatius](#), [Net Choice](#), the [Federalist Society](#), the [App Association](#), the [Republican Editorial Board](#) and [NBC](#) voiced support for the IANA stewardship transition and supported the announcement by NTIA that the IANA Stewardship Proposal met its criteria.

On September 13, 2016, many organizations from [U.S. industry](#) and [civil society groups](#) published letters encouraging Congress not to delay the IANA stewardship transition.

In addition, many members of the [U.S. Government](#) and [ICANN multistakeholder community](#) have issued support for the IANA stewardship transition throughout the process.

INDUSTRY

AN OPEN LETTER FROM U.S. INDUSTRY

Signed by The App Association, American Registry for Internet Numbers, Computer & Communications Industry Association, The Domain Name Association, Information Technology Industry Council, Internet Association, Internet Infrastructure Coalition, NetChoice, Packet Clearing House, Afiliac PLC, Amazon, Cloudflare, cPanel, Inc. Donuts Inc. Dropsuite, Dyn, Endurance, Facebook, Google, GoDaddy, Handy Networks, OnApp, Public Interest Registry, SingleHop, Tucows, Inc., Twitter, Yahoo

 [An Open Letter from U.S. Business](#)

September 13, 2016

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid:

On October 1st, 2016, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) plans to end its stewardship of the Internet's addressing system, known as the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). This authority would then shift to the global Internet community, through the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a private sector led, multistakeholder organization to coordinate Internet addresses.



In March 2014, the U.S. Department of Commerce asked ICANN to convene the global community of Internet stakeholders to produce a transition plan that meets strict criteria. The undersigned companies and trade associations, representing thousands of companies across the country, are proud and active members of the Internet community. We have worked with representatives from civil society, government, and the technical community to craft a proposal that enables the U.S. Government to seamlessly transfer stewardship of the Internet's addressing system to its global stakeholders.

The final proposal includes significant and concrete measures to enhance ICANN's accountability to its global community. We believe that this important proposal will assure the continuing security, stability and resiliency of this system. Furthermore, crucial safeguards are in place to protect human rights, including the freedom of speech. We are confident that the proposal goes above and beyond the criteria set out by the Commerce Department two years ago to protect Americans.

The Internet's addressing system helps keep the Internet global, scalable and interoperable. It is imperative that Congress does not take action to delay the October 1st transition date. The Internet is defined by its inclusivity and openness. Those critical characteristics are reflected in the work that – over the course of many months of open, transparent and inclusive discussion – went into the drafting of this transition proposal, which is ready to be executed.

A global, interoperable and stable Internet is essential for our economic and national security, and we remain committed to completing the nearly twenty year transition to the multistakeholder model that will best serve U.S. interests.

AN OPEN LETTER TO CONGRESS FROM U.S. BUSINESS

Signed by Intel Corporation, Amazon, Google, Facebook, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Microsoft, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Dell, Cisco, Cloudflare, U.S. Council for International Business, Internet Infrastructure Coalition, Internet Association, Computer & Communications Industry Association, Information Technology Industry Council, Software & Information Industry Association

 [An Open Letter to Congress from U.S. Business](#)

April 21, 2016 (Updated May 23, 2016)

Dear Members of Congress:

The Internet is the greatest platform for innovation the world has ever known, and the greatest communication network yet devised. Our companies depend upon its stable and secure future.

The Internet's addressing system helps keep the Internet global, scalable and interoperable. An important proposal to assure the continuing security, stability and resiliency of this system has recently been approved by the Board of Directors of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and delivered to the U.S. government.

In March 2014, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced a plan to transition its historical stewardship of the Internet's addressing system to the global Internet community. This plan represents the final stage of the development of ICANN, as a private-sector led, multi-stakeholder organization to coordinate Internet addresses. At the time of their announcement, the Commerce Department asked ICANN to convene the global community of Internet stakeholders to produce a transition proposal.



Our companies and trade associations are proud and active members of this community. We have worked with representatives from civil society, government, and the technical community to craft a proposal that enables the U.S. Government to seamlessly transfer stewardship of the Internet's addressing system to its global stakeholders.

The proposal delivered last month meets the criteria set out by the Commerce Department two years ago. Furthermore, it includes significant and concrete measures to enhance ICANN's accountability to its global community. We recognize that additional important work remains, including properly revising ICANN's bylaws and further improving ICANN's practices and procedures. It is imperative that this work be accomplished in a timely and effective manner and we look forward to ensuring that it does.

The Internet is defined by its inclusivity and openness. Those critical characteristics are reflected in the work that – over the course of many months of open, transparent and inclusive discussion -- went into the drafting of this transition proposal.

We congratulate those who worked tirelessly to develop the proposal and we celebrate the effort that will enshrine America's commitment to ensuring the future of a global, interoperable and stable global Internet.

INTEL

Policy@Intel, InternetAssociation.org

 [IANA Transition Moves Forward](#)

March 11, 2016

Yesterday, the Board of Directors the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), approved the multistakeholder community's proposal for transitioning oversight of the Internet's addressing system from the US government to the global multistakeholder community. The Board approval followed approvals from ICANN's chartering organizations. I want to congratulate the community for their tireless efforts in developing this proposal. The ICANN Board has sent the proposal to the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) for their review and approval. These milestones are not only critical for the transition itself but a further endorsement of global multistakeholder Internet governance.

The proposal is comprised of two separate, but related, plans. The first part of the plan describes how the three communities of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) – Names, Numbers and Protocol Parameters – will operate and interface with ICANN directly. The second part of the plan includes an extensive set of reforms to ICANN's governance structure to enhance the organization's accountability to the global community. Intel has been deeply engaged in the development of the overall transition plan and we believe it meets the criteria outlined by NTIA in their announcement in 2014.

The current IANA contract between ICANN and NTIA expires September 30th. While today's milestones are significant, we are not finished yet. The NTIA must review the proposal to ensure it meets the criteria. New agreements between ICANN and the communities must be executed and a new contract for the management of the Internet's Root Zone must be developed, vetted by the community and executed. The cross-community Working Group responsible for developing the accountability measures must immediately begin drafting changes to ICANN's bylaws so that the measures can be implemented. And, Congress must be given an opportunity to review the proposal.

I am confident that the community behind the incredible work to-date will succeed in completing the transition and moving us fully into 21st century Internet governance.

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Press Release, [USChamber.com](#)

 [U.S. Chamber Statement on IANA Transition Plan](#)

March 17, 2016

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Senior Vice President for International Policy John Murphy issued the following statement on the proposal to transition oversight of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the multi-stakeholder community and Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN):

“The Chamber continues to support the long-planned transition of the IANA functions along with needed improvements to enhance ICANN accountability. The recently agreed proposal appears to achieve binding, legally enforceable accountability that will benefit the multi-stakeholder community. While the proposal is a positive step forward, it’s too soon to declare victory, and we urge the business community to insist that implementation benchmarks be met prior to final approval by the U.S. government.

“We stand ready to work closely with Congress, the Department of Commerce, and the broader multi-stakeholder community to ensure the proposed plan moves forward in a way that preserves the safe and secure Internet that our members of all sizes and sectors rely on to conduct business and reach customers worldwide.”

Press Release, [USChamber.com](#)

 [U.S. Chamber Statement on NTIA Support of ICANN Transition Plan](#)

June 10, 2016

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Global Regulatory Cooperation Senior Director and Policy Counsel Adam Schlosser issued the following statement today on the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s announcement that it supports the transition plan for domain system oversight:

“The U.S. Chamber appreciates the thorough analysis put forth by NTIA. We continue to support the long-planned transition of IANA functions and the much-needed improvements to overall ICANN accountability. The report by NTIA indicates the proposal is on the correct path to fulfill the goals of the multistakeholder community both from a technical and accountability standpoint. We will closely monitor the ongoing implementation of the changes to ensure the process remains on this path.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world’s largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations. Its International Affairs division includes more than 70 regional and policy experts and 25 country- and region-specific business councils and initiatives. The U.S. Chamber also works closely with 117 American Chambers of Commerce abroad.

THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE INNOVATION

Media Statement, [Ourinternet.org](#)

 [Statement by the Global Commission on Internet Governance Regarding the IANA Transition](#)

June 9, 2016

Members of the Global Commission on Internet Governance (GCIG) released the following statement today calling on the U.S. government and the U.S. Congress to meet the September 2016 target date for the transition of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global multi-stakeholder community:

“The U.S. government’s 2014 call for a plan to transition the stewardship of the IANA functions to the global multi-stakeholder community was an important step toward ensuring that no one entity can exert undue influence or control over the Internet. We commend the international Internet community for coming together in response to that call to develop a workable plan. The dedication and energy committed by all stakeholders shows that the multi-stakeholder model is robust enough to ensure the stability of the Internet’s key functions far into the future. “We now call upon the U.S. government to adopt that plan and to meet the September 2016 target date for the transition of the IANA functions. Failure to do so will send the wrong message to the international community, increase distrust, and will likely encourage some governments to pursue their own national or even regional Internets.

“Completing the transition will bolster the power of the Internet and will help facilitate access to the world’s most powerful engine of social and economic growth for millions of people.”

-Carl Bildt (Sweden), Gordon Smith (Canada), Fen Osler Hampson (Canada), Patricia Lewis (UK), Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi (UAE), Dominic Barton (Canada), Pablo Bello (Chile), Moez Chakchouk (Tunisia), Michael Chertoff (USA), Anriette Esterhuysen (South Africa), Hartmut Glaser (Brazil), Dorothy Gordon (Ghana), Dame Wendy Hall (UK), Joseph S. Nye (USA), Sir David Omand (UK), Latha Reddy (India), Marietje Schaake (The Netherlands), Paul Twomey (Australia), Pindar Wong (Hong Kong)

This statement was released in response to the report and recommendations of the United States National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), made public earlier today.

The Commission is a two-year initiative of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and Chatham House, two independent think tanks that together convened 29 commissioners and 39 research advisers to articulate and advance a strategic vision for Internet governance.

The Commission will release One Internet, its final report and recommendations, on June 21, 2016, at the OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy in Cancun, Mexico.

INTERNET ASSOCIATION, CCIA & I2COALITION

Statement, InternetAssociation.org

 [Internet Association, CCIA & i2Coalition Statement On The NTIA Report On The ICANN Transition Proposals](#)

June 9, 2016

Today, the Internet Association, Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), and the Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition) issued the following statement on the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) report on the ICANN transition proposals:

“The internet economy applauds NTIA for its deliberative and thorough work reviewing the ICANN transition proposals to ensure its principles for a successful transition are met. Our organizations agree that the proposals to transition ICANN from U.S. government stewardship to a bottom-up, multistakeholder model satisfy NTIA principles and provide the internet with the best path forward for self governance. It is important that Congress not artificially

slow down the transition beyond the September 30 expiration of the current IANA contract. We will remain engaged and vigilant as the transition proceeds to ensure the continued success of the multistakeholder model.”

THE INTERNET ASSOCIATION (IA)

Official Statement, InternetAssociation.org

 [Statement On ICANN Plan To Transition IANA Functions](#)

March 11, 2016

Internet Association President and CEO Michael Beckerman issued the following statement on the Internet Corporation for Assigned names and Numbers’ (ICANN) plan to transition stewardship of the Internet Assignment Numbers Authority (IANA) from the U.S. Government to the Internet community:

“The Internet Association congratulates the ICANN community on this outcome and the hard work that went into the proposal. The Internet industry is evaluating the proposal and looks forward to supporting a transition plan that preserves a multistakeholder governance model that implements strong accountability measures and controls. Such a model must treat all stakeholders equitably. Internet companies look forward to working with Congress and the NTIA as they review ICANN’s plan and look to set ICANN on a path that will allow the Internet to continue to thrive.”

INTERNET GOVERNANCE COALITION (IGC)

IGC members include AT&T, CISCO, Comcast, Disney, Facebook, GoDaddy, Google, Juniper, Microsoft, NCTA, Time Warner Cable, Telefonica, Verizon and 21st Century Fox.

Official Statement (PDF)

March 11, 2016

Today’s action by the ICANN Board to approve the plan for transitioning IANA from the United States government, together with the associated and substantially improved accountability processes, is an important milestone for the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance and for the Internet as a whole. Approval by the ICANN Board is the result of two years of hard work by many people and organizations, demonstrating that even complex and difficult Internet-related issues can be resolved successfully through a multi-stakeholder process. The proposals approved by the ICANN Board in Marrakesh will be instrumental to ensuring the continued stability and reliability of the Internet, especially as it continues to help the world’s people economically, socially and culturally. We look forward to the timely finalization of ICANN’s bylaws and the implementation of these recommendations.

YAHOO!

Blog Post, [YahooPolicy@Tumblr](#)

 [ICANN's Transition Plan for IANA Will Preserve the Open Internet](#)

March 14, 2016

Yahoo congratulates ICANN on submitting the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal, which sets out a clear plan for transitioning the important global functions of IANA – including the coordination of Domain Names, Numbering Resources, and Protocol Parameters – from the U.S. Government to the global multistakeholder community and enhancing accountability of ICANN. ICANN's plan represents many months of hard work and negotiation among all of the parties to achieve support for key principles that underpin the open internet and our global digital economy. These principles include: enhancing the multistakeholder model; maintaining the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet DNS; meeting the needs of IANA customers and partners; and maintaining the openness of the internet. ICANN's proposal now heads to the U.S. Department of Commerce for approval (and will be subject to Congressional review). As the proposal moves forward, Yahoo will continue to support ICANN's proposal which, once implemented, will empower the global multistakeholder community to take over responsibility for these key functions, ensuring accountability and transparency in the evolution of the internet.

INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ICC-BASIS)

Press Release, [ICWBO.org](#)

 [ICC-Basis Welcomes IANA Stewardship Transition Plan and Related Improvements to ICANN Accountability](#)

March 11, 2016

As a long-time advocate of the need to ensure the continued security, operational stability and multistakeholder nature of the Internet, ICC BASIS has welcomed the submission of proposals to transition stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global multistakeholder community.

The package, which also includes plans to strengthen accountability of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) as an independent organization, has been submitted to the US National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) and is the result of an inclusive, global discussion among representatives from government, business, technical community, civil society and academia, as well as end users. If approved, implementation of the plan is expected to be completed prior to the expiration of the contract between US NTIA and ICANN in September 2016.

Thorough consultations seeking the global stakeholder views on the principles and mechanisms for the transition and enhanced accountability got underway following the US NTIA announcement of its intention to transition its stewardship of this crucial Internet function to the global multistakeholder community in March 2014.

IANA is responsible for coordinating some of the Internet's technical functions, such as allocating and maintaining the unique codes and numbering systems that allow the Internet to operate smoothly. The comprehensive package submitted yesterday combines requirements for the transition coordinated by the IANA Stewardship Transition Group (ICG). The multistakeholder working group was responsible for assembling the components from the respective ICANN communities into a single proposal and for meeting criteria set out by NTIA. Enhancements to ICANN's

accountability were identified and put forward by the Cross Community Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability (CCWG-Accountability).

ICC BASIS and its cross sector membership of businesses and associations from around the world advocates the fundamental importance of a secure and stable Internet and strongly supports a multistakeholder approach to Internet governance. BASIS commends the serious and diligent work that occurred across all stakeholder communities in the development, evaluation and finalization of the proposals.

ICC BASIS participated in the ICG as a representative of business and was actively involved in the CCWG-Accountability process through the direct engagement of members advocating for minimum changes to the operational practices of the IANA technical functions. Chair of the ICC Commission on the Digital Economy and ICC BASIS liaison to the ICG Joseph Alhadeff said: "ICC BASIS called for any proposal for a path towards transition to maintain the security, stability and integrity of the Internet and be sourced from and supported by the breadth of the multistakeholder community. We believe that the proposals put forward have met those criteria and we will remain constructively engaged to continue to assure these priorities through the further implementation of these proposals."

Article, icwbo.org

 [ICC meets new ICANN CEO and applauds US Commerce Department approval of IANA transition plan](#)

June 10, 2016

On the sidelines of the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) in Brussels today, ICC BASIS Director and Senior Policy Executive for Digital Economy Elizabeth Thomas-Raynaud met with ICANN Chief Executive Officer Goran Marby, as he starts his third week of a five-year appointment. On the heels of yesterday's announcement by the US Commerce Department, noting that the proposal of the global Internet multistakeholder community meets the criteria it set out two years ago, ICC used the timely occasion to express support and encouragement on behalf of companies from all regions for the important step.

ICC meets new ICANN CEO and applauds the US Commerce Department approval of IANA transition plan

This is an important milestone in the process for the transition of the US Government's stewardship role for the Internet domain name system (DNS) technical functions, known as the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global multistakeholder community

Members have seen this transition proposal as necessary and positive for the on-going integrity, security and stability of the Internet that is paramount to global trade and commerce for companies of all sizes and in all sectors.

"ICC has been an active advocate for members from all countries in supporting an IANA transition plan to global multistakeholder stewardship, with necessary accountability mechanisms," said Ms Thomas-Raynaud. "Members have seen this transition proposal as necessary and positive for the on-going integrity, security and stability of the Internet that is paramount to global trade and commerce for companies of all sizes and in all sectors."

ICC told ICANN it remained committed to constructively engage and share global and broad business perspectives to help assure these priorities are kept through the implementation of these proposals.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY COUNCIL (ITIC)

Blog, TechWonk

 [Multistakeholder Internet Governance Alive and Well](#)

March 13, 2016

Last week, the process to transfer stewardship of Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) from the U.S. government to the wider Internet community reached an important milestone: transmittal of the community-developed [transition proposal](#) to the Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). This helps keep the process on track for the planned handover later this year. That’s a good thing.


ITI continues to support transitioning IANA stewardship. It is consistent with industry’s unequivocal support for multistakeholder governance of the Internet, where the policies and technical processes are developed and implemented by an array of experts in a bottom-up approach, rather than handed down by governments or multilateral organizations. Current management of the Internet is multistakeholder, a model that has—and will continue—to contribute greatly to the integrity and stability of today’s free and open Internet. The development of the IANA stewardship transition proposal has been a long, sometimes messy process, fueled by the investment of tens of thousands of volunteer hours and dollars. No matter what one may think of the outcome, the vigorous participation of various Internet communities and individuals is a tribute to, and a powerful validation of, multistakeholder governance. The system works. It’s as simple as that.

Even so, ITI, like many others, felt it was critical to use this opportunity to enhance ICANN staff and board accountability in order to build trust and confidence. We believe this has been achieved. The transition proposal lays the foundation for creating a more equitable balance in the governance of ICANN itself. Again, that’s a good thing.

ITI applauds all who helped achieve this significant milestone. We hope that the various stakeholders will continue their collaboration to further improve and strengthen ICANN and the multistakeholder ecosystem.

SOFTWARE & INFORMATION INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (SIIA)

Press Release, SIIA.net

 [SIIA Welcomes Proposal to Transfer Control of Internet Assigned Names Authority \(IANA\) Function to Multistakeholder Stewardship](#)

March 11, 2016

The [Software & Information Industry Association \(SIIA\)](#), which represents software and digital content companies in the United States and Europe, today welcomed the transmittal of the proposal to place the responsibility for the Internet’s naming system under the control of the multistakeholder community.

Mark MacCarthy, SIIA’s Senior Vice President of Public Policy, issued the following statement:

“We welcome yesterday’s [decision](#) by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) board to transmit a set of proposals to transfer to multistakeholder oversight the functioning of Internet’s address system, the Domain Name Server (DNS) system. Now it is up to the U.S. Administration to review the proposal and for Congress to exercise its legitimate role.

“ICANN plays a critical role in facilitating the digital trade that underpins worldwide technological innovation. SIIA encourages careful review of the proposals, particularly from the perspective of ensuring multistakeholder, as opposed to inter-governmental, control over the Internet. SIIA has supported the transition from its March 14, 2014 announcement, subject to the new arrangement meeting the conditions established by the U.S. government.”

U.S. COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (USCIB)

Press Release, USCIB.org

 [USCIB Applauds Plan to Transition Stewardship of Key Internet Functions, Urges U.S. Government Approval](#)

March 10, 2016

The United States Council for International Business (USCIB) welcomed a comprehensive package of proposals developed by numerous Internet stakeholders including the private sector, which will enable global stewardship of the domain name system (DNS) and enhance accountability of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which manages the global domain name system.

The proposals, if approved, would permit the transfer of the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), a set of core functions necessary for the running of the Internet domain name system, from the U.S. Commerce Department’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), to the multi-stakeholder Internet community, with safeguards to enable active involvement by the in processes designed to hold ICANN accountable as an independent entity.

“While some have argued that the Internet should be overseen by governments, the two-year process that culminated in this plan demonstrates that the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance works,” said USCIB President and CEO Peter M. Robinson. “This model is clearly the most appropriate means for considering issues that could affect the operation of the global Internet as we move forward.”

At an ICANN meeting wrapping up today in Marrakesh, Morocco, ICANN’s board approved the proposal and immediately transmitted it to NTIA.

“USCIB worked actively to help shape this ground-breaking initiative,” said Robinson. “We believe that the final product will meet NTIA’s criteria for the transition of the IANA stewardship role and ensure the continued stability, security and resiliency of the domain name system as well as fundamental openness of the Internet. We urge NTIA to approve the plan.”

The package combines the technical requirements for the IANA stewardship transition with important, interrelated enhancements to ICANN’s accountability to replace the “backstop” function provided by NTIA’s current contract with ICANN.

“USCIB believes this package will best ensure the continued security and stability of the domain name system and preclude its capture by a government or governmental entity, which is one of NTIA’s important criteria,” according to Barbara Wanner, USCIB’s vice president for information, communications and technology (ICT) policy.

On ICANN accountability, USCIB said the proposal would empower the Internet community through use of a bottom-up, multi-stakeholder model. “There are details that still need refinement, such as the drafting of bylaws,” said Wanner. “We look forward to helping shape these as part of the continued open and consultative implementation process.”

According to Wanner, USCIB contributions to the processes of encouraging the IANA stewardship transition and enhancing ICANN’s accountability have reflected cross-sectoral and cross-community perspectives. She noted that, as an association composed of more than 300 multinational companies, law firms and business associations, the organization’s membership represents a broad cross-section of leading global companies in the ICT sector. Moreover, USCIB members come from both the “contracted house” of ICANN – those companies that serve as registries and registrars of Internet domain names – as well as the “non-contracted house,” which encompasses others in the private sector.

Press Release, USCIB.org

 [USCIB Hails US Approval of Internet Stewardship Transition Proposal](#)

June 9, 2016

New York, N.Y., June 9, 2016 – The United States Council for International Business (USCIB) is pleased that the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has found that the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) Stewardship Transition proposal meets the criteria NTIA set forth in announcing its intention to transition the U.S. stewardship of the Internet domain name system (DNS) technical functions to the global multistakeholder community.

“NTIA’s approval of the plan highlights its strength and the broad support it has received from all stakeholders,” said USCIB President and CEO Peter Robinson. “We have worked tirelessly to help shape a plan that will enable a seamless transition of DNS stewardship functions and preserve the fundamental openness of the Internet, and we’re thrilled that NTIA shares our view.”

USCIB members actively contributed comments during all aspects of the two year development of both the IANA Stewardship Transition proposal and the related Enhanced ICANN Accountability proposal. On March 10 USCIB expressed support for the two-proposal package and urged NTIA to approve it on grounds that it, indeed, provided a framework that would meet NTIA’s criteria and preclude capture of DNS stewardship by a government or governmental entity. NTIA’s announcement today re-confirms USCIB’s view that the March 10 proposal best ensures the continued stability, security, and resiliency of the DNS system as well as fundamental openness of the Internet.

NET CHOICE

Blog, NetChoice.org

 [IANA Transition and ICANN Accountability proposals: thumbs-up from US Commerce Department](#)

June 9, 2016

Today, [NTIA announced](#) its report on the community proposal for IANA transition and ICANN Accountability. NTIA concluded that the proposal meets the conditions for transition, and would effectively protect ICANN from capture by governments.

NetChoice released this statement today, consistent with our [testimony](#) in Senate Commerce last month:

It’s no surprise that this report confirms that the community proposals meet NTIA’s conditions, since we were tuned-in to those requirements from the start. We’re also pleased that Berkman Center concluded that our proposals would effectively prevent capture of ICANN by governments.

As we've said in several Congressional hearings on this transition, we appreciate how Congress backed the community by demanding that ICANN implement the proposals developed by the community.

With this report, NTIA clears the way for expiration of the IANA contract, leaving ICANN under the control of the international private sector stakeholders it was designed to serve.

Some members of Congress have lingering doubts about this transition, but the protections are in place — to include ICANN's headquarters remaining in the U.S. — to ensure that free expression and free enterprise will prevail in the domain name system at the core of the Internet.

INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION (I2 COALITION)

Announcement, i2Coalition.com

 [ICANN, The IANA Transition and The Marrakech Package](#)

March 17, 2016

The best thing about ICANN is the amazing fact that for the past fifteen years it has been a functioning multistakeholder approach to Internet policy development and decision-making. The undue influence the U.S. Government arguably has – seeing as how ICANN is a California-based nonprofit corporation and the U.S., through the NTIA, has a continuing stewardship and administrative role in the DNS and contracts with ICANN to maintain the IANA functions – does not comport with this multistakeholder approach.

The NTIA's long anticipated move to ensure a functional transition that removes the U.S. Government from direct control over the Internet demonstrably authenticates the argument that no government has a special relationship to the Internet and strengthens the multistakeholder model. The comprehensive package agreed to last week by the global Internet community to transition the IANA responsibilities to global stewardship from U.S. Government control remarkably enjoys the broadest possible support from this very diverse community. Moreover, it proposes ways to enhance ICANN's accountability as a fully independent organization. This transition is the final step in the long-anticipated privatization of the Internet's DNS, first outlined when ICANN was incorporated in 1998.

The U.S. Government will now review the package to ensure that it meets NTIA's criteria, set out two years ago, to ensure that the package:

Maintains the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS,

Meets the needs and expectations of the global customers and partners of the IANA services, and

Maintains the openness of the Internet.

If approved, implementation is expected to be completed prior to the expiration of the contract between NTIA and ICANN in September of this year.

The global Internet community has seen to it that the world can enjoy a stronger ICANN and a stronger Internet through the transition of IANA. Everybody who believes in freedom of expression and the power of the connected world owes this group of heroes a huge debt of gratitude. Through their hard work they have ensured that no one entity controls the Internet and have set the stage for this global resource to continue to be governed by the stakeholders it serves.

THE FEDERALIST SOCIETY

Blog, Fed-soc.org

 [ICANN in Transition](#)

June 22, 2016

Since NTIA announced its acceptance of ICANN's transition plan (see the [FedSoc teleforum on the issue](#)) there has been an increase in the predictable volume from those who breathlessly characterize the conclusion of this transition as "the US giving up control of the Internet," or on the other hand, a "bold decision by the Obama administration to preserve Internet freedoms and openness."

