

The ccNSO

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As you have seen this morning there are many different ccTLD models – some ccTLDs are run by government, some are run completely independent of government while others, such as Australia, are run by an independent body endorsed by the government.

The obvious question is:- how do you co-ordinate this disparate bunch of ccTLDs at a global, technical, DNS level?

It is an obvious question but it is NOT the first question.

The first question is 'what needs to be co-ordinated for ccTLDs in respect to the DNS at a global level?'

In reality.....very little.

There are only a VERY NARROW range of global DNS policies that relate to ccTLDs.

So first I will briefly explain what those policies are and then I'll look at how is it being done.

There are only 2 functions that a ccTLD needs to perform at a global technical level:

1. Entering data into a data base
2. Maintaining and ensuring upkeep of the name servers for the ccTLD

Entering data needs to be fully defined by a naming policy to specify rules:

- a) under which data will be collected and entered into the data base and changed in the data base and;
- b) for making that data or a sub set of it publicly available.

Name server function is about the essential interoperability and stability issues that are at the heart of the DNS. Policies need to be defined and established to ensure that interoperability and stability.

Most ccTLDs already accept the need for common policies in this area by adhering to the relevant RFCs such as RFC1591.

From a global point of view, it is only in these 2 narrow areas that global technical policy needs to be set.

These global policies have been defined after much discussion and work within the ICANN framework.

It was done as part of setting up the ccNSO and defining its scope. And it is through the ccNSO that the disparate bunch of ccTLDs co-ordinate the setting of this global policy.

So let us move on to look at how that is being done.

The ccNSO has a well defined role within the structure of ICANN.

It is responsible for:

- i. Developing and recommending to ICANN global policies on the narrow range I have described;
- ii. Nurturing consensus across the ccNSO's community, including the name-related activities of ccTLDs; and
- iii. Coordinating with other ICANN Supporting Organizations, committees, and constituencies under ICANN.

In addition to the above core responsibilities, the ccNSO may also engage in other activities authorized by its members, including: seeking to develop voluntary best practices for ccTLD managers, assisting in skills building within the global community of ccTLD managers, and enhancing operational and technical cooperation among ccTLD managers.

How does the ccNSO go about developing the narrow global policy? It is a complicated process that I do not have time to go into at this meeting but the process has many checks and balances and is designed to be as open and inclusive as possible. Input and feedback is taken from all ccTLDs (members and non-members), other ICANN supporting organisations and advisory committees including the GAC.

On the GAC, I would like to digress slightly to address an issue which was raised yesterday. I may have misunderstood but I got the definite impression that it was being suggested that the GAC is broken or lacking in legitimacy in some way.

Let me say that from the point of view of most ccNSO members this is categorically not the case. Governments and ccTLD managers are not always going to agree. However, everyone recognises the importance of cooperation between them and the GAC and ccNSO have worked extremely hard to set up clear lines of communication. This includes a joint ccNSO/GAC working group and information sharing and update sessions at each ICANN meeting.

The ccNSO membership comprises ccTLD managers from around the world. Some ccTLDs, especially in Europe have not yet joined. Many of these want to join but feel varying degrees of discomfort about some of the by laws that govern the ccNSO.

To address this the ccNSO is currently in the process of conducting a review of those by laws with a view to recommending changes that will overcome the problems that some ccTLDs have expressed.

During the development of the internet and the formation of ICANN a number ccTLD managers, especially those from 'developed' countries have been involved in shaping global DNS ccTLD related policy.

What is SO IMPORTANT about the ccNSO is that it has attracted a large number of developed and, CRUCIALLY, developing countries who have not previously been involved.

Members include 14 from Africa and 13 from Latin America. For many ccTLDs, the ccNSO is the first time they have taken the opportunity to be involved.

Not only that but the ccNSO is structured in such a way as to cater for the input and opinions on those ccTLD managers who choose, for whatever reason, not to join.

As most of you will know, the worlds ccTLDs are split into 5 regions. Each of those, with the exception of the North American region, has an independent regional organisation that ccTLDs in that region can join.

You have already heard this morning from CENTR which is the European regional organisation. Similar work is being done by the apTLD in the Asia Pacific region and so on.

Each of those regional organisations has chosen to apply to the ccNSO for designation as the official regional organisation representing their region within the ccNSO and each of them has appointed a non-voting representative to the council of the ccNSO.

As you can see, the ccNSO is a truly open and inclusive forum whose role is not only to develop policies on the narrow range of global policies relevant to ccTLDs but also, and very importantly, to reach out to the global community of ccTLD managers to develop voluntary best practices and assist in skills building. In other words, to engage in capacity building.

I hope I have been able to give you a useful outline of the ccNSO and how it deals with ccTLD global policy issues.

Is the ccNSO perfect? No.

Has all of the work yet been done to make the ccNSO effective, efficient and fully inclusive? No.

Is significant and speedy progress being made? Yes.

Will it work? Yes.