**ICANN**
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**Brand TLDSs Trends and Use Cases**
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Cecilia Smith:     Okay.  Let's get started.  Thank you everyone for joining the Brand Registry
Group for Trends and Use Cases.  I'm Cecilia Smith.  I'm the Brand Registry
Group President.

For those of you who don't know about the BRG, we are a trade organization
focused on empowering our brand top-level domains.  Our members consist
of a mix of companies who own single .brands.  Some own multiple .brands.
Others have a mix of .brands and open brands - .brands.  And there are even
some who are potentially (in shifted) in future .brand.  So that's sort of the
arena of our membership.

And our main goals here are to advocate within ICANN.  We usually do that
through the Registry Stakeholder Group.  But we also work through the GDD
and various different channels within ICANN, governments and Internet
stakeholders.

Another goal that we have that's very unique to the Brand Registry Group is
that we provide a safe space for our members to talk openly to each other,

which isn't very common in many other ICANN spaces and for sharing information.

And finally, it is a means for educating our members so that they can be armed with information to take back to their companies to share and advocate and provide awareness for their companies so that we can better use our .brand spaces.

So with that, I'm going to pass this over to Martin who's going to talk to us about some of the brand trends that you may be interested in. Thank you.

Martin Sutton: Thank you Cecilia and welcome everybody. We thought we'd take this as an opportunity to do something similar to what we did in Hyderabad just to really raise awareness about what some of the brands use cases are and some of the trends that we're seeing and really just because it may be something that you're not always going to pick up and see unless you really go out searching for these things.

So a lot of this is to work through things like these questions that we're quite frequently asked, which is who's using them, how are they using them, how many are there, why is it so slow to actually get them activated and is anyone - why should anybody be interested to get their brand TLD in the future?

So hopefully as I go through the slides today and some of the information that we'll be sharing, that'll give you some kind of answers to some of these questions. I do want it to be interactive. So if there's any questions as we go along, please do interject and we'll do questions as we go along.

A large portion of the information that we're going through here is from the .brand observatory. So I think if there's (Giome) in the room, if you'd just wave your hand.

(Giome)'s done a lot of research and monitoring of what is actually happening out there and doing some deep dives as to how brands are being structured, when they're launching, how they're actually approaching it and whether it's just simple redirects or are they actually transitioning, you know, full content Web sites and driving their customers to that new location.

And what we've seen over the last year is a steady increase of those that have actually been delegated into the root of the Internet. So with last year there was a deadline imposed for everybody to reach that end game and be delegated.

So from this slide here you'll just see that there was an uptick towards the end of last year of those that are delegated. So from a brand perspective, there's about 550 TLDs. So representing a good chunk of all new gTLDs pushed forward.

So for a lot of people in the domain industry, second level domains tends to be a really important number. For brands not so much. But given that, over the last year again there's a trend - upward trend as use and adding of second level domains is introduced to brand TLDs.

And as illustrated here, big uptick surges in certain regions, which is when, you know, some brands have gone through with a structure, which they wanted to impose and put - apply to their TLD.

And what I'll try and do today is just go through some of the use cases so you can see how they are being used. But ultimately for a brand volume of second level domains is not the significant mark for them.

Going through the stages of those being delegated. It's more - this is to illustrate that some of them, 230 here, that have got more than one second level domain. That's a big achievement for a lot of them to get past their

nic.brand and start to apply actual second level terms that they're going to use and apply for their business is creeping up.

In terms of active ones, we're looking at this where, you know, there's something visible. It's going to be a Web site or there's some active redirects that have been applied.

So they are expecting traffic either directly to that site or to be shared amongst their existing or co-exist with their existing gTLD second level domains and ccTLD second level domains.

And so what does that represent? About 1/5 of all brands and they're actually using their .brands still very different ways. So we'll just hit on some of the examples today.

So again, some numbers. I don't know if you can see that very clearly. But on the - this is just a pull from the database on the .brand observatory. And this is by volume of second level domains because again, I know how that's appealing for the domain name market.

So you'll see some on there. MMA, the insurance company have got 1700 of second level domains already applied to their TLD. They're very localized as an insurance company and most of those second level domains are actually their office addresses around - (dotted) around France.

Other applications here or other industries that we're looking at as the sort of high volume second level domains that have been applied across the different sectors of finance, automobile and retail as well I can see on there and healthcare.

So there's a good mixture already on top of the, you know, volume metric side of this and spread across different regions as well. So we can see that

within Europe there's some activated ones, U.S. and Asia I think. Yes. (Try there). A couple are closed. Thank you. Yes. I should use this I think.

Now the ranking there is by the volume of second level domains. But there's another column here called active second level domains. So looking at that, that's going to give us more of a picture of actually who's using the TLDs more effectively.

Again, this is a mixture of industries, financial services, automobile, healthcare and consumer and retail. So some surprises in there because there might not be some well-known brands. But they've moved and started to use these TLDs, very much active in this space. So this gives you a better representation I think of where you're likely to find some real activity going on with the TLDs.

This kind of breaks it down in terms of the actual brand. So it's sort of kind of representing a longer list. But again, this is really just to illustrate there was a good cross section of industries being active in this space and starting to push ahead.

