

Why ICANN Accountability matters

Co-Chair of the Working Group on Enhancing ICANN Accountability, Mathieu Weill speaks on its status, work and importance to ccTLDs and the wider community

It's difficult to understand all the various groups working on the IANA Stewardship transition. What exactly is the Accountability CCWG about? While a lot of attention is - rightfully - devoted in the ccTLD community to the transition of the IANA stewardship function, the Enhancing ICANN Accountability process is the other key activity running in parallel. The focus is ICANN itself, beyond the IANA function, and the goal is to significantly enhance its accountability in the absence of its historical contractual relationship with the U.S. Government.

The group's work started only in early December, following several process-focused iterations, but it is catching up and making good progress.

The CCWG-Accountability consists of 161 **people** (including 11 ccTLDs), organized as 25 **members**, appointed by and accountable to chartering organizations, 136 **participants**, who participate as individuals, and 38 **mailing list observers**. The group also includes one ICANN Board liaison, one ICANN staff representative, and one former ATRT member who serves as a liaison as well as two liaisons from the ICG. We hold weekly conference calls and just held our first face-to-face meeting in Frankfurt on 19-20 January.

The three co-chairs are Thomas Rickert (GNSO), Leon Felipe Sanchez (ALAC) and me. The ccNSO appointed 4 other ccTLD members: Jordan Carter (.nz), Eberhard Lisse (.na) Roelof Meijer (.nl), and Giovanni Seppia (.eu).

Since the group's scope is not about IANA, how does that affect ccTLD managers and why should they care? First of all, the NTIA made clear several times that the IANA stewardship transition would not take place unless appropriate accountability mechanism within ICANN are in place. As a consequence, the outcomes of this group is a key condition for the transition to happen, and many in the ccTLD community understand the importance of contributing to this success.

The CCWG-Accountability also has a lot of inter-relations with the ongoing work of the naming community (CWG-Stewardship). Close coordination exists between the co-chairs of the two groups, and we are working on synchronizing timelines as well as clarifying how the pieces of our respective groups will fit together.

Finally, although ccTLDs are largely independent from ICANN in terms of policy and day-to-day management, we are all aware that ICANN plays a decisive role in shaping our environment. The introduction of new gTLDs is a good example where a policy set by ICANN influences all ccTLDs: new local competitors sometimes, new opportunities in other cases, and certainly a lot of movement on the market we operate in.

As ccTLD managers, we are affected by ICANN decisions, so we have a strong interest in ensuring that the organisation is accountable to all its stakeholders.

Can you tell us more about the direction the work of the CCWG is taking at this point? During its Frankfurt meeting, the CCWG-Accountability advanced a document including a problem statement and a set of definitions. These definitions clarify the purposes of ICANN's accountability, which include compliance to processes and applicable laws, achieving certain levels of performance and security, and ensuring that its decisions are for the benefit of the public, not just in the interests of a particular set of stakeholders and the corporation itself.

We also reached initial agreement on requirements which should be in place or committed to before the Transition can happen. The requirements were grouped into two categories:

- Enabling community empowerment over ICANN Board decisions with limited, strictly enumerated, last resort powers (such as approval of budget and strategy, removal of Board members, approval of Bylaw changes, incorporation of the AoC provisions into the Bylaws...)
- Enhancing review and redress processes (to improve accessibility to stakeholders, expand the standards of review, ensure independence of panels, ...)

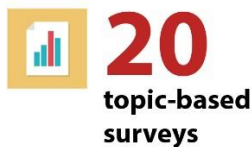
These mechanisms will inform feasibility assessments and also the development of solutions for consideration by the CWG-Stewardship.

What are the next steps, and how can ccTLDs provide feedback or ask questions? The work of the CCWG-Accountability is just emerging from its formative stages. We expect to deliver the first part of our work ("work stream 1", the part that has to be in place or committed to before the transition can happen) within the same timeframe as the parallel, interrelated IANA Stewardship Transition process.

