



International Chamber of Commerce

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BASIS

Business Action to Support
the Information Society

Talking points for Paul Twomey

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Session 3: 15:30–17:30

The Internet and bringing its benefits to more people around the world

Issues to be explored by panelists:

- What is your organization doing to bring the Internet benefits to people around the world (especially developing countries)? What are some examples of initiatives that work well or did not work well (and why)?

The Internet has grown into a vast, global ecosystem embracing stakeholders from all sectors: the public, industry, academia, governments and civil society. Its physical manifestation lies in the hands of a remarkable confederation of parties. The Internet's ecosystem is global in scope, complex in its character and utterly dependent on collaboration, cooperation and coordination among these many stakeholders for its effective operation.

As grand as all that sounds, a reality check is in order here. More than 1.3 billion people can access the Internet today. That's a huge number, but it's really only about 17 percent of the people on the earth. Clearly, we all have much to do to make the Internet reach out to those 5.5 billion who still do not have secure, stable, and affordable access.

Two major ICANN initiatives that reflect stakeholders' drive toward making the Internet truly global are internationalized domain names and a streamlined process for approving and a fast-track process for launching new generic top-level domains. We expect to see both functioning successfully within the next year.

Example (what worked) – (compliance program?)

Example (what didn't work) – RAA (?)

- What are the primary issues in your view in addressing Internet governance related issues?

Internet governance has gained worldwide attention simply because of the rapid expansion of the Internet and the domain name space. ICANN's multi-stakeholder model reflects the multiple facets of the Internet ecosystem and is a model for fashioning an instrument of policy development for a narrowly-defined but important part of the general Internet's structure. Although ICANN is keenly interested in Internet governance, outside this policy development process we have little influence, not to say regulatory or enforcement authority. ICANN believes, however, that we will only succeed in evolving the Internet and making its capabilities accessible to the full world's population by addressing the full range of critical infrastructure needs.

- What are the main benefits and what are the challenges or pre-conditions to bringing the Internet and its benefits to more people? Are there downsides as well as benefits?

Main benefits – People everywhere will be able to access the Internet using the characters in which they write their own language, and will be able to read online content, transact business, and transfer and store data in their own language. In addition, individuals, organizations, businesses, and other entities will have greater choice in top-level domain names as well as services and products in the domain space marketplace.

Challenges – Among the most critical technical and policy issues that must be addressed before the Internet community can expand into the multilingual, multicultural technology we all envision are these.

- The deployment of IDNs in the root zone is perhaps ICANN’s most pressing challenge — and one of the biggest changes to the Internet since its creation. Just Monday of this week, ICANN launched an evaluation of IDNs in the root that will allow Internet users to test top-level domains in 11 languages — Arabic, Persian, simplified and traditional Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Greek, Korean, Yiddish, Japanese and Tamil. The evaluation environment will allow Internet users around the globe to access wiki pages with the domain name example.test in these 11 test languages. This evaluation represents ICANN’s most important step so far towards the full implementation of IDNs.
 - Another challenge is adding IPv6 technology to the current IPv4, which will run out of available addresses in the next two or three years. ICANN is addressing this issue in cooperation with the Number Resources Organization and Regional Internet Registries.
 - Domain name tasting and the demand for new domain names are taking on increasing importance. Meeting the interest in the creation of new TLDs while protecting users against potential confusion and even abuse has been a challenge, as has preparing to accommodate the increase in nontraditional business models for domain names, but multi-stakeholder discussions are expected to produce guidelines for the solicitation of new top-level domains in 2008.
 - And, of course, the security of the Internet infrastructure and data must be constantly addressed. ICANN’s Security and Stability Advisory Committee recently published a report containing recommendations for signature authentication and domain name space security.
- How does one maximize the benefits and protect against the downsides?

Since its inception, the Internet and its systems have been coordinated through a private sector-led effort that works to coordinate the Internet’s core functions of security, stability, and operability.

ICANN’s unique role as consensus-builder and forum for the discussion of issues by the entire Internet community continues to expand these benefits and to work to prevent the fragmentation of the Internet.

- **What are the respective roles of government and the private sector in promoting Internet expansion?**

As remarkable as the array of Internet stakeholders is, it also represents only a portion of the full range of parties interested in one aspect or another of the global Internet. Collaboration, cooperation and coordination are the order of the day in enabling the Internet and all its myriad applications to actually work for its global user base.

Efforts to develop increasingly effective processes for harnessing the power of the Internet to achieve the Millennium Development Goals set out by the World Summit on the Information Society will of necessity need to engage a wide range of Internet stakeholders, to the extent that the Internet is or can be the means to reaching these goals on a global scale.

Governments can serve the goals of promoting the Internet's benefits around the world through legislation and enforcement, and through multi-lateral, international commitments to adhere to technical and security standards as well as operational policies.

At the same time, business cannot abdicate responsibility for leveling the Internet playing field to either government or the international community. It should be obvious that an expanding Internet opens a vast world of business opportunity. Enlightened self-interest has long proved to benefit both business and consumers, and may be the best approach toward achieving the goal of benefiting more people around the world.