Chris Mondini: Meet the New ICANN Org Leader in Europe

ICANN org has appointed Chris Mondini the Vice President of Stakeholder Engagement in Europe and Managing Director for the Brussels, Belgium office. He reports to Sally Costerton, Senior Vice President of ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement.

"I am delighted and honored to become a part of ICANN's Europe team," Mondini said. "This region is at the forefront of many Internet governance discussions and our stakeholders here are among the most active contributors to our policy processes. There is also a strong European network of technical and operational partners with which ICANN collaborates to fulfill its remit and achieve the regional strategic objectives.

I am also excited to add Belgium to the list of European countries where I have lived and worked at during the earlier stages of my career, to join a first-class, multifunctional team serving the region, and to bring my experience to the table during the next phase of ICANN's development.

I will assume my responsibilities soon. In the meantime, I look forward to meeting with you in Cancún, or during one of my upcoming trips. I am also eager to hear your ideas on how we can do better together. Until we meet, feel free to reach me at chris.mondini@icann.org."
Register Now for the Middle East DNS Forum

The 7th Middle East DNS Forum (MEDNSF) will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Hosted by the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) of Saudi Arabia, the event will take place from 24-25 March 2020.

Read more in our announcement here.

“you see global cyberspace evolve right before your eyes” - Joanna Kulesza, ALAC

How are you involved in ICANN?
I serve on the ALAC, representing European end-users. I am currently ALAC Vice Chair for Outreach and Capacity Building, also co-chairing the At-Large Capacity Building Working Group.

How long have you been involved with ICANN and in which ways?
ICANN58 in Copenhagen was my first face-to-face meeting, but I have been following the organization and the community in my academic capacity for over a decade before that. I tried to follow various mailing lists, but it was the face-to-face meeting that made me better understand the full potential and challenge that the multistakeholder governance holds.

What are the most challenging things about being a part of ICANN community?
ICANN as a global stakeholder network is unique and as such is utterly fascinating. There is no other community like it. I do say that with full confidence, having researched international law and norm-making for almost two decades. This fascination has its perks and never ceases to amaze me, but also poses unique challenges when it comes to effective communication across languages and cultures as well as effective time management, with stakeholders operating around the clock and across the globe. One tends to try and keep up with all the interesting threads and trends of this perpetual, universal dialogue, and at times gets so caught up in it, has to remind oneself to dive back into everyday life.

What are the rewarding things about being a part of ICANN community?
There is no other community like it. It’s global, intercultural, and driven by a shared desire to preserve a rare, free global resource. One could argue it’s what’s left of the original “independent...
“John Perry Barlow so beautifully argued for back in 1996 – a platform for new global norm making, with individual users having their voices heard, right next to governments and big businesses. Participating in ICANN, one gets to witness this unique governance model at work. You see global cyberspace evolve right before your eyes and have the opportunity to actually impact the way it goes. ICANN offers a mix of idealism, community, and – last but not least – global power and politics. Plus, you get to make really good friends across the globe. There’s nothing like it.

What would you suggest to the newcomers at ICANN?
Take your time, browse the community, seek friends, and find your space. Once you do – make your voice heard. That’s what ICANN is all about.

MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Strategy Work Underway

In October 2019, the Middle East Strategy Working Group, made up of 27 community members from the region, started its work on drafting ICANN’s Regional Engagement Strategy for the Middle East 2021-2025.

This initial work included defining the working group’s objective, reviewing the current and past regional strategies, and aligning with ICANN’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The group agreed to set the term of the new regional strategy as five years, ending at the same time with ICANN’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The group also identified and agreed on key strategic focus areas and goals in light of the region’s unique circumstances and needs.

The group is planning to publish a draft strategy document by mid-February 2020 for Public Comment, which will be open for six weeks. You can view this page for updates on the Public Comment period. The group also plans to hold a public session during ICANN67 in Cancún, Mexico, to update the community and receive feedback on the progress of the work.

You can learn more about ICANN’s 2021-2025 Middle East Strategy here. If you are interested in the work, please get in touch with the regional Global Stakeholder Engagement team at meac.swg@icann.org.

AFRICA

ICANN Joins the Celebration in Madagascar
ICANN org staff in Africa made a presentation on the ICANN ecosystem, the Domain Name System, new generic top-level domains, and Internationalized Domain Names. The focus of the presentation was on Universal Acceptance of the domain names and email addresses.

ICANN org is happy to see .mg grow and looks forward to other domain anniversaries across Africa!