And what is important for any business that's running their services online is obviously to maintain the attraction that they're already had the traction they've had in their existing gTLDs and ccTLDs. And Alexa ratings are a good indicator of how well your sites are performing.

So even at this early stage, the .brands that have gone ahead and set themselves up in the correct manner are getting the right traffic coming through, the search parameters are effective. So this is again an illustration then that they're not losing any traffic. They're pushing ahead. They're making it happen.

And just to give you an indication of which the top 12 are. So this is the top 100,000 Alexa rankings. Those are the types of brands with their second

level domains that are ranked the highest so far. So again, a good variation of brands already on there.

And so as I say, it's really important for brands to really carefully step forward and to make sure that if they're going to transition and start actively using their top level domain is that they get everything set up correct to achieve a seamless transfer, migrate their customer to do that.

And that's not without its incredible challenges for a brand. This is all of an end-to-end process. So it's not distributing second level domains. It's actually trying to run its entire business and channel through their top level domain.

So some will move ahead fairly cautiously. Some have been bold and this one is an illustration of a banking - online banking service that's been fully migrated rather than just simple redirect, (maybank.bnpparibas). Again, high rankings in the Alexa scores. And but what does that mean?

Well that means probably tens of thousands of hits a day from their customers. So in this space users - the end users are already having good visibility of top level domains being used and they are accepting quite easily that migration to these new locations.

And it's reinforced with very careful communications, so (BNP Paribas) carefully told their customers this is what's going to happen. This is why we're doing it. It's going to be added security, better control in place and we want to use this space effectively to run our services to you.

And this is just one example on (Maybank). There's a number of second level domains that they've already activated. And in terms of localization, obviously this is probably much more focused in France.

So outside of France and not being a customer of the (BNP Paribas) you may not be seeing any of this just by normal use of the Internet. Unless you have a need to go there or you're a customer, you're not going to be having visibility of this.

But to customers and basically I think is about four - over four million online customers that they have for banking services have actively engaged with this and are using it. So it does work. You can transition over. And it is without any problems.

Interestingly another financial services but this time Bank of (Bodadesko). So again, good rankings. They've moved their customer base to use - actively use their TLD. And this is a great example I think in both cases where you have a large consumer market and you're able to transition them.

Strangely enough when you look back at the original list of ten or so high volume second level domains and active domains, there is a good number of them within Europe. And there's no particular reason for that that I thinks been identified.

But it is typical within the European region that ccTLDs were easily adapted to for businesses to use that channel to reach their customers. So they're not tied to a .com for instance to run their typical day-to-day services. A lot of these would run their corporate and investor type information from their .com. And then their ccTLD network would distribute that channel to their end users.

So I think that that does give them the flexibility and the confidence to quite quickly migrate their customers through to their .brand. They know their customers are quite happy to be guided and use that new space.

So in other ways that it's really helpful for brands is to be able to be very consistent within their ability to - for their affiliates to be able to use their .brand.  And so car dealerships for instance.

So we've seen quite a few automotive TLDs go live where they're able to create that distribution network on their TLD, apply a lot of control and consistency in the way that the brand image is portrayed and consistency for the user because again, a lot of this is about how to make it easier for users to feel confident that they're going to the right place.  And this is a significant way of being able to do that with a consistent feel even though you have a large distribution network.

Another example is here.  So in the healthcare, they're taking, you know, really good cases and putting it through a more action type second level domain, short and effective.

So here we've got a live .abbott.  So it's much more of an energizing second level domain, which they can easily use and apply onto their TLD and push content out.

And it's (just not) online obviously.  Within a corporate this is a whole branding exercise that's required.  So here's some examples of (brosh aware) of content that is away from just Web sites.  You have to do the whole end-to-end process.

However you touch your customer in whichever channels and mediums, you have to be thinking about the whole exercise of applying your new top level domain extensions and products, services in and across those channels.  So it is a huge exercise to be able to coordinate that effectively, to implement it, to track it and improve it continuously.

But with the advantage of having your own top level domain, obviously you have the simple way and method of applying second level domains that you

want short, sharp, applicable to your business and you do not have the issue of trying to hunt around or produce lots of third level or sub domains or very long URLs.

You can actually do something very much more succinct and effective for your brand. So those choices are out there. But obviously it comes with the whole new issues as to what will you do in terms of second level domains for consistency, to get the right messages across to your customers.

How do you use it internally when there's a global business and different parts of the business want (home) or they want a particular - or global .brand. You know, some of these have to try and work out where - who will own that location of their TLD. And who will - and how you will actually coordinate and approve the evolution of your top-level domain.

But here is an example of some of the stronger second level terms as some that will be quite obvious and repeated from the old days in the home, mail, ww. So there's some common ones there. But what we're starting to see is, you know, words that make sense is actually being applied to second level domain for those brands.

Now obviously this stays with the issue and what the new gTLD program was trying to resolve was a lot more choice because all the good names were taken. It's very difficult to get what you want when you need it.

And whilst three is advantages to .brands being able to select quite easily and apply whatever second level domain that they require to run their business, they've also got the advantage of shrinking it into a shorter term because they don't have to worry about all the ones that aren't available that they would have preferred to have used.