Significant community engagement will come, including an engagement session in February 2015 at the ICANN52 meeting in Singapore, as well as a dedicated ccNSO session. The CCWG will also meet with the ICANN Board.

ccTLD managers can engage through these sessions, or through the ccTLD members or participants, either individually or collectively. As ccTLD managers, we have a lot of experience to share in terms of accountability to a large set of stakeholders. I hope that we can channel this experience into this process to ensure an outcome that delivers a better ICANN, for everyone.

CENTR in numbers in 2014



Market Analysis: Global Domain Registrations

The **DomainWire Stat Report** is CENTR's quarterly publication on status and growth evolution the global domain name market. The report captures and analyses the status and evolution of domain names registrations globally – it also has a special focus on European ccTLDs.

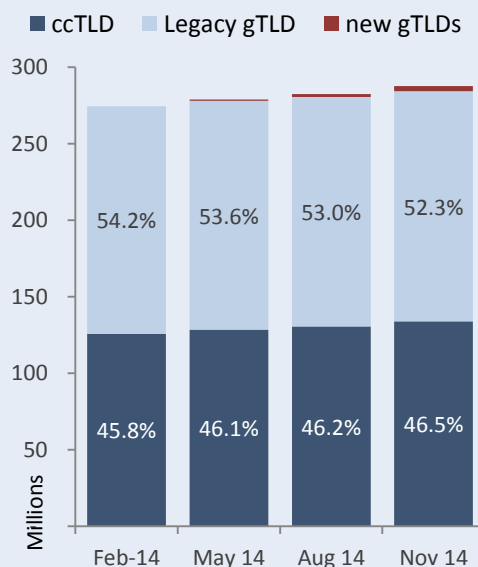
The most recent report (right) shows there are around 286.7 million domain name registrations globally - around 46% of those are ccTLD registrations. Currently new gTLDs, of which there are around 435, account for around 1.2% of all domains. New gTLDs however are being added each week and growing in volume.

Other elements included in the report are: the top 20 ccTLDs by zone size (and growth), the status of European ccTLDs (size and growth), ccTLD country market share and other statistics on DNSSEC and renewal rates.



See inside the report

Combined Registrations:
Global Market Share



Alexandrine Gauvin recently joined the CENTR Secretariat in Brussels as Communications Manager. We thought we'd take the opportunity to ask her a few questions about her new role, thoughts on the domain name industry as well find out a little about her own background. On behalf of the members, we welcome Alexandrine to the CENTR team!



Could you tell us a little about your new role as Communications Manager at CENTR?

I joined CENTR as a communications specialist to help with a few important projects, but also to support the development and implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy. The goal is to derive objectives from the three strategic priorities of the association. In other words, we want to serve the members as best we can and start interacting more with external stakeholders.

What kind of things were you doing before you joined CENTR?

I have now been living and working in Brussels for four years. Before joining CENTR, I worked for two years at the American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union and at another trade association for a year before that. I also completed internships at the Québec Delegation and Canadian Mission to the EU. Back in Montreal, I worked for a B2B firm. All in all, I have more than five years of experience in communications, but in other lives, I also worked as an emergency calls dispatcher and elementary school teacher.

What are some of the areas you are focusing on in the role currently?

Right now, my priority is to absorb as much information and knowledge as possible, because I want to get a good grasp on the industry's ecosystem and CENTR mechanisms to produce a sound communications strategy. The next step will be to draft that strategy, which will include plans for a new website, extension of the association's corporate identity, social media recommendations, as well as a plan for streamlining communication tools, to name a few. But I see that CENTR is already doing very well in communicating key information, especially to members, so the goal will mainly be to polish, improve and enhance!

Could you share some of your initial thoughts on the challenges European ccTLDs face going forward? Do you have thoughts as to how best to deal with those challenges?

I have only been 'exposed' to the industry for a few weeks, so I still have a lot to learn to shape an opinion, but from what I can see the main challenge will be market saturation and possibly the new landscape created by new gTLDs. It seems like European ccTLD registries will have to become more actively involved in shaping policies that affect the DNS world. I believe ccTLD experts and organisations will have to reach out to policy-makers, increase coordination with peer organisations, and foster interaction and dialogue on key issues like security and sustainability.

What was the most surprising thing for you at CENTR so far?