The truth is that the US Government has never had any operational "control of the Internet" to give up, and this transition began in the Clinton administration, was continued through the Bush administration, and is now set to conclude in the Obama administration. This is not to suggest that the careful execution of this transition does not remain of critical importance and worthy of Congressional attention and oversight, but rather that it is more important to focus on the technical legal framework of the transition than on hyperventilating hyperbole.

ICANN plays an important but largely technical function that properly falls under the purview of the private sector. And while certain governments have long sought greater influence over these technical functions as a means of influencing speech and parochial economic interests, the transition has been designed to ensure that ICANN remain a private non-profit entity incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

So the task now is two-fold. First, ensure that ICANN's implementation plan is watertight and includes no flexibility on the issue of legal structure and jurisdiction. And second, the impacted private sector interests must step into the shoes of the US government and take advantage of ICANN's by-laws and the protections of California law to ensure that ICANN remains accountable and responsive to its constituencies.

THE APP ASSOCIATION

Letter to Congress

 [App Association Letter to Congress](#)

September 13, 2016

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned associations and their members, we write in support of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) Stewardship Transition, which will be completed when the contract between Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and U.S. Department of Commerce expires on September 30, 2016.

Upon its expiration the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS) will be finally and fully privatized. The IANA transition supports and enhances a multi-stakeholder model, maintaining the security, stability, and resiliency of the internet DNS, while meeting the needs and expectations of global customers and partners.

Right now, a handful of Members of Congress are trying to delay or block this transition. The primary concern is that foreign governments will want to bring the internet under their control. We respectfully disagree with this position, and despite the rhetoric otherwise, continued U.S. government oversight of ICANN creates a significant risk of internet fragmentation and government overreach.



We believe that the transition will significantly improve accountability, as well as long term sustainability, by making ICANN responsible to technologists, businesses, civil society, and all users who depend on the internet for economic growth and social innovation. The transition also ensures that the internet remains an open platform, uncontrolled by any single entity. Those who are against the transition argue that the government can better protect the public interest than the multi-stakeholder model can. But if the U.S. government insists on maintaining its role, other governments will insist on having a role as well, unraveling the multi-stakeholder model and fragmenting the internet. Governments will manage their own national or regional DNS. This is a high cost for holding on to the U.S. government's purely administrative role. It won't safeguard freedom of expression on the internet because neither the DNS nor the U.S. government's limited role provide any authority over content on the internet.

Innovators have lined up to support the transition because we understand the unique role that the internet plays in our own success, and also how it powers global trade and commerce. If members of Congress are able to block or delay the transition, we fear U.S. businesses will shoulder lasting negative effects on their business operations, unnecessarily impacting global trade and investment which depends on a unified, global internet.

The internet is the greatest platform for global commerce that the world has ever known, and must be protected. This is why the transition is so critically important to small businesses like ours.

We now respectfully request your help to ensure that the continuing resolution does not contain any language that would delay or block the IANA transition.

Announcement, Actonline.org

 [App Association Applauds NTIA Approval of ICANN Community Transition Plan](#)

June 9, 2016

Today, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced it has approved a proposal from the ICANN community for the U.S. government to relinquish its oversight role of the domain name system. This marks the final stages of the IANA transition announced in 2014.

“The announcement from NTIA provided just the impetus the community needed to round out the accountability mechanisms inside ICANN and harden the organization against capture by governments,” said Jonathan Zuck, president of ACT | The App Association, who worked as part of the cross-community working group on accountability to create the proposal.

“Both NTIA and the Berkman Center have endorsed a plan for ICANN accountability, which was born of a truly multistakeholder process to build the stronger, more independent ICANN that has always been intended.

“Participation in this historic effort has been a personal highlight for me in my 18 years at the App Association. While there's more work to be done, this is an incredibly important milestone. ICANN and the internet will be stronger for this effort.”

MICHAEL CHERTOFF AND JAMES CARTWRIGHT

Michael Chertoff served as Homeland Security secretary from 2005 to 2009 and is executive chairman of The Chertoff Group, a security and risk management advisory firm with clients in the technology sector. Retired Marine Corps Gen.

James Cartwright served as the eighth vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is now the inaugural holder of the Harold Brown Chair in Defense Policy Studies at the Center for Strategic & International Studies.

Opinion, politico.com

 [How to keep the Internet free and open](#)

June 10, 2016

In the upcoming months, the U.S. government faces a critical decision: Should it relinquish its limited oversight role over a critical component of the Internet?

The decision concerns the Internet's Domain Name System — the system that allows users to reach sites ending in .com, .org., .uk, .bank and many other designations. For nearly two decades, the U.S. has helped oversee this crucial component of the global Internet. And for many years, Washington has been committed ultimately to fully privatizing the system, withdrawing the oversight role of the Commerce Department, and leaving it in the hands of a private California-based organization. But now, there are some who want to abandon that plan and keep the government involved.

Opponents of the current plan to eliminate the U.S. government's oversight role have argued that federal supervision is needed to protect the freedom of the Internet and that the transition to privatization is a national security risk. But these arguments are misplaced. If Washington fails to follow through on its longstanding commitment to privatize the DNS, it will fuel efforts by authoritarian regimes to move Internet governance to the United Nations—and potentially put the Internet, as we know it, at risk.

The Internet is vital to the international economy and global security for its openness, speed, flexibility and efficiency. It enables international communication, the free flow of ideas and innovation, and global commerce. Not surprisingly, authoritarian regimes, which often want to limit the ability of their citizens to communicate, don't like these attributes. Keeping the Internet free and open should be of utmost importance to the U.S. government.

The DNS lies at the intersection of these competing visions. The DNS is what keeps the Internet singular, unified and global. If the Internet is an "information superhighway," the manager of the DNS enables users to navigate it. ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, has ably performed this function for nearly two decades. It is a California-based nonprofit public benefit corporation, created in 1998 during the Clinton administration, whose mission is to make certain that the Internet's naming and addressing system is globally coordinated, secure and stable. In 1998, the U.S. government recognized that, as the commercial use of the Internet expanded globally, governance would also need to evolve, and that stewardship of Internet resources would be better served by an inclusive and global multi-stakeholder model.

Since ICANN's inception, the Department of Commerce has held a limited oversight role over the organization. The agency's stewardship has greatly diminished as the organization has matured from a small operation on a shoestring budget to a large, professional corporation with more than 350 employees in seven offices around the globe. Global stakeholders, including U.S. businesses, end users, technical experts, public interest organizations and academics, oversee ICANN.

In 2014, the U.S. government asked ICANN to convene this global Internet community to develop a proposal to make ICANN truly independent, and end the U.S. government's continuing oversight role. The resulting proposal, presented to the government on March 10, does what the U.S. had always planned: It completes the privatization of the DNS. The proposal would give oversight authority to those groups that represent the rich diversity of the Internet itself: business leaders, Internet engineers, academics, civil society, governments, end users and many others. This multi-



stakeholder model works and the transition should be nothing more than the final step in an 18-year process. The Obama administration must now decide by Sept. 30 whether to go ahead with the new proposal and complete the privatization. We strongly believe this is the right thing to do.

Opponents of the transition argue that the U.S. government should maintain its control over ICANN to prevent bad actors from taking over the Internet. Lawmakers have tried to delay or block the transition multiple times through the appropriations process and standalone legislation. For example, some senators are currently floating legislation that would effectively delay the transition indefinitely. But their arguments are exactly backward and would have the opposite effect of what they intend.

The DNS is a globally agreed-upon address book for the Internet, originally created by the U.S., that any nation, network or user can exit from at any time. No country or international organization can force the U.S. to give up its oversight role. But they can simply abandon the U.S.-created DNS, potentially creating an alternative DNS housed at the United Nations or even within their own country. Such a change would mean the loss of the very element that has made the Internet a single, globally interoperable system strengthening the global economy, including that of the U.S., by creating jobs, encouraging innovation and stimulating the economic growth critical to global stability and security.

Without the private, multi-stakeholder model, other nations' proposals to move to a new DNS, operated by foreign governments on a multilateral, regional or national basis could gain traction. The U.S. government would be powerless to compel anyone to use the Commerce-administered DNS. In the end, nongovernmental stakeholders, like businesses and every day Internet users, would no longer have a say in the management of the DNS. Decision-making authority over significant Internet policy issues, such as freedom of expression and cyber security would move to a multilateral forum like the U.N. as well. Abandoning the multi-stakeholder model would undermine the enormous economic and social benefits of the free, open global Internet. In short, if the U.S. refuses to turn over its legacy, ministerial oversight of ICANN to the private sector, the private sector may end up with no voice in global Internet governance.

If the U.S. relinquishes its exclusive oversight role, other governments will no longer be able to insist on also having an oversight role at an institution like the U.N. because they will have an equal role as members of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee. While this may not convince authoritarian regimes, our allies and the developing world are much more likely to stay with the ICANN-administered DNS because the global multi-stakeholder model does a better job of ensuring the continued success of the Internet than one managed by governments.

While authoritarian governments may be happy to see the U.S. relinquish its oversight role, privatizing the DNS is a much better way to guarantee broad support for the system among allies and the developing world for the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance. The proposal developed by the global Internet community recognizes that the Internet is not something appropriately controlled by governments or any other single stakeholder. Instead, the business community, the community of Internet users, the technical experts responsible for continuing development and innovation, and thoughtful academics all bring essential abilities and perspectives to the management of the Internet's global address book and other key functions.

This is why we see diverse support for the promised ICANN transition from diverse groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Human Rights Watch, companies like Microsoft and Intel, and free speech advocates like the Center for Democracy & Technology. It's why the House and Senate announced its unanimous support for the multi-stakeholder model in its Resolution of 2012.

To reject or even delay the transition would be a gift to those governments threatened by a free and open Internet. The multi-stakeholder model is exactly what has allowed policy to keep pace with the Internet's rapid growth. The

proposal includes all voices and is built on a foundation of transparency and accountability. It is a quintessentially American policy.

When our values of freedom and democracy spread around the world and are shared by others, we are more secure at home and the world is more stable. We support this stewardship transition, as it will pave the way for American values and the free and open Internet around the world.

LOS ANGELES TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

Editorial, [LATimes.com](#)

 [Cutting U.S. ties to the Net](#)

March 16, 2016

No government or interest group should control the Internet. On that point you'll find broad agreement, particularly among the world's democracies. The United States, however, has final say over one small but important aspect of the net: keeping track of the list of "top level domains," such as .com and .org.

Whether that's a good thing or a bad one depends on how much you trust the United States. Congress has voted to preserve the Commerce Department's connection to the Internet's name-and-address system at least through Sept. 30. But ever since Edward Snowden's revelations about U.S. surveillance of the net, much of the rest of the world has been trying to put the technical standards of the Internet out of any government's reach — or to give more governments a say in the rules of the virtual road. Some countries have even threatened to create their own name-and-address systems, potentially fracturing the net and undermining its role as a free and open platform.

That's one reason the Obama administration proposed in 2014 to cut the U.S. government's ties to the domain name system and give complete control over those functions to the "global multi-stakeholder community" — in other words, an entity broadly representative of Internet users. It asked the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the independent nonprofit that now manages the domain name system for the government, to propose a way to do so.

At issue was the fate of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, which ICANN operates through a contract with the Commerce Department. The authority oversees changes to top level domains, managing a list that Internet service providers around the world rely on to route data and ensure that only one place online corresponds to each domain name. By virtue of its contract, ICANN also gets to control the supply of top level domains and set conditions on the companies that sell domain names.

Last week, ICANN's board approved a proposal to take over the authority, the culmination of two years of difficult negotiations among Internet service providers, businesses, public interest groups, governments and other interested parties. Although the plan would end formal U.S. oversight, it's a thoughtful compromise that promises to do more to preserve the status quo online than the current system does. In particular, it would make ICANN more accountable to those who use the Internet, and give the net more protection against meddling by governments that don't value the free flow of information online as much as Americans do — a freedom that has been crucial to the development of the net as a boundlessly innovative hub for information, communications and commerce around the globe.

Included in the plan are new mechanisms that could be used to remove board members who stray from the recommendations made by the policymaking panels, which are composed of technical experts, businesses, public-interest groups and Internet users. Another proposal would have ICANN's board consider only those

recommendations from a governmental advisory committee that two-thirds of the committee members supported — a requirement that should restrain repressive regimes or others threatened by an open Internet.

Republicans in Congress have opposed privatizing the numbering authority on the grounds that U.S. ownership helps protect freedom online. Setting aside the irony of conservatives arguing that the government can better protect the public interest than private industry can, the GOP overstates what the U.S. can do with its control over the numbering authority. It is not the Internet's cop — its role is purely technical and administrative.

It's certainly true that many countries crave more control over the Internet, as evidenced not only by China's "great firewall," but also Europe's "right to be forgotten" and Brazil's proposal to bar companies from exporting the data they collect from users there. ICANN's plan would be a step in the opposite direction. That's reason enough for Congress to support it.

Editorial, LATimes.com

 [To keep the Internet free of governmental control, Washington needs to cut its ties](#)

June 10, 2016

The Obama administration moved one step closer Thursday to giving up the last vestige of U.S. control over the Internet. It's not a big step in practical terms, but symbolically it's a big deal.

At issue is a Commerce Department contract that seemingly allows it to manage a crucial Internet function: the global master list of "top level domains," such as .com and .net, that directs traffic online. But the contract with the nonprofit Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers doesn't give the U.S. much discretion; instead, it merely allows the feds to verify that the right procedures and policies were followed before any changes are made to that master list.