**ICANN Org Participates in the First DNS Forum in Chad**

Chad hosted its first DNS Forum in Ndjamena on 18-19 December 2019 attended by nearly 500 local and regional participants. Highlights included presentations and panel discussions on topics such as an overview of the Domain Name System, domain entrepreneurship, and DNS security. ICANN org representatives in Africa discussed topics such as Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names. The forum is an initiative by ADETIC, the .td registry of Chad, and aims to increase awareness around the .td domain name space.

**Recognizing Excellence in African Internet Development**

ICANN org partnered with the Internet Society (ISOC) chapter in Benin to host a conference exploring different policy and technical topics related to the Internet ecosystem. The conference, attended by over 150 people, also paid tribute to two African Internet pioneers who were recently recognized internationally:

- Alain Aina, Chief Technology Officer of the West Africa and Central Research and Education Network (WACREN), and recipient of the John Postel Service Award 2019.
- Adiel Akplogan, Vice President for Technical Engagement at ICANN org, recently inducted in the Internet Hall of Fame.

We look forward to seeing more Africans rise to leadership in the Internet ecosystem!

**ICANN Wants to Hear from You**

Join Us in Cancún for ICANN67!

Don’t forget to register for ICANN67 coming up 7-12 March in Cancún, Mexico. The Community Forum will include plenary sessions on high-interest topics, cross-community discussion, and internal work of the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees. Register [here](#) and find the schedule and travel information [here](#).
ICANN org is seeking Public Comment on the proposed Amendment No. 3 to the .COM Registry Agreement between ICANN and Verisign. Post your Public Comment submission here on or before 14 February 2020.

In addition, ICANN and Verisign have announced a new proposed framework for working together on initiatives related to the security, stability, and resiliency of the Domain Name System (DNS) in the form of a binding Letter of Intent (LOI) between the two organizations. Read the full announcement.

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**Help Shape ICANN's Future**

ICANN org’s new draft Five-Year Operating and Financial Plan and FY21 Operating Plan and Budget include details about the funding and execution of major strategic initiatives.

The FY21-FY25 Operating and Financial Plan also includes the “Evolving ICANN’s Multistakeholder Model Work Plan,” for which ICANN also seeks your input. Over the years, ICANN’s multistakeholder model (MSM) has evolved, addressed important issues, and developed policies for the Internet’s domain name and numbering resources.

ICANN wants to hear what you think. View the documents and submit Public Comment here on or before 25 February.

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**Open Data Platform Update**

ICANN’s Open Data Program’s goal is to enhance the transparency and accessibility of data. As part of the program, ICANN org is developing an Open Data Platform to provide the community access to specific datasets. At launch, the Open Data Platform will include the following datasets:

- Registry Monthly Reports
- Identifier Technology Health Indicators (ITHI)
- Domain Name Marketplace Indicators

For more information about the Open Data Platform, register here for an informational webinar on 18 February 2020 as part of the ICANN67 Prep Week. You are also invited to attend a session on the Open Data Program during ICANN67 with the date and time to be announced soon.

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**Apply Now for ICANN and PTI Leadership Positions**

The ICANN Nominating Committee (NomCom) is welcoming applications for key leadership positions within ICANN and Public Technical Identifiers (PTI). Successful candidates will have a unique opportunity to help shape the Internet's technical coordination and policy development. Find more details here. The deadline to submit applications is 25 February 2020.
Improved Public Comment Feature

The Information Transparency Initiative (ITI) has released an improved Public Comment feature based on invaluable input from members of ICANN’s Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees. Please check it out here and register your feedback.

Apply Now: ICANN Community Childcare Grants Program

ICANN’s Community Childcare Grants Program is aimed at making it easier for community members with children to attend ICANN Public Meetings and other eligible ICANN events. The application cycle for those seeking a childcare grant for ICANN68 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is now open and will close on 4 March 2020. Applications must be submitted by 11:59pm UTC on that day.

For more information and details about the program and how to apply, please visit here.

GDD UPDATE

Registration Data Policy (EPDP) Implementation Work Presented at ICANN67 Prep Week

During ICANN67 Prep Week, learn about the many activities involved in implementing the new Registration Data Policy (EPDP Phase 1). This webinar will cover current policy requirements, the Implementation Review Team’s work supporting the policy document drafting, completed reports and studies, and other activities stemming from the consensus policy recommendations. The informational session takes place on Monday, 24 February at 15:00 UTC and registration is required by this Friday, 14 February. The webinar will be followed by a Q&A session and you are welcome to submit questions ahead of time. Register here.