I think that the most surprising thing for me was the sharp contrast between what seems to be like a very niche industry and the actual importance of it, especially in the broader context of internet. I am also pleasantly surprised by the great friendliness, support, professionalism and dedication of members and staff. I feel very lucky to have joined such a fascinating industry and fantastic team!

Q&A

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Q&A

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News & Blogs

Suspension of direct sale of .ch addresses The SWITCH Foundation stopped selling .ch domain names in January and is handing over client support to its the registrars.

Russell Haworth joins Nominet as CEO Following the announcement in October 2014, Russell Haworth has joined Nominet (.uk) as CEO.

.at-report: "The year in Review" In the last .at-report for 2014 we look back at Domain Pulse in February, the successful ISO-27001 certification and much more.

.is reduces registration price ccTLD for Iceland (.is) have reduced their price for domain name registrations to 29.90 EUR per year.

Opening of .paris and .bzh also a success for Afnic Afnic, has made an assessment after the general openings that took place in December 2014 of these two new gTLDs.

Amendment to Roles and responsibilities of resellers The Domain Name Commission proposes additional provisions around management of .nz domain resellers.

Latest .nl statistics available SIDN published its latest update of .nl statistics covering number of domains, the number of registrars, the rate of growth, etc.

NORID offers DNSSEC From 9 December Norwegian domain names can be secured with DNSSEC.

New picture book explains to children how the internet works In .SE's free picture book, 'The Internet – How it Works', children can learn more about the internet in a playful and educational way.

Recent Workshops

15th CENTR Marketing workshop

On 27-28 November 2014, 33 participants gathered at the 15th CENTR Marketing Workshop in Belgrade hosted by RNIDS. In various interactive sessions, participants discussed how to overcome sluggish growth rates, how to reinforce visibility of domains and its uses through branding campaigns and awards, and exchanged experiences with the launch of new namespaces. In small groups they developed ideas for both a national and European registry-registrar day. The next workshop will take place in Bari on 26-27 March. [More info \(RNIDS\)](#)



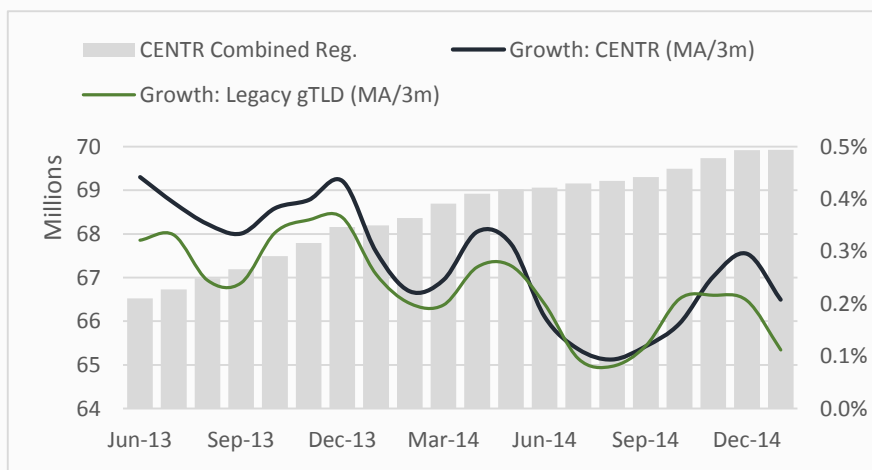
Upcoming Events

25th February 2015

34th CENTR **Administrative Workshop** (Berlin)
46th CENTR **Legal & Regulatory Workshop** (Berlin)

18/19th March 2015

53rd CENTR **General Assembly** (Copenhagen)



Source: CENTR (based on 57 ccTLDs), ICANNwiki
MA = Moving Average * Refers to CENTR full members only

CENTR Combined Registrations*

69.9 million

The chart (left) shows combined registrations and growth (using 3 month moving averages) of CENTR ccTLDs with the equivalent growth in legacy gTLDs.

Combined registrations among CENTR members have grown 2.5% over the past 12 months. The median ccTLD growth over this period was 3.6%

The highest percentage growth among CENTR ccTLDs in December 2014 was .ir (Iran) at 1.6%.