Nevertheless, even that minor role has given some repressive regimes a pretext to push for more control by governments over other aspects of the Internet, such as the rules for privacy, security and data storage. Former NSA contractor Edward Snowden's revelations, meanwhile, led officials in some other countries to oppose any U.S. government involvement in the Internet at all.

Against that backdrop, the Obama administration proposed in 2014 to transfer oversight of the master list of domains to a "multistakeholder" group that could not be controlled by any government and would not diminish the Internet's openness, stability or security. ICANN worked with a broad array of Internet users and other stakeholders to develop a proposal of its own, along with new rules aimed at making ICANN's governing body more accountable to Internet users. On Thursday, the Commerce Department gave ICANN's proposal a conditional thumbs up, with the final details to be worked out over the coming months.

Some conservatives argue that the U.S. involvement in domains is crucial to preserving an open Internet, and the House Appropriations Committee has proposed to maintain the status quo. But keeping the Commerce Department's nominal role in domain names would only encourage other governments to remake the Internet to their liking, either through technological barriers or through intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations. If it truly loves the open Internet, Congress will let it go.

DAVID IGNATIUS

Editorial, Washingtonpost.com

 [Let the geeks rule over the Internet](#)

August 2, 2016

As Russian intelligence agencies escalate their use of the U.S.-created Internet as a tool of political sabotage, it's haunting to recall the famous communist dictum: "The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them."

Against this menacing background, the subject of Internet governance — long an arcane topic of discussion among geeks and technologists — takes on crucial political importance. Who will protect the integrity of the basic structure of domain names and addresses on which the Internet operates? What protects the world from future efforts by Russia or China, or the United States, for that matter, to subvert a free and open Internet?

The hero of this story turns out to be a little-known, quasi-private oversight group known as ICANN, which stands for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. It was founded in 1998 to take over an informal system that had been managed by an early Internet guru named Jon Postel, an eccentric computer-science professor at the University of Southern California.

Postel and his techie friends created a structure for public use of the communications network that had been built in the late 1960s by the Pentagon. The engineers created a system of domain names — the now-universally familiar array of ".mil," ".gov," ".edu," ".org," ".net" and ".com." To help people find their way electronically to the right computer, they built a naming system that had minimal central management and great autonomy for users.

The genius of the early system was that it was, essentially, ungoverned. "The Internet had little control at the core and innovation at the edges," explains Steve Crocker, the current chairman of ICANN, in an interview. Rather than bureaucratic rules and boundaries, there were engineering protocols.

Postel died in 1998, just before the Bill Clinton administration launched its plan to charter ICANN to take over the operations that had been run, figuratively speaking, out of Postel's shoebox of index cards at USC.

The new corporation had a contract with the Commerce Department to maintain the system. So in that sense, the United States had oversight, but ICANN officials say it was rarely exercised. ICANN also supervised Postel's system of national suffixes, such as ".uk" or ".ru," which helped other countries join the network. This unitary, unregulated Internet quickly spread to every corner of global life and commerce.

This technological Arcadia inevitably drew complaints from countries that resented ICANN's U.S. base. These critics proposed a takeover by the International Telecommunication Union, a stodgy, bureaucratic U.N. agency that was headed at the time by a Russian-educated engineer from Mali, who was succeeded last year by the Chinese deputy secretary-general.

But the advocates of a free and open Internet fought back. Fadi Chehade, an Egyptian American who was then president of ICANN, began campaigning to keep control out of the hands of governments, bureaucrats and potential censors. Chehade and the Obama administration both recognized that after the Edward Snowden revelations in 2013, the price of ICANN's continued control would be severance of its ties to the U.S. government. Chehade made that pitch to Brazil, China and India — three countries that had been eager for ITU control. And amazingly enough, he succeeded.

ICANN's contract with the Commerce Department is set to expire Sept. 30. A few Republicans, led by Sen. Ted Cruz (Tex.), are trying to block the transition, arguing that it will give control of the Internet to Russia, China and other potential abusers. But Crocker and Chehade argue that continuation of this peculiar, independent, tech-driven body is in fact the only way to keep the system open and honest.



Crocker explains the protections that ICANN has designed into the system. If any nation, or private hacker, tried to introduce bad information into the architecture, it would be detected instantly. And sabotaging domain names would be impossible because the information is so widely distributed. A committee of engineers, drawn from the United States, Europe and Asia, will oversee the “root” system that Postel created. Another global panel of engineers will guard the system’s security.

The genius of the Internet is that nobody owns it. The vulnerability of the information that rests atop this platform was shown by the recent Russian hacks of the Democratic National Committee. But the underlying system looks more secure — and is probably best protected by ICANN’s global alliance of geeks, rather than any government or agency.

THE REPUBLICAN EDITORIAL BOARD

Editorial, Masslive.com, *Republished in CBS Miami, miami.cbslocal.com*

 [*Privatizing Internet function won't change much at all*](#)

August 18, 2016

Flip the switch and the lights go on. Hit the starter button and the engine turns over. Key in an Internet domain name and the Web page pops open.

How does it all work? Who even thinks about that – until there's a reason to wonder. Like when something goes wrong. Or when the administration of Internet domain names is about to undergo a change.

If you've never heard of ICANN – the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers – you may soon enough, as the United States, which has maintained a role in the handling of Internet domain names, is about to hand over the last of its functions to the private, non-profit ICANN. If all goes as planned, though, you'll likely not hear a peep.

Why? Because the change, set to take effect on Oct. 1, will keep things mostly as they've been for some time now. But that doesn't mean that there aren't critics.

One of them, oddly, is Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, the onetime presidential candidate who preached the gospel of conservatism out along the campaign trail. And yet he supports the federal government's role in assigning and overseeing domain names instead of total privatization of the function. Seems a most anti-conservative position, doesn't it?

Cruz's stated objection? Handing the keys to the kingdom to ICANN might well allow other governments to begin to meddle with the Internet. Specifically, undue and unwelcome influence from China is feared.

But this is a straw man argument. ICANN has effectively been running the show since the late-1990s, with minimal involvement from the feds. The government, whose role was largely an accident of history, has long been looking for a way to step back.

Two decades of planning seems more than enough.

And the transition that's about to take place ought surely beat the heck out of what had once been considered an alternative – having the United Nations handle the assigning of Internet domain names.

Imagine the influence that China or Russia could have had in that scenario.



The move has been supported by the last three presidential administrations. That should say something. When Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama all agree on something – and Ted Cruz opposes it – it's probably the way to go.

NBC NEWS

Article, [nbcnews.com](#)

 [U.S. Ready to Hand Over Control of the Internet Naming System](#)

August 22, 2016

The United States will officially relinquish its authority over the internet's naming system on October 1 to a California-based non-profit comprised of government and technology stakeholders.

Over 33,000 emails have been exchanged and more than 800 hours have been spent in meetings discussing the transition, according to ICANN, the group that will officially oversee the domain name system.

Why Is the Government Stepping Aside?

The U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications & Information Administration has authority over the domain name system but has mostly let ICANN run the show since 1998.

The decision to give ICANN the keys to the kingdom has been the plan all along. In a 1998 policy statement, the NTIA said it was committed to a transition that would let the private sector take over management of the domain name system.

With ICANN maturing as an organization, officials announced in March 2014 their intention to work with ICANN to create a plan to transition the system.

That time is now coming.

What Is ICANN?

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is a non-profit group based in Los Angeles, California. Members hail from around the world and may work for governments, technology companies or simply be interested in helping to shape the evolution of the internet.

It's important to note that ICANN does not control the internet. The group's role is similar to both the Federal Communications Commission and the Better Business Bureau in that it develops policy on the internet's unique identifiers, keeps track of the businesses involved in registration, and ensures everything is running smoothly.

ICANN's mission on its website declares, "Users of the internet deserve a say in how it is run."

PUBLIC INTEREST/CIVIL SOCIETY

CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF COMPLETING THE IANA TRANSITION ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

Signed by Access Now, Article19, Centre for Democracy & Technology, Greater Washington D.C. Internet Society Chapter, New America's Open Technology Institute, New York City Internet Society Chapter, Niskanen Center, North American Regional Bureau, Internet Society, North Carolina Internet Society Chapter, Public Knowledge, Rebecca MacKinnon, San Francisco Bay Area Internet Society Chapter

Statement, AccessNow.org

 [Civil Society Statement in Support of Completing the IANA Transition on September 30, 2016](#)

September 13, 2016

We, the undersigned, believe it is critical to the future of the Internet for the IANA stewardship transition to complete on September 30, 2016, with the expiration of NTIA's contract with ICANN. Signatories to this letter include leading civil society organizations dedicated to defending freedom online.

We believe the best defense against foreign governments exerting control over the Internet is to finish the transition on time. The transition of these functions away from the US government removes an excuse for authoritarian countries to demand greater oversight and regulation of Internet issues. Failure to move ahead with the IANA transition will empower those who advocate for governments alone to manage or regulate the Internet, and will encourage those who favor a governmental or intergovernmental model of Internet governance, whether implemented through the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union (ITU) or some other government-dominated body.

Over the past two years, the organizations and individuals most invested in the smooth functioning of the Internet and the free flow of information online have come together to produce a transition plan to safeguard the Internet's future. Executing this plan now is the best guarantee of the stability and security of the Internet. Delaying or preventing the transition at the last minute would only fuel foreign governments' attacks on Internet freedom and openness, both in intergovernmental fora and via technological solutions designed to fragment the single, globally interconnected Internet. It would tell the world that the historic multistakeholder consensus that exists in support of the IANA transition is insignificant. And, it would discredit the US Government's longstanding support for the multistakeholder Internet governance model.

The IANA transition is not an "Internet give-away" as some would characterize it. Since the Internet's inception, the US government has worked together with businesses, technologists, individuals, and civil society organizations to ensure that the Internet remains a tool that can bring about social, economic, and political change and further the realization of human rights. These are the same stakeholders that developed the transition plan's detailed governance and accountability measures and stand by those measures today. To suggest that these same businesses, individuals, and organizations would agree to handing over the Internet to the UN or to nations that support a government-run Internet is simply not credible. The Internet is revolutionary because it is a voluntary system. It works because the parties who run and oversee the infrastructure choose to work together and trust each other of their own accord. If the US Government does not keep faith with its commitment to the transition, that will undermine the trust that all of the parties have in the system. Such mistrust could lead to much more drastic changes to the Internet than merely letting the NTIA contract expire, as it is set to do.

Our organizations are dedicated to fighting censorship and defending freedom. We believe completing the IANA transition on time is imperative and urge members of Congress to do everything they can to ensure a successful transition on September 30.

CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR IANA TRANSITION

Signed by Access Now, Article19, Centre for Democracy & Technology, Human Rights Watch, Open Technology Institute, Public Knowledge, Ranking Digital Rights

Statement, AccessNow.org

 [Civil Society Statement of Support for IANA Transition](#)

May 23, 2016

Introduction

We the undersigned US and international civil society and public interest groups support and encourage the timely transition of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the multistakeholder community, as outlined in the Internet community's proposal submitted to National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on March 10th 2016.

Civil society has been involved in and following the IANA transition since NTIA's announcement in March 2014 in which the agency communicated the intention to "transition key Internet domain name functions to the global multistakeholder community." Members of our community have been involved in both the Working Group (WG) on stewardship transition and the WG on enhancing ICANN accountability. Representatives from civil society have participated throughout, contributing substantively on a range of issues from the structuring of the post-transition IANA; to working to ensuring the continued stability, continuity, and resiliency of the DNS; to bringing about a commitment that ICANN will recognize and meet its human rights obligations going forward.

When the Internet community came together in Marrakech in March 2016 to endorse and forward the IANA transition package to NTIA, there was consensus that the product of two years of challenging hard work was robust and credible and met the key NTIA criteria. The undersigned civil society and public interest groups believe that the IANA transition is a positive development for the Domain Name System and for the Internet at large, and that the process to develop the transition proposal has been a successful expression of multistakeholder approaches to Internet decision-making.

The transition is important

The Internet has been instrumental in promoting civil liberties and universal human rights, a goal shared by the United States government. As a global platform for the free flow of information, the Internet has facilitated unprecedented expansion of free expression and freedom of assembly & association. Simply put, the Internet has become an indispensable vehicle for the exercise of human rights around the world. The continued functionality of the open, interoperable, global Internet is a top priority shared by our organizations because it is essential to protection of human rights in the 21st century. Our organizations depend upon the stable and secure operation of the Internet to do our work every day, as do the human rights defenders, journalists, and other civil society groups we work with around the world.

Many of the undersigned organizations have worked with ICANN's staff and community on the structure of the transition and are committed to continue holding ICANN accountable to its human rights obligations after the transition. We believe that the multistakeholder model and governance structure of ICANN is the best way to empower global civil society along with the technical and business communities who have an interest in the free and open global Internet. We believe that supporting the participation in ICANN of a diverse international multistakeholder community that shares a common interest in openness and innovation is the most robust long term strategy for preventing any governments - or other multilateral entities they may commandeer - from steering the DNS in a direction that would be much less supportive of a free and open global Internet. Further, we see this proposal as an effective path to continue stable and resilient DNS administration that supports the interests of public and private stakeholders across societies and industries.

For those reasons, we strongly support the plan to transition oversight of the IANA functions to the global multistakeholder community. The IANA functions, which include management of Internet number resources and the DNS, help keep the Internet global, scalable and interoperable. We believe that executing upon the IANA transition is the best way to ensure the continued functionality of the global Internet and to protect the free flow of information so essential to human rights protection.