Universal Acceptance: Looking to Form Local Initiatives

The Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) is looking for advocates to form local initiatives at both regional and national levels to drive awareness and aid the development and deployment of UA-ready software and email services. These groups will work in close collaboration with UASG leadership and working groups, as well as with ICANN org. Please contact UAProgram@icann.org for more information. Universal Acceptance is key to enabling a multilingual Internet and bringing the next billion users online – let’s work together to make this a reality!

RDAP: Moving Towards a More Robust and
Secure Technology

The technology transition from WHOIS-based services to solutions based on the Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) is well underway. Contracted parties are already offering services based on this protocol, which allow users to access domain name and other Internet identifier registration data in a secure and structured manner. ICANN also offers a registration data Lookup tool based on RDAP – bookmark the page! RDAP was developed by the technical community in the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) as a replacement for the WHOIS protocol. Are you ready for this technology upgrade? Learn more here.

Nomination Period for ICANN Community Excellence Award 2020 Now Open

The nomination period for the ICANN Community Excellence Award 2020 is now open. Formerly known as the Multistakeholder Ethos Award, the ICANN Community Excellence Award recognizes ICANN participants who substantively contribute to policymaking within the ICANN ecosystem and who are deeply invested in developing consensus-based solutions within ICANN’s multistakeholder model. Learn more about the nomination process and submit your nominations here.

Register for ICANN67 Prep Week Webinars

Mark your calendars! Ahead of ICANN67, there will be a series of webinars during the week of 18-24 February 2020 to help the ICANN community prepare for the Community Forum in Cancún, Mexico.

Please register here by 14 February to receive your calendar invitation.

SO/AC Leaders Plan for 2020

The chairs of the Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees (SO/ACs) met in Los Angeles on 27 and 28 January 2020. This meeting provided a space for leaders to hold strategic discussions outside of an ICANN Public Meeting. The collaborative agenda included discussions on governance, the respective priorities for each of the SO/ACs in the upcoming year, and a summary and status update on the FY20 goals for the ICANN Board of Directors and CEO.

Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Playbook Now Available

The Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) Top-Level Domain Operations (TLD-OPS) Standing Committee published its Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Playbook, which serves as a basic business continuity strategy and implementation guide for small country code top-level domain
GNSO Council Meets to Develop Strategy for 2020

The Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) held its third Strategic Planning Session (SPS) from 22 through 24 January 2020 in Los Angeles. For the last few years, the annual SPS has allowed time for the GNSO Council to onboard new Councilors and develop a strategic work plan for the upcoming year. This year, the GNSO Council also learned more about how to carry out its responsibilities as a Decisional Participant in the Community, as well as how to more effectively execute its role as a policy development process (PDP) manager by using the toolkits developed from the PDP 3.0 implementation effort. In addition, some of the ICANN Board Directors observed the sessions.

EPDP Update

The Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on the Temporary Specification for gTLD Registration Data published its Phase 2 Initial Report for Public Comment on 7 February 2020. From 27-29 January, the EPDP Team met in Los Angeles to reach agreement on recommendations and finalize the content for the Initial Report. Discussions related to the EPDP Phase 2 Initial Report will continue during ICANN67.

GAC Begins Work on Universal Acceptance-Internationalized Domain Name Issues

The Governmental Advisory Committee’s (GAC) newly formed Universal Acceptance-Internationalized Domain Name (UA-IDN) Working Group has been developing an initial work plan, including its terms of reference. The GAC is expected to endorse the group's first phase of work prior to ICANN67. The UA-IDN Working Group was established during ICANN66 to help the GAC track, consider, and address UA and IDN matters relevant to governments. Learn more.

At-Large Review Implementation Nearly Complete

The At-Large Advisory Committee submitted for review the second status report of the At-Large Review Implementation to the ICANN Board’s Organizational Effectiveness Committee (OEC) in December. Nearly all of the eight issue areas identified in the previous status report have been implemented by At-Large or will be implemented in the near future.

For more information about the issues currently under review by the OEC, please visit the At-Large Review Implementation Plan Development workspace.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join ICANN org at these upcoming events in the EMEA region:

- 24-27 February, Mobile World Congress, Barcelona, Spain
- 4-5 March, Kuwait Internet Days, Kuwait City, Kuwait
- 17 March, Universal Acceptance Workshop, Manama, Bahrain
- 18-19 March, Middle East Network Operators Group 2020 (MENOG 20), Manama, Bahrain
- 19-20 March, WACREN Meeting, Cotonou, Benin
- 24-25 March, Middle East DNS Forum, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- 22-24 April, OSIANE 2020, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

Learn more about how ICANN will be participating in regional events near you.