



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ICANN Leader Calls for Broad Support of the Multi-Stakeholder Model of Internet Governance

New Generic Top-Level Domains Likely to Dominate ICANN's 40th Public Meeting

San Francisco, California. Rod Beckstrom, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), said the organization's multi-stakeholder model has been validated over many years by the smooth and reliable functioning of the Internet.

"We believe in a simple principle: everyone with an interest in the Internet has an equal right to be heard in its governance," said Rod Beckstrom. "When all voices are heard, no single voice can dominate an organization – not even governments. Not even the government that facilitated its creation."

Beckstrom made the remarks during the opening ceremony of ICANN's 40th public meeting in San Francisco.

The U.S. Department of Commerce issued a notice that is now receiving public comments in preparation for the renewal of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) contract. Under that contract with the U.S. government, ICANN coordinates the root of the Internet's domain name system. The current contract is set to expire in September.

"This is the chance to add your voice to those determining the fate of the IANA function," said Beckstrom in encouraging the attendees to make their feelings known to the U.S. government. "Whatever your opinion, we hope you will express it – openly and in writing. Take full advantage of this unique window before it closes, and make a difference in the future of the Internet."

In addressing another leading issue at the ICANN meeting, the proposed addition of new generic top level domains beyond the familiar ones, such as .com, .net, .edu, etc.) the ICANN CEO said progress is being made toward establishing a system that will vastly increase the number of generic top level domains in the Internet's root.

Beckstrom countered critics who say the process is taking too long by saying, "We're not in a race; we're considering a significant change to the world's primary communications tool. We do not do that lightly. Getting it right is much more important than doing it fast."

The man considered by many to be one of the "Fathers of the Internet," Vint Cerf, told attendees "there are pressures to move away from a multi-stakeholder model. I strongly urge against this because there are too many valuable points of view that must be incorporated into any consideration of policy for Internet growth."

Cerf also said during the opening ceremony that the IANA contract should give way to a cooperative agreement, which he described as being far more versatile to a procurement type of contract, which he called “too rigid.”

Governmental control of the Internet is not a viable alternative to the ICANN model, said Ira Magaziner, Senior Advisor to the President for Policy Development in the Clinton Administration.

“We think the idea has worked,” said Magaziner. “While ICANN has its faults, I urge you to work actively to improve it rather than tearing it down.”

“The U.S government is absolutely committed to the multi-stakeholder process, ,” said Larry Strickling, head of the U.S. government’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration. “It only makes for a stronger ICANN and that will help ensure the continued growth and innovation of the Internet.”

The ICANN meeting will continue through the week and conclude on Friday with a public meeting of the Board of Directors.

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Audio and/or video recordings of the speakers at the opening session will be posted here:

<http://www.icann.org/en/press/>.

To see the entire schedule for ICANN’s Silicon Valley/San Francisco meeting, go here:

<http://svsf40.icann.org/full-schedule>

To learn more about new generic top-TLDs, go here: <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/new-gtld-program.htm>.

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About ICANN: ICANN’s mission is to ensure a stable, secure and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn’t have one global Internet. ICANN was formed in 1998. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet’s unique identifiers. ICANN doesn’t control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn’t deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet’s naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet. **For more information please visit:** www.icann.org.