Delaying or blocking the transition is not in the interest of stakeholders

The transition of these functions away from the US government removes an excuse for authoritarian countries to demand greater oversight and regulation of Internet issues. Any delay in the transfer of these management functions to the global multistakeholder community could have the effect of undermining the openness and interoperability that has characterized the Internet to date. This is because the open, interoperable, global Internet did not arise out of agreements between governments, but rather through community-led innovative approaches by a diversity of stakeholders. In many ways, this transition is returning the Internet and DNS to the open multistakeholder governance model that characterized and fostered its first few decades of growth.

Failure to move ahead with the IANA transition will empower those who advocate for governments alone to manage or regulate the Internet, without equal involvement of the private sector or civil society. Delay will encourage those who favor a governmental, intergovernmental, or solely multilateral model of Internet governance, whether implemented through the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union (ITU) or some other government-dominated, non-multistakeholder body.

Yet, the importance of the transition to realizing human rights and the empowerment of Internet users around the globe does not seem to be shared by all. We read with concern the mischaracterizations of the IANA transition plan's proposed human rights commitment for ICANN in the May 19th letter from Senators Cruz, Lankford, and Lee to US Department of Commerce Secretary Pritzker and Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information Strickling. While we share the Senators' stated desire to protect Internet freedom, we note that their proposed solution of delaying the IANA transition will unintentionally have exactly the effect they hope to avoid: Delay would incur risk of increasing the role for foreign governments over the Internet and undermine free speech. The suggestion in the letter that the commitment that is sought of ICANN to respect its human rights obligations "would open the door to the regulation of content" is frankly puzzling and clearly incompatible with the further defined and limited ICANN mission in the transition plan.

The consequence of failure to move ahead with this transition will be to reinforce the power and influence of those who would prefer a less open, less innovative, less global Internet platform. We believe this could have significant implications for human rights worldwide, as well as undermine US interests and values. We strongly believe that the best way forward is to support a strong and accountable multistakeholder system that enables civil society groups,


business, and technical community members from all over the world to participate in ICANN independently of their governments.

Conclusion

It is the view of the undersigned civil society organizations that the IANA transition will confirm the legitimacy of multistakeholder approaches to Internet policy and governance, will result in a stronger and more empowered community within ICANN and ensure that the Internet community - and not ICANN or one government - is responsible and accountable for the stability, security and resiliency of the Internet going forward. This multistakeholder transition both protects the Internet and best serves stakeholder interests. Blocking or delaying the transition would strengthen the hand of those who do not believe in or support an open Internet and would encourage further government intervention and control.

MERCATUS CENTER

Blog, Eli Dourado, readplaintext.com

 [Here's why we should go through with the IANA transition](#)

June 10, 2016

The Internet began as a military experiment. As such, the US government has historically played a large role in its development and oversight. Now, almost 50 years after its inception, and after countless hours of mind-numbing multistakeholder preparatory meetings, the United States is getting ready undertake “the IANA transition”—to relinquish the last vestiges of formal legal oversight over its baby. The community’s transition plan, two years in the making, was just approved by the Commerce Department.

But some in Washington want to slow the process down. Senator Ted Cruz and Representative Sean Duffy have introduced legislation that would require Congress to authorize the plan. They have the mistaken view that the transition as currently contemplated would play into the hands of repressive regimes like China and Russia that want to censor the Internet. Dismayingly, my friends at the International Center for Law and Economics and TechFreedom have also taken anti-transition positions.

These slowdown maneuvers are a big mistake. Completing the process of Internet demilitarization and privatization that began in the 1980s is long overdue. There are real costs to further delaying the transition, primarily in the sphere of international diplomacy. And there are virtually no benefits to delay, because on a technical level IANA is not as important as some say and it will become even less important over time.

The IANA transition is smart diplomacy

Governments have wanted to get their hands on the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions ever since the United States formalized the functions in 1998. Until that year, one dude named Jon Postel was IANA. A graduate student at UCLA, he declared himself the “czar of socket numbers” in 1972 and people went along with it. Postel maintained a list of the ports that various protocols should generally operate on. Of course, there’s nothing stopping you from operating an FTP server on a port other than 21, but the system works marginally better if we semi-standardize port numbers. Postel’s “czar” role was eventually extended to include coordination of Autonomous System Numbers (ASNs) assigned by Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) and maintenance of the root zone file of the Domain Name System (DNS).



In 1998, Postel decided to test his authority. He unilaterally instructed several of the root nameservers to use his own root zone server, rather than the government's. They complied. When the government found out, they instructed him to reverse the change, and within a week, they decided that DNS (to say nothing of the IANA numbering elements) was getting to be too important to entrust to one dude. They created a nonprofit corporation called ICANN and then contracted with ICANN to administer the IANA functions. Postel died later that year.

The outcry from the governments around the world when the US formed ICANN was immediate. ICANN was a US corporation, created by the US government, subject to US law, and under contract with the US government. As the Internet grew in importance, many governments, not just authoritarian ones, were growing increasingly concerned about the fact that a critical global resource was under the thumb of just one government, the United States. They thought that a natural place to locate IANA was at the United Nations, specifically the UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The US insisted at the time that its continued oversight of the IANA functions through its contract with ICANN was a temporary waypoint on the road to complete privatization of the system. But other governments weren't buying it. They thought the US would never give up such a strategic asset. And so the other governments revolted, twice.

The first time was in the early 2000s, when the ITU convened the World Summit on the Internet Society (WSIS). At the WSIS, the US engaged in forceful and active diplomacy so that the 2005 outcome document, called the Tunis Agenda, ended up being a reasonably benign mediocrity. The document has some positive language, such as: "The private sector has had, and should continue to have, an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields." But it also had language most Internet freedom lovers would object to: "Policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues." This language has been used ever since the WSIS to justify further government encroachment into Internet governance matters.

The second revolt was in 2012, at the ITU's World Conference on International Telecommunication (WCIT). Having failed to achieve what they wanted at the WSIS, many governments decided to use the treaty revision being negotiated at the WCIT to achieve their goals on Internet governance, including but extending far beyond the IANA functions. I played my own role at the WCIT, first by leaking treaty proposals with Jerry Brito through our website, WCITLeaks, and second by attending the WCIT as a member of the US delegation. My blow-by-blow account of the events of the WCIT is [here](#), but the bottom line is that those who wanted a stronger role for the world's governments in Internet governance greatly overplayed their hand, and the US and 54 other countries refused to sign the resulting treaty.

When we returned from the WCIT, the US government immediately started thinking about how to fulfill its intention, expressed in 1998 at the time of the creation of ICANN, to fully privatize the Internet. Nobody in the State Department wants to see another fiasco like the WCIT. Refusing to sign a treaty that had been anticipated for years, worked on for months, and negotiated in person for two weeks was a giant (though in my opinion warranted) middle finger to our partners around the world. We were burning diplomatic capital at a time when we needed it for other pressing global issues. Although Internet freedom is very important to many of us, it is far from the only issue on which the US has to negotiate with other countries, and consequently, it is not a sustainable diplomatic strategy to refuse to address the concerns other governments have with the US's ownership of the IANA functions contract.

When the US asked the global multistakeholder community for an IANA transition plan in 2014, it laid out criteria for a successful proposal. Notably, any successful proposal would have to strengthen the bottom-up multistakeholder model, and could not locate the IANA functions in a government-led or intergovernmental body. Such a plan was submitted to the Commerce Department earlier this year, and the government now says that the plan meets its stated criteria. Everything is ready to go.



Except for the pesky matter of ill-conceived Congressional legislation. Opponents of the transition say that the plan will somehow empower authoritarian regimes. “President Obama wants to hand over the keys to the Internet to countries like China and Russia,” says Rep. Duffy. That appears to be news to Russia, which complained earlier this year “that ICANN would remain a US corporation and the functions of the NTIA would just be resolved within the ICANN procedures, and be totally laid on US ground.”

In truth, authoritarian regimes would love nothing more than to see the IANA transition fail. It would give them another shot at taking the issue to the ITU, this time with the added ammunition of pointing out that the United States does not keep its word regarding Internet governance. Oddly, this places Cruz and Duffy on the same side as Russia and China, against the world’s democracies, the Obama administration, sober Republicans, virtually every US tech company, the Internet Society, and virtually every freedom-loving intellectual or activist I have met who has participated on a US delegation to the ITU.

Technically, IANA matters less than you think

“OK, I know this is somewhat technical, but it’s actually really important. Listen up.” Internet policy wonks, myself included, have a terrible habit of starting their presentations to policymakers in something resembling this fashion. While it’s great to be listened to, I fear that we may have oversold the importance of the IANA functions.

The root zone file, maintenance of which is the most contentious IANA function, has been described as “the phone book of the Internet.” More accurately, you might call it a meta-phonebook, the phone book you use to find the phone book to use to look up the number corresponding to a name.

Is this a critical resource?

Now: how important are phone books, really? If we went from using a phone book to not having one all of a sudden, it might be disruptive, but a phone book is not the only way to acquire numbers for a name. And it is far from clear that having a single “root” meta-phonebook is the best way to structure Internet name resolution.

By backing up and caching the root zone file as well as individual DNS queries, companies and individuals on the Internet could make themselves much more resilient against failures or shenanigans of the root zone operator. The fact that most of us don’t routinely do this goes to show how unconcerned we are that something will suddenly go awry.

There are other technical possibilities that could further reduce the importance of the root zone file. One is to establish an alternative root with different domains. There is nothing stopping me from publishing my own .ELI domain outside of the ICANN system, but using the exact same syntax and setup used by the traditional DNS. Even more intriguingly, I could allocate names for my domain through a blockchain instead of through a traditional hierarchical DNS setup. While efforts to set up alternative blockchain-based DNS roots haven’t gathered a critical mass yet, they are probably just a matter of time.

Finally, it is far from clear that name-to-IP-address resolution is the best way to structure Internet browsing in the first place. New projects like IPFS use content-based addressing. Rather than searching for a specific server that will serve the content you request, IPFS helps you find the right content, which might be located on any computer connected to the network. It’s an intriguing, fully peer-to-peer solution that nicely sidesteps the need for a hierarchical DNS in the first place.

Between content-based addressing and blockchain-based naming, we could take a significant step toward de-territorializing the Internet. My hope is that the Internet community will pursue these avenues even if nothing at all goes wrong with the DNS. And I’m certainly not cheering for DNS to fail—I hope we transition to these new technologies gradually and smoothly, not suddenly due to problems with the root zone file. My point is only that the

existing DNS is not the absolutely critical resource some claim. Putting the root zone file in private hands is not tantamount to “giving the Internet away,” as Senator Cruz’s press release states.

The bottom line

Neither the existing DNS system nor the proposed IANA transition plan is perfect. ICANN has a lot of warts. Personally, I worry about the excessive influence of intellectual property interests within ICANN, about its mission creep under its previous president Fadi Chehadé, and about a slippery slope that can occur when the organization cooperates with law enforcement even for heinous offenses. ICANN’s Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) has been a force for lawlessness, for example by holding up the .AMAZON top-level domain.

But holding up the IANA transition is shooting ourselves in the foot. And for what? For ill-founded fears that it somehow benefits authoritarian regimes, even when said authoritarian regimes oppose the transition? For the patriotic belief that the United States will somehow preserve the “sanctity” of the Internet’s phone book? This is madness.

The Internet will be significantly more free when no government controls the IANA resources because then those resources will no longer be diplomatic chits to be haggled for. While I am disappointed that some of our friends in Washington have staked out a strong anti-transition position, I am hopeful that the transition will proceed without significant Congressional intervention and we can avoid yet another intergovernmental fight over Internet governance.

INTERNET SOCIETY

Press Release, InternetSociety.org

 [*Internet Society Applauds Community-Developed Plan to Transition Oversight of Key Internet Functions*](#)

March 10, 2016

The Internet Society (ISOC) Board of Trustees today passed a resolution to strongly support the plan developed by the global Internet community presented to the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration to transition oversight of key Internet resources. The ISOC Board further urged the community to continue its efforts to implement the plan, and recognized that ICANN must continue to make the reforms called for by the community to continue to be a strong steward of the IANA functions.

Robert Hinden, Chair of the Internet Society Board of Trustees, said, “This is a significant milestone in the transition process. We commend the persistent and dedicated efforts by all stakeholders in developing the plan presented today, and look forward to their continued commitment to ensure the plan is successfully implemented.”

The plan provides continuity for the processes and principles that have provided a foundation for the Internet’s growth and development, and sets a course for strengthening the security and stability of the Internet going forward. The Internet Society has been active in and strongly supportive of the community-led processes that led to the plan developed by the IANA Transition Coordination Group.

Kathryn Brown, Internet Society President and CEO, said, “Ultimately, this process is about stewardship of the critical functions of one of the most extraordinary human innovations. It was right to entrust this important role to the Internet community. The IANA transition proposal is reflective of the collaborative nature of the community and I am confident that it protects and enables the continued growth and development of the Internet.”

On 14 March 2014, the U.S. Government's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced its intent to transition stewardship responsibility for the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global, multistakeholder community. The Internet Society, along with other key Internet technical organizations, welcomed the announcement and have been committed to engaging in open, community-driven processes to develop the plan that was presented today.

The IANA functions keep track of IP addresses, domain names, and protocol parameters that are used by Internet standards. These identifiers are what allow billions of devices and the many thousands of networks that make up the Internet to connect with one another. IANA ensures these identifiers are responsibly managed and are publicly-available on the Internet.

Over the past two years, the work undertaken by the stakeholders to this process has been a testament to the dedication, persistence and expertise of the dedicated Internet community. In the true spirit of the Internet, there has been a tremendous amount of work and effort to ensure that the transition of the IANA functions happens in an open, inclusive, transparent and accountable manner. A successful transition is key to the positive strengthening and evolution of the multistakeholder Internet governance model.

For more information about the IANA transition, see: <http://www.internetsociety.org/ianaxfer>

Announcement, InternetSociety.org

 [Internet Society Statement in Support of the IANA Stewardship Transition](#)

May 24, 2016

The Internet Society made a statement today in support of the timely transition of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions to the global Internet community.

The Internet Society has been involved in and followed the IANA Stewardship Transition since the NTIA announcement in March 2014. As the US government continues to review and analyse the IANA final proposal, the Internet Society wishes to reiterate the following:

- The Internet Society strongly supports the IANA Stewardship Transition plan as the means to ensure the continued, uninterrupted operation of the global Internet;
- We are confident that the proposal meets all of the requirements as set out by the NTIA in its statement in March 2014, including that it:
 - Supports and enhances the multistakeholder model;
 - Maintains the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet DNS;
 - Meets the needs and expectation of the global customers and partners of the IANA services; and,
 - Maintains the openness of the Internet.
- We are confident that the current proposal balances the diversity of the global multistakeholder community, but does so in a manner that does not grant any special powers to any one stakeholder group alone, including governments and intergovernmental institutions;



- We believe that the proposal developed by the global, multistakeholder community ensures the continued stability of key technical functions that are a core part of the smooth operation of the Internet, and provides the path forward for strengthening the stewardship role of the ICANN community;
- Furthermore, we believe that the proposal includes an important shared commitment to performance and performance metrics that are crucial for the security, stability and resiliency of the IANA operation.

The Internet Society looks forward to the timely implementation of the IANA Stewardship Transition, including the revision of ICANN's Bylaws. A successful IANA transition will strengthen the collaborative, multistakeholder model of governance that has been at the foundation of the Internet's success to date. The Internet Society is confident that this can be done in a way that allows the contract to expire at the end of September 2016.

From our perspective, the Internet Society sees no reason to delay the IANA Stewardship Transition. In fact, we believe that such a delay would add a degree of instability and making the prospect of government control of the Internet more likely, not less. Currently, there is an impressive momentum and collaboration in the IANA Stewardship Transition process that will only assist and enhance the evolution of the Internet.

The Internet Society believes therefore that the best approach is to empower the multistakeholder model through renewed commitment to the plan. We believe this will:

- Strengthen the solidarity among the diverse group of stakeholders that have been engaged in the 2+ year process to develop the proposal;
- Increase support for the multistakeholder model, which has been the foundation for the tremendous success of the Internet to date. The Internet's governance requires many voices in order to continue to function in a reliable, stable, secure and predictable manner, and the process in the development of the proposal has proven the multistakeholder model to be effective, efficient and successful.

Whereas stakeholders came together towards a common goal, delaying the transition will challenge the collaborative frameworks that have been established in order to achieve the common goal of a global, free and open Internet that benefits all citizens of the world.

The collaborative nature of the work that has taken place around the IANA Stewardship Transition exemplifies the strength of the multistakeholder model in reflecting the open, distributed, interconnected and trans-national characteristics of the Internet itself. The Internet Society believes that a challenge to the validity of the IANA Stewardship Transition process and its implementation is also a challenge to the very characteristics that have allowed the Internet to thrive.

Blog, Public Policy, InternetSociety.org

[!\[\]\(bd1a142de767a21e5362c595f844a4ff_img.jpg\) *Important next step in IANA Stewardship Transition: NTIA says proposal meets criteria*](#)

June 9, 2016

Today, the global Internet community reached an important milestone. The US Department of Commerce National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) announced that the community-developed proposal to transition the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions meets the criteria it set out in March 2014. The NTIA specifically noted that the proposal:

- Supports and enhances the multistakeholder model;
- Maintains the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet DNS;
- Meets the needs and expectations of the global customers and partners of the IANA services; and,
- Maintains the openness of the Internet.

NTIA further specified that it would not accept a proposal that replaces its role with a government-led or intergovernmental organization solution.

The announcement comes after a thorough, 90-day review. It reaffirms the value and power of the multistakeholder bottom-up process. Importantly, it puts to rest any concern about capture or control of IANA by any one stakeholder. In the transition proposal, no single party has undue control, and there are protocols in place to prevent any individual, organization or government from seizing jurisdiction or excluding others from the stewardship process.

Today's announcement proves one additional thing: when presented with a common goal, the multistakeholder model can deliver robust solutions to practical questions facing the Internet. The open, inclusive, and consensus-driven processes by which the IANA Stewardship Transition proposal was developed ensured the plan was informed by the operational realities—and has laid the foundation for its successful implementation. The Internet community worked collaboratively towards a shared goal of creating and implementing a plan that would allow the Internet to continue to function in an open, secure and reliable manner.

Of course, the operational communities will continue working towards finalizing all of the implementation details before the IANA contract expires at the end of September. Over the past several months, since the proposal was submitted, the hard work of developing the transition plan has been followed by more hard work to make it a reality. And through this work, the operational communities have demonstrated they are ready to take on the responsibility of stewarding the IANA functions. We are confident in the integrity of the plan and that all final details will be completed on time.

I believe in the plan's ability to serve the broad interests of Internet users around the world, and in the operational communities' talent to deliver on the plan's promise. I am heartened by the process by which the plan was developed and the demonstrated commitment to see it through. And, I am committed to continue supporting the efforts of everyone involved working towards an Internet of opportunity for all.

COUNCIL FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS

Blog, Net Politics

 [*Ted Cruz Wants to Shrink Government, Except When It Comes to the Internet*](#)

May 18, 2016

It is a strange world we are living in when a Democratic President wants to reduce government interference in the private sector and the GOP's standard bearer for limited government is fighting to stop him. That is what is happening with the continued fight over the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and its contract with the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA).

In the spring of 2014, the Obama Administration announced plans to end the contract it has for managing some of the core governance functions that keep the Internet running. The thinking was that the private companies that own and operate the Internet, their user base, and the engineers that work for them should manage the functions involved with keeping the domain name system working via what has become known as the multistakeholder process.

Ted Cruz, the Senator from Texas and now-former presidential candidate, has fought to thwart President Obama at every turn. Oddly, the entire limited government movement has gotten behind continued government intervention. That this movement is doing so over the protests of private companies like Google and Microsoft that are actively advocating for ending this contract is all the more strange. Americans for Limited Government, an advocacy group, has put out a bizarre report condemning ICANN entitled "[ICANN Do What I Want](#)" and advocating for continued government oversight.

Let's be clear about what's happening: The innovators, entrepreneurs and businesses that drove the Internet to astronomical success are asking for better control over the future of the Internet and Senator Cruz is trying to block them on the grounds that Washington, DC bureaucrats—whom he criticized almost daily during his campaign—need to oversee the management of the Internet.

Senator Cruz is rightly concerned that foreign governments, most notably China and Russia, want to bring the Internet under the control of their governments and other repressive states. What he fails to recognize is that the continuation of U.S. government control makes that outcome all the more likely. Ending the contract was a move designed to keep the functions in the hands of a California-based non-profit that is beyond the reach of those governments.

The functions covered by the contract are routine and administrative. At a basic level, ICANN processes and authenticates requests to make changes to the root zone file, the list of operators of top-level domains like .com or .cn, China's country-level domain. If China wants to change the IP address for one of its servers, ICANN makes sure the request is from China and not from Internet pranksters. It then passes the information to NTIA to approve, and then passes it to Verisign, which distributes the updated file to the root zone servers around the world.

The root that the U.S. government nominally controls is only the root because everyone agrees that it is. There is quite literally nothing to stop the United Nations from setting up a separate system of root servers and publishing a separate root zone file, thereby fracturing the Internet. The only thing that keeps everyone from using the one that ICANN uses is consensus. Maintaining that consensus is becoming all but impossible with the current contract in place.

When the Clinton administration created ICANN in 1998, they did so with the full intention of eliminating NTIA's role as the middle man once the support of the government was no longer needed. As far back as 2000, the agreement has been a "zero dollar" contract, with the U.S. government paying ICANN nothing to carry out its functions (ICANN

derives fees from website registrars like [GoDaddy](#) to cover its costs). In the entire time that NTIA has overseen ICANN, it has never rejected a single change to the root zone file that ICANN wanted to make. Ending the contract simply eliminates a vestigial function within the U.S. Department of Commerce that has become a source of international intrigue.

The best way to protect the Internet from political interests is to take it out of the realm of government and lodge it firmly in the multistakeholder process that entrepreneurs, users, nonprofits, governments, and ICANN built over the last two decades.

The function that NTIA performs has become unnecessary. Advocates of small government and proponents of the private sector should be for, not against, ending this contract. The ultimate irony may be that if Ted Cruz had been elected President and made good on his campaign promise, he would not have just ended this contract but also eliminated the entire Commerce Department and with it NTIA.

FREEDOM HOUSE

Article, [Freedomhouse.org](#)

 [U.S. Moves to Privatize Oversight of Internet Domain Systems](#)

June 10, 2016

In response to the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) decision to support the global internet community's proposal to fully privatize oversight over the systems that control key domain name systems and allow data to be sent among connected devices, Freedom House issued the following statement:

“NTIA’s announcement brings us another step closer to ensuring that the internet remains an open platform not dominated by a single entity—whether it be a government, the private sector, or any other force,” said Sanja Kelly, director of the Freedom on the Net project. “The current U.S. government oversight of the central DNS functions is largely symbolic but has given authoritarian regimes cover for demanding greater regulation of the internet through the UN and other international bodies. The current plans for privatization include strong safeguards to prevent that from happening, but close public attention will remain critical to make sure the plan unfolds as intended.”

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Press Release, [PublicKnowledge.org](#)

 [Public Knowledge Joins Public Interest Groups to Reinforce Support for Timely IANA Transition](#)

May 24, 2016

In advance of today's Senate Commerce Committee hearing to examine the plan to transition the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), Public Knowledge joins other civil society and public interest groups in reinforcing our support for the timely transition of IANA functions from the purview of the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to the global multistakeholder community, set to take place on September 30, 2016.

Since March 2014, Public Knowledge has worked with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) community to provide input into the overall process and advocate for a successful transition that protects the stability and continuity of the Domain Name System (DNS).

The following may be attributed to Carolina Rossini, Vice President of International Policy at Public Knowledge:

“At this crucial time for the Open Internet, we are sending a letter to members of Congress and the NTIA urging them to move forward with the IANA transition. Contrary to political opposition, to block or delay this process would have worldwide implications for human rights and undermine U.S. interests and values.

“We believe that supporting the participation in ICANN of a diverse international multistakeholder community that shares a common interest in openness and innovation is the most robust long term strategy for preventing any governments - or other multilateral entities they may commandeer - from steering the DNS in a direction that would be much less supportive of a free and open global Internet.

“A timely transition is essential to ensure the continued functionality of the open, interoperable, global internet and protection of fundamental human rights, such as freedom of expression and the free flow of information.”

Read the full statement [here](#).

Press Release, Publicknowledge.org

 [Public Knowledge Welcomes the NTIA’s Decision to Advance the IANA Transition](#)

June 9, 2016

Today, the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released a report assessing the state of the transition of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) to the global multistakeholder community. The NTIA’s detailed, 200-page report offers a thoughtful recommendation to approve and advance the IANA transition on its scheduled date: September 30, 2016. It also offers next steps for the completion of this process, as well as suggestions for improvements post-transition.

Public Knowledge welcomes NTIA findings that the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal Meets Criteria to Complete Privatization and congratulates the NTIA for their hard work since their [announcement](#) to begin the transition process back in 2014. We strongly urge members of Congress to support the NTIA’s decision and the consensus within the internet community that this is the right thing to do.

The following may be attributed to Carolina Rossini, Vice President of Public Knowledge:

“We stand by the decision of the NTIA to uphold the two-year multistakeholder process to foster community empowerment, strengthen review mechanisms, boost transparency, and increase accountability of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) over IANA functions. The approval of a timely transition will help preserve the stability, security, and resiliency of the Domain Name System. The NTIA’s evaluation of the transition’s implementation sends a clear message that the internet is not only in the domain of national governments, but that users around the world also have an essential role in shaping its future.”

CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY & TECHNOLOGY

Blog, CDT.org

 [Why the IANA Transition Matters and Must Not Be Delayed](#)

May 24, 2016

As the Senate Commerce Committee hosts a hearing on “Examining the Multistakeholder Plan for Transitioning the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority” and the Board of ICANN meets to adopt the new ICANN bylaws, a number of concerns continue to be raised in the media, on Capitol Hill and elsewhere about the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) transition. CDT offered our thoughts on these unfounded concerns in a statement we submitted for the record of the Senate hearing and we debunk a number of these concerns in this post.

One suggestion, that the internet is being “given away” – whether to governments or whoever – is troubling to CDT, and, we would assume, to those in government, business, technical organizations and other public interest groups who have worked to build, promote, and strengthen the open internet over the years. This multistakeholder community has worked together to ensure that the internet remains a tool that can bring about social, economic, and political change and further the realization of human rights around the globe. Many of these same stakeholders have worked diligently over the past two years to develop a credible and implementable IANA transition plan. To suggest that this same community would agree to handing-over the internet to nations that support a government-run internet is ludicrous.

To suggest that the community would agree to handing-over the internet to nations that support a government-run internet is ludicrous.

Critics have also raised the concern that, with the proposed IANA transition, there will be an increase in censorship around the globe. Astonishingly, these critics are taking an element of the proposal that seeks to ensure that ICANN will meet its human rights related obligations post-transition and turning it on its head. The language in the accountability proposal is being portrayed as a way of unduly increasing ICANN’s mission, opening the door to content control and undermining online free speech. It is wholly inaccurate to characterize the IANA transition plan as something that would increase censorship and diminish free speech worldwide. As CDT and other civil society and public interest groups have said in a statement on the IANA transition released today: “We believe that executing upon the IANA transition is the best way to ensure the continued functionality of the global internet and to protect the free flow of information so essential to human rights protection.”

Some are also calling to extend the ICANN-NTIA contract, stating that the transition plan is untried and untested and therefore it would be hasty for NTIA to step away. Were the community not ready to transition, it would acknowledge that fact, but this is not the case; none of the stakeholders involved in drafting the transition plan wish to see the security, stability, and resiliency of the DNS imperiled. The process for drafting the necessary ICANN bylaws is proceeding as foreseen and it is anticipated that the ICANN Board will adopt the new bylaws on May 27th. The implementation planning work for the post-transition IANA is also underway. CDT and others testified in March 2016 that the transition should occur as anticipated and that the community is ready.

Delaying the transition through extending the contract would undermine the two-year multistakeholder process that developed the transition plan. Governments that want to see the transition fail will use the extension and continued US government involvement as justification to promote further intergovernmental control over the internet. The longer the US government retains its role, the more the voices against multistakeholder approaches and an open internet will grow.

For Congress to vote on the transition could undermine and put in question the multistakeholder model globally

Many of the same repercussions would result from Congress seeking to vote on the IANA transition. The US government's relationship with the internet can reasonably be characterized as a hands-off approach. Since the establishment of ICANN, the US government has managed its relationship through a contract with ICANN for the provision of the IANA services, not through government diktat. It has recognized that the community that has developed policies and managed the Domain Name System so successfully over the years should continue to do so without one government having a prominent, if administrative, role. For Congress to vote on the transition could undermine and put in question the multistakeholder model globally. A vote could also undermine a cornerstone of the US government's internet policy: the primacy of the multistakeholder approach over a government-run or intergovernmental approach.

At the end of the day, this multistakeholder community – representing diverse interests and stakeholders – came together and created a robust and credible transition plan that will see a more accountable ICANN and the centrality of multistakeholder community in managing the Domain Name System going forward. The transition is providing a unique opportunity for the ICANN community to insist on new powers that will increase accountability and transparency, strengthen review mechanisms, and more narrowly scope the mission of ICANN. By transitioning the IANA functions to the multistakeholder internet community in ICANN there is no hand-over to governments, but rather an overdue recognition that the multistakeholder management of the internet is working just fine.

ACCESS NOW

Blog, AccessNow.org

 [Civil society tells U.S. Senate: Open the internet to inclusive oversight](#)

May 25, 2016

On Tuesday, the U.S. Congress held a hearing on the future of the internet. Specifically, members of the senate asked assembled experts, mostly from industry groups – and all white men, unfortunately – whether they should delay a proposed transition of the process and structures for managing the internet's Domain Name System (DNS). Congress should get out of the way and allow the transition to continue.

The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) publishes the equivalent of the phone book for the internet. It assigns names and numbers so that our data can navigate the internet. Currently, the IANA is mandated to include a U.S. government body, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), in its operations managing aspects of the DNS. This is unnecessary and gives the U.S. government the appearance of control of the internet. Access Now has supported a multistakeholder process to transition control of this agency to the international internet community. If all goes as planned, the transition will be approved next fall. However, congressional representatives have threatened to delay the move by denying funding to NTIA or requiring a “stress test” of the new structures, among other measures.

In preparation for the hearing to discuss these threatened delays, Access Now and other civil society groups and experts issued a statement, now entered in the official record, that calls on the U.S. Congress not to delay the transition. While the proposal is far from perfect, we support the IANA Transition's speedy conclusion for several reasons.

First, delays will just encourage and play into the hands of those countries looking to restrict and fragment the internet under strict intergovernmental control. As we note in the letter, failure to move ahead with the IANA



transition now will empower those who advocate for governments alone to manage or regulate the internet, without equal involvement of the private sector or civil society. Russia and China, for example, routinely push for the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to regulate the internet, and would pounce on any delays as a signal that a government-only body should take control. As the sole government overseeing the DNS, the U.S. has an opportunity now to shift power to an inclusive, balanced set of stakeholders who spent two years on this transition plan — a chance the U.S. must not pass up. Moreover, as participants mentioned in Tuesday's hearing, the current IANA contract ends in 2018. At that time, the U.S. would have to face telling other governments that it will not give up control of the DNS. Their reaction would not be pleasant.

Second, human rights are on the line — though not in the way U.S. Senator Ted Cruz believes. To protect human rights in the 21st century, it is essential that the open, interoperable, global internet continue to function. We and the other organizations that signed the joint statement depend upon the stable and secure operation of the internet to do our work, every day. So do the human rights defenders, journalists, and other civil society groups we work with, all around the world. This contradicts the beliefs of Senator Cruz, who sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Commerce last week with the strange message that increasing human rights protections would allow or encourage internet censorship. In fact, the transition includes a plan to enhance protection of human rights like freedom of expression and privacy online.

Finally, there is no technical reason for NTIA's involvement in DNS management. The NTIA and the U.S. government have no special technical expertise or capacity that the rest of the world lacks. In fact, one expert testifying before Congress on Tuesday compared the NTIA role to a vulnerability. Software developers try to get rid of unneeded features in their code, which are "just bugs waiting to happen," Andrew Sullivan of the Internet Architecture Board told the Senate. Similarly, Congress must allow the the global multistakeholder community to eliminate the unnecessary government involvement in the IANA functions. As we make clear in our letter, the transition path outlined will "continue stable and resilient DNS administration that supports the interests of public and private stakeholders across societies and industries."

Join us in calling on the U.S. Congress not to delay the IANA transition by [signing onto our letter here](#).

GOVERNMENT

U.S. Congress

HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Press Release, [EnergyCommerce.House.gov](#)

 [Committee Leaders Acknowledge Progress on Internet Transition Proposal](#)

March 10, 2016

House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR), and Environment and the Economy Subcommittee Chairman John Shimkus (R-IL) today acknowledged the multistakeholder community's proposal to transition stewardship of the Internet Assigned Number Authority from the U.S. government to the Internet community. The committee has been actively engaged in the future of the Internet.

"This transition proposal marks a major milestone in the history of the Internet. We thank the entire multistakeholder community for their hard work and attention to this important task," said Upton, Walden, and Shimkus. "Now we in the U.S. government must do our work. We look forward to reviewing the proposal and to the thoughtful analysis from NTIA as we look to whether this proposal meets the U.S. government's requirements for the transition and the needs of the American people. This final step of removing U.S. government oversight of the IANA functions is irreversible and we must be sure the transition will not harm the Internet or the millions of Americans that rely on it. There are no do-overs. Once the U.S. relinquishes its role in IANA, that's it, there's no going back. We must get it right."

On Thursday, March 17th, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology will hold a [hearing](#) on "Privatizing the Internet Assigned Number Authority" to begin consideration of the proposal. The subcommittee will hear from a cross-section of stakeholders that participated in the development of the proposal.

More information, including a background memo and witness testimony will be available online [here](#) as they are posted.

ENERGY AND COMMERCE RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE

Press Release, [Democrats-EnergyCommerce.House.gov](#)

 [Pallone Welcomes Oversight of the IANA Transition and Accountability Proposal under DOTCOM Act Framework](#)

March 10, 2016

Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) issued the following statement today as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) approved its IANA transition and accountability proposal for submission to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

Under the proposal, the Internet's multistakeholder community would become the new steward of the IANA functions that are central to the Internet's Domain Name System. The proposal also reconfigures the structure of the ICANN to address ICANN's accountability to the multistakeholder community. The proposal will now go to the NTIA for further review:

“I applaud the efforts of the multistakeholder community in reaching this consensus proposal. I look forward to closely reviewing the proposal and the NTIA's forthcoming report to Congress. Fortunately, the bipartisan DOTCOM Act we negotiated last year and passed through the House already set out the framework for ongoing congressional oversight, and I hope to follow that outline as this process continues.”

U.S. SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ (D-HI)

Press Release, [Schatz.senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov/record/2016/06/09/press_release)

 [Schatz Statement on NTIA's IANA Transition Report](#)

June 9, 2016

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawai‘i), ranking member of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, issued the following statement after the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released a report on the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) transition proposal.

“NTIA’s report confirms that the IANA transition proposal meets all of NTIA’s criteria.

“The detailed process undertaken by NTIA reflects Congress’ expectations for the transition as it was outlined in the DOTCOM Act that Chairman Thune and I introduced a year ago.

“There is no question that the transition – supported by businesses, civil society, and the broad internet stakeholder community – must move forward. The consensus plan for many years, through many administrations, has always been to turn the IANA functions over to the private sector. In fact, Congress and the U.S. government at large have expressed unanimous support for the multistakeholder model of international internet governance. I encourage the multistakeholder community and ICANN to finalize its work on implementing the plan in an expeditious manner, as recommended by NTIA, so that the transition can proceed this year.

“The internet may have its roots in America but its social, economic, and human rights benefits depend on the internet’s global nature. A successful IANA transition will ensure that the global community continues to benefit from an open internet.”

U.S. Department of Commerce

U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE PENNY PRITZKER

Press Release, Commerce.gov

 [Statement from U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker on IANA Stewardship Transition](#)

June 9, 2016

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker issued the following statement today regarding the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's determination that the proposal submitted by the global Internet multistakeholder community meets the criteria NTIA outlined in March 2014 when it announced its intention to complete the privatization of the Internet's domain name system.

"Today's announcement marks an important milestone in the U.S. government's 18-year effort to privatize the Internet's domain name system," Secretary Pritzker said. "This transition ensures that the Internet continues to flourish as a platform for innovation, economic growth and free expression. I want to thank the Internet's diverse multistakeholder community, which includes businesses, technical experts, and civil society groups, for their dedication and hard work."

As part of this 18-year privatization effort, in 2014, NTIA said it would transition the U.S. government's stewardship role of technical functions related to the Internet's domain name system (DNS), commonly known as the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions, to the Internet's global multistakeholder community.

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION (NTIA)

Blog by Lawrence Strickling, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, NTIA.doc.gov

 [Reviewing the IANA Transition Proposal](#)

March 11, 2016

Over the past two decades, the Internet has touched the lives of billions of people around the globe in profound ways. It has fueled economic growth, giving even the most remote villages the opportunity to sell their products in faraway lands. It has fueled innovation, connecting mobile gadgets and household appliances. And it has torn down barriers to speech, enabling diverse viewpoints to be heard across the political spectrum.

The Obama Administration is committed to doing everything within our power to preserve and protect the open, free-flowing global Internet, which has revolutionized the world. That's why two years ago, we announced our intention to transition the U.S. government's stewardship role of the Internet Domain Name System to the global multistakeholder community.

Since our announcement, the Internet community – made up of businesses, technical experts, academics and civil society – has risen to the challenge by developing a transition plan that has achieved broad community support. The community delivered that proposal to NTIA yesterday, marking the culmination of the largest multistakeholder process ever undertaken. Stakeholders spent more than 26,000 working hours on the proposal, exchanged more than 33,000 messages on mailing lists, and held more than 600 meetings and calls.

Why is this transition so important? The Internet has grown and thrived largely because of the multitude of folks who have come together around the globe through multistakeholder processes to solve technical and policy challenges on a consensus basis. No government or intergovernmental entity could have accomplished what this community of experts has achieved in such a relatively short period of time.

The U.S. government has been a strong proponent of this model, and we believed in 2014 and still believe today that transitioning our stewardship role is the best path to preserving and strengthening this multistakeholder model that has worked so well. This model has demonstrated that it is a powerful mechanism for protecting the Internet as a driver of economic growth, innovation and free speech.

Over the last two years the members of the IANA Transition Coordination Working Group (ICG) and the ICANN Cross Community Working Group on Accountability (CCWG) have worked tirelessly to develop the stewardship transition proposal. Scoping the issues, understanding the challenges, working through the various scenarios and then engaging with the various ICANN constituency groups and customers along the way was not easy. Both the ICG and the CCWG showed incredible determination, focus and then flexibility to adjust as conditions required.

So, what's next? NTIA will now begin the process of reviewing the proposal, hopefully within 90 days, to determine whether it meets the criteria we outlined when we announced the transition:

- First, the proposal must support and enhance the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, in that it should be developed by the multistakeholder community and have broad community support. More specifically, we will not accept a transition proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or intergovernmental organization solution.
- Second, the proposal must maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the domain name system.
- Third, it must meet the needs and expectations of the global customers and partners of the IANA services.
- And finally, it must maintain the openness of the Internet.

In this effort, we will be joined by other agencies of the U.S. government. We will also be guided by the recommendations of the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The U.S. Congress has a strong interest in this proposal and we expect Congress to closely monitor and review the proposal as well as our evaluation of the plan.

I applaud all those who participated in and contributed to this process for working through very complex issues. Not only will ICANN be stronger as a result of this effort, but a successful outcome here would serve as a powerful example to the world that the multistakeholder model can be used to address challenging Internet governance issues.

**Blog by Lawrence Strickling, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information,
NTIA.doc.gov**

 [Update on the IANA Transition](#)

August 16, 2016

Two months ago, we passed an important milestone in a nearly 20-year effort to privatize the Internet domain name system (DNS). We announced on June 9 that the transition proposal developed by the Internet multistakeholder community meets the criteria we outlined in March 2014 when we declared our intent to transition NTIA's stewardship role related to the DNS. While this was a significant moment in this journey, we said in June that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which currently operates the IANA functions under a contract with NTIA, still had work to do to implement key action items called for in the transition plan.



On Friday, ICANN informed NTIA that it has completed or will complete all the necessary tasks called for in the transition proposal by the end of the contract term. NTIA has thoroughly reviewed the report. We informed ICANN today that based on that review and barring any significant impediment, NTIA intends to allow the IANA functions contract to expire as of October 1.

The IANA stewardship transition represents the final step in the U.S. government's long-standing commitment, supported by three Administrations, to privatize the Internet's domain name system. For the last 18 years, the United States has been working with the global Internet multistakeholder community to establish a stable and secure multistakeholder model of Internet governance that ensures that the private sector, not governments, takes the lead in setting the future direction of the Internet's domain name system. To help achieve this goal, NTIA in 1998 partnered with ICANN, a California-based nonprofit, to transition technical DNS coordination and management functions to the private sector. NTIA's current stewardship role was intended to be temporary.

In March 2014, NTIA initiated the final step in the privatization of the DNS by asking ICANN to convene Internet stakeholders to develop a plan to transition NTIA's stewardship role for the DNS to the Internet multistakeholder community. Stakeholders spent two years developing a thoughtful consensus proposal that meets the criteria we outlined in 2014 and will strengthen the multistakeholder approach, while maintaining the stability, security, and openness of the Internet that users across the globe depend on today. This multistakeholder model is the key reason why the Internet has grown and thrived as a dynamic platform for innovation, economic growth and free expression.

We appreciate the hard work and dedication of all the stakeholders involved in this effort and look forward to their continuing engagement.

ICANN MULTISTAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY

IANA STEWARDSHIP TRANSITION COORDINATION GROUP

Announcement, ianacg.org

 [ICG Welcomes NTIA Approval of Transition Proposal](#)

June 9, 2016

The IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group (ICG) welcomes today's [announcement](#) from the US Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) that the plan for transitioning stewardship of the Internet Assigned Names Authority (IANA) meets the required criteria for the transition.

NTIA's determination matches the ICG's own conclusions. The transition proposal upholds a vision for the Internet that all of the communities represented on the ICG share. The proposal supports the multistakeholder model of Internet governance; maintains the security, stability, and resiliency of the Domain Name System; meets the needs of the customers and partners of IANA; maintains the openness of the Internet; and does not replace NTIA's role with a government or inter-governmental organization. We are gratified that after rigorous review, NTIA's assessment agrees with our own.

NTIA's announcement underscores the strength of the work that went into developing the plan, and the depth of support the plan has garnered. Support for the plan is broad, deep, global, and diverse. Over nearly two years, hundreds of people from across sectors and geographies put in thousands of hours of work, joined conference calls in the middle of the night, and sacrificed holidays and weekends in support of the transition. This effort was unprecedented.

Beyond delivering a transition plan to the NTIA, the Internet community has continued to prepare for the plan's implementation. The ICG has been pleased to see this ongoing implementation work carried out through open processes with different parts of the community collaborating together.

The care, attention, and effort that went into developing the IANA Stewardship Transition Plan was remarkable—mirroring the dedication and passion that have gone into so many aspects of the Internet's development. And, yet, the measure of the plan's success, once it is in place, will be how little changes for the billions of people who use the Internet every day. The ICG welcomes NTIA's announcement as another step along this path and looks forward to the completion of the transition.

INTERNET ENGINEERING TASK FORCE

Blog, IETF.org

 [NTIA Assessment of the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal](#)

June 9, 2016

Today the US Department of Commerce National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) announced that the Internet community's proposal to transition the stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions meets the criteria it set out for the process ([source](#)).

This is good news and an important milestone. It is also another indication of the strength of the IANA system and the multistakeholder community caring about it, and one more step to ensure the long term health of a free and open Internet.

The transition plan has been developed in the community. One part of the plan, the one dealing with protocol parameters (such as port numbers) came from the IETF and its IANAPLAN working group. NTIA's assessment of the protocol parameters part can be found [here](#).

The implementation efforts related to the plan are ongoing. As always, the Internet community needs to take care of the IANA system on a continuous basis. And we will — together, in a multistakeholder fashion.

AMERICAN REGISTRY FOR INTERNET NUMBERS

Announcement, ARIN.net

 [NTIA Issues IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal Report](#)

June 9, 2016

On 9 June 2016, The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) issued its assessment report on the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal.

In order to be accepted, the proposal needed to be shown to have "broad community support and address the following four principles:

1. Support and enhance the multistakeholder model;
2. Maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet DNS;
3. Meet the needs and expectations of the global customers and partners of the IANA services; and
4. Maintain the openness of the Internet."

The NTIA further stipulated that "it would not accept a proposal that replaces its role with a government-led or intergovernmental organization solution."

After thorough review the NTIA reports that it finds that "the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal meets the criteria necessary to complete the long-promised privatization of the IANA functions."

ARIN recognizes that the NTIA report and acceptance of the proposal is an important milestone that completes the planning phase for the IANA Stewardship Transition.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

Andrew Sullivan is a fellow at Dyn and chairman of the Internet Architecture Board. He has been active in the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) for about a decade and previously served as co-chair of the DNS Extensions working group and SPF Updates working group.

Article, [techcrunch.com](#)

 [The Internet is made with carrots, not sticks](#)

April 7, 2016

The Internet is at once global and local. The nature of internetworking means that the global Internet is built only of other networks. There is a small but key point of coordination on the Internet, called the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA).

The U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) recently received a proposal to change the stewardship of IANA. This proposal is good for the Internet, the companies and organizations that depend on it and the people who use it. To understand why this is so, it is helpful to understand a bit about the coordination points, and why they have worked well so far.

The Internet is a radically distributed system: Almost all of the technical operation is undertaken without any direct coordination with anyone, performed by an enormous number of independent operators. This means that interoperation across networks is fundamentally voluntary. In your network, you make your rules, and there is no stick (outside of national law) to make you interoperate with others. Instead, there is only the carrot: if you interoperate, you get the benefits of that interoperation.

For example, on the Internet we use names from the Domain Name System (DNS), like “www.internetcarrot.org.” But the DNS is also a completely distributed system. It consists of units called zones, operated mostly independently from one another. Any place there is a dot (“.”) in a DNS name, there can be (but need not be) a new zone.

When it comes to the Internet, carrots will beat sticks every time.

This makes it possible for the DNS to grow with the Internet: You don’t need a single, large bureaucracy running the whole thing. Rather, lots of different actors behave independently without a great deal of central coordination, permitting the whole thing to work better than a system that is all run by one organization. This is the near-magic that is the functioning of the Internet today.

It turns out that the magic is made a little easier with a minimal amount of central coordination. IANA’s job is that minimal coordination. In principle, we could do this some other way, but this is how we do it now. It has worked well for nearly 30 years, as the Internet has grown from connecting a few thousand devices to the billions it connects today.

ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, has operated IANA for the past 18 years because the networks that make up the Internet have agreed that it should play that role, not because any outside authority required that it do so.

Here’s what IANA does.

First, to allow data packets to go from one network to another, it’s necessary to be able to tell one another which network you’re operating. To make that work, when you say, “I’m running this network,” everyone else needs to know what “this network” means. The way we do that is to use a common set of numbers to represent the networks; to use

a common set of numbers, it is convenient to maintain a starting-point list, called a registry. IANA maintains that registry.

Second, to make it easy for the various networks to connect to one another reliably, they can use common mechanisms configured in a particular way. The mechanisms are called “protocols,” and it is convenient to have a single place to look up the configuration settings. Different people decide what the settings need to be for different protocols, but everyone writes them down in a single place. Keeping those lists of settings — the protocol parameters — is another IANA job.

You don’t need a single, large bureaucracy running the whole thing.

Finally, names that are assigned on one network won’t be any use to those connected to other networks unless the other network users know how to get to those names. To know how to do that, it is convenient to have a place to start looking. Mathematically, a way to do that (and one that is not too hard to implement in computers) is a tree structure, which by definition starts from a common root. We do this today in the Domain Name System (DNS).

Maintaining the registry of the common root (also known as the “root zone”) is IANA’s job. (This job turns out to be special because the policy source for the root zone turns out to be ICANN, which also operates IANA. The other two registry types have well-defined sources of policy for how they ought to be maintained, as well. Regional Internet Registries [RIRs] set the policies for numbers and the Internet Engineering Task Force [IETF] sets the policies for protocols.)

The DNS attracts a lot of attention, in part, because nearly every Internet user comes across these names when they use the web or email. But notice that the DNS itself is a matter of convenience. We could have other naming systems on the Internet. There are peer-to-peer systems that have already been invented and are in fact deployed that do not depend on DNS. There are alternatives that have been proposed but turn out, for practical purposes, to depend on the DNS anyway, even though they don’t need to do so. There are lots of possible ways to name things. DNS with a common root is what got us this far — though a system could emerge to replace DNS in the future.

Now, because of the nature of the Internet, which relies on all those interconnected networks voluntarily interoperating, the convenience of centralization is a trade-off. The central point of control that IANA provides is traded for the advantages of simplicity in protocol design, implementation and operation.

But if the central control is too great — if, for instance, someone starts trying to impose controls down through the DNS tree, or starts trying to demand strict interconnection regimes along geopolitical lines or whatever — then all the independent networks that are now gaining the benefit of easy interoperation will get less “carrot” than they do today.

The Internet scales the way it does because the overwhelming majority of interconnections among the largest Internet service providers (ISPs) are done with a handshake, without the overhead of money and contracts getting in the way. If the world decides to make that hard, it changes the business models of all the ISPs.

Similarly, part of the reason DNS scales so well is because the coordination ends at a delegation point: the root zone delegates “.org” to Public Interest Registry, and after that has basically nothing to say about what happens inside the .org zone. Similarly, Public Interest Registry delegates internetcarrot.org to me, and they don’t have anything to say about what I do in my zone.

The plan presented to the NTIA preserves how — and why — the Internet works. We should resist proposals that could change the ground rules that allow networks to voluntarily coordinate to form the Internet. When it comes to the Internet, carrots will beat sticks every time.

Article, [fcw.com](#)

 [Is the U.S. handing over control of the internet?](#)

August 23, 2016

Some recent headlines might lead one to believe that the internet is about to undergo some giant change. People talk about the U.S. "giving away" the internet, and even the 2016 Republican Party platform objects to "surrendering U.S. control of the root zone of web names and addresses."

But the truth is that on the internet, nobody has control. The internet doesn't work that way. The U.S. cannot hand over controls that it does not already have.

Something is about to change -- that much is true. Since its founding in 1998, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has held a contract with the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). That contract was for "IANA functions," which are useful and important functions that allow parts of the internet to work the way they do.

IANA, which stands for Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, is like a land registry for the internet that prevents two different functions from laying claim to the same value at the same time.

For instance, when you visit a web page, you probably use the conventional port 443 for a secure connection. Everyone knows to use port 443 for this purpose (as opposed to, say, port 25, which is for mail) because it's written down in an IANA registry. It wouldn't matter which number we used as long as everyone used the same number. If everyone does not, then in order to make a connection you'd first have to negotiate what port to use, and that would be less convenient.

It really is a matter of convenience. We could negotiate the ports instead -- there's even a way already built to do that - but it's more work. By and large, engineers prefer the easier path when it is available.

One of the IANA registries is the Domain Name System root zone. It holds the name servers for the top-level domains (such as .com and .org and country codes such as .us, .cn and .in). Ultimately, in the DNS, every response depends on the values in the root zone. This is why the job is a critical function.

But of course, we don't actually need to use DNS. We do it because that's what we've used since the 1980s, and it works. But other name systems have been invented and deployed, and they don't depend on a root zone. Also, even if we keep using DNS, nobody can force you to use the same root zone as everyone else. It's just much less convenient if you don't.

The current contract for the IANA functions between ICANN and NTIA is set to expire on Oct. 1. NTIA has announced that it plans to not renew the contract, which means ICANN's job will not be supervised by the U.S. government anymore.

That is the "giveaway" some people are complaining about.

But there is a difference between being critical and being in control. The land registry office is a critical function to make sure the ownership of property is recorded. That doesn't mean the land registry controls where people live.

The end of oversight by the U.S. government does not mean that ICANN gets to do whatever it wants. Instead, in the past two years, the internet community came together to invent new, community-based ways of ensuring that ICANN



does a good job. If it doesn't, the community can, in effect, fire ICANN. That is the way everything already works on the internet. The idea is to take the existing successful model of the open internet, built by voluntary collaboration, and use it again for that purpose.

But even today, if people did not find the system useful, they would choose something else. This isn't some utopian dream of techno-libertarians. It's part of the nature of inter-networking. The internet is a network of networks. Each network voluntarily chooses to exchange packets with other networks. Each makes the rules for how it will work. That means that when the various networks all decide to use the IANA registries as they are operated today, it is because they find that system more useful than alternatives.

If the IANA system ceases to be useful (or starts to be too politically controversial), then people will choose something else. And there is no central point where people could be forced to use the IANA system because there is no center in a network of networks. That is also the reason why nobody -- not China, not Russia and not the bogeyman in the basement -- can "take over" the internet.

The United States is not "giving away" the internet. NTIA is wisely acknowledging that the internet has grown up and that the system works as designed and doesn't need governments to keep it going. On Oct. 1, nobody will be able to tell that anything has changed. We should all be thankful that NTIA recognizes that its job is complete and that it can step back confident that the same enlightened self-interest that keeps the internet delivering its magic will work for this part of the internet, too.