And bearing in mind that you always - the tendency is to go for a shorter string, much more easy and succinct for your customers to understand. This

graph just illustrates that for the brands, which are the bars, the shorter strings at the second level are much more common to them than when you're looking across the average of the .com or .net landscape.

So there again, there's some good advantages for brands taking this forward where they not only have the choice but they're actually making things smarter and easier for their customers, quicker to get to content and the marketing material again, that makes it more sense to be able apply something that makes sense rather than a long URL or lots of sub domains.

So why does it take so long for some of these brands? I think I've alluded to some of these points. And feel free - we've got some of our members around the tables here.

So I will outline some of the reasons why these things take so long. But if there's anybody that would like share any information experiences that they've had in terms of reaching a point towards applying second level domains and content, I'd welcome input from members as well.

But well first of all, it was a long arduous process through the application phase. Wasn't really designed for .brands and how they were going to use it. They weren't selling and distributing domain names. It was about delivering better services to their customers whether it's a B2B market or a B2C market. That is the real push for them to be able to transfer across to their own zone.

And with the lengthy process to reach this point of delegation, there's a lot of changes in organizations. So you can imagine in large corporates there's always a good turnover of people especially at the sort of C suite level where they could be in there for two years, you won't see them again.

You've got to then try and work out who's going to sponsor this because you've then got to educate somebody coming in. This was a good idea. This

was why we did it. But they may have completely different opinions at that stage and it may go into reverse instead.

So you have internal education. You have internal issues in terms of the timeframes that it's taken. And if the momentum isn't sustained, it's one that can easily go to the side as a distraction more than over benefit because it's not going to achieve you any strong revenue streams.

So a lot of the time it's one of the short winds that we can have. And if it's not going to give me, you know, better revenue, better products and services, then, you know, just go and leave it in the corner for a little while and come back in a couple years and we'll have a rethink at that stage.

So I'd say that that's one of the issues that has been around for a number of brands that have lost the original sponsors internally and also that strength of engagement with other functions because it is a lot of stakeholders within your organization that you have to engage and work with and encourage plans to be pushed out there for activating a .brand.

So that's across your marketing. It's across your finance area. It's across your DNS, your IT networks. It's about your communications. So a lot of people getting engaged. And typically it's all been kicked off from an IP legal position for the first round.

So they've had to try and then draw in all of these other folks from different functions to encourage them to take up and champion the cause to get this into activation mode. So I'll look - stop just very briefly in case there's any others in the room that would like to share their thoughts or add ons.

Man:         (Unintelligible) (when lines will be available).

Woman:      Yes. I'm just (a bit curious). And (they like read it to the room).

Woman: There's a question on Adobe from Michael Flemming.  Will the slides be available for download that are not currently available on the ICANN Web site?

Martin Sutton: Yes Michael.  It's just there behind me.  So anybody that would like to add onto that.  I know I've just covered a couple of key points.  But thank you (Karen).

(Karen): Not necessarily to add onto what Martin said but I can share an experience within my brand.  We have two brand TLDs.  I can confirm what Martin has said about all of the points about internal awareness being an issue in getting things rolled out.  Change in management.

We are - our CMO, our Chief Marketing Officer was the executive sponsor of our efforts to acquire the TLDs - the three TLDs that we get.  He was very much in favor, very much behind it.

And at Christmas last - a year ago after 25 years with the company he left.  So in January the following year - January of 2016 we got a new CMO.  Had no idea we had done this.  Had heard nothing about it because we'd just been working because the application was so long and painful.

So we had to go into a brand new CMO who was, you know, drinking from a fire hose anyway and we got ten minutes on his calendar to say hey, just wanted you to be aware we've got these things and we're going to be using them.  And so he's nicknamed us the Black Ops Team.  But so we had to go through that whole reeducation process again.

And then just last month when we got ready to roll out our first .brand site, which went live two weeks ago, we had registered the domain and we put in a work ticket to our IT department to ask them to set up the space and the Adobe Experience Manager that we use for our Web sites.

And the ticket came back the next day from the manager of IT and said I think there's a mistake here. Don't you mean that this is going to be - the address is going to be at jmp.com? And we were like no.

There really is a .jmp. We're not doing jmp.com. There really is a .jmp. And so we had to (unintelligible) IT manager that we really didn't want to be at .com.

Martin Sutton: Thanks (Karen). You know, some of the other issues that came along during the way through the application phase were name collisions, universal acceptance as well. So again, whatever momentum and positive cases that had been reached internally, they took a number of (not facts) from time to time with regards to other issues that people really didn't understand internally.

It was very hard to explain to them and to encourage them to continue to push forward with the use of their .brand. So more examples of that I'm sure exist. But is there anything else that anybody wants to add as to - please do.

(Jack): Yes.

Martin Sutton: (Oh good).

(Jack): Yes. Good - yes. Good afternoon. So my name is (Jack). I've been working with the provider name Melbourne IT DBS at the time and we've been managing quite a lot of those .brands.

What I see here doesn't feel so surprising because all the arguments we see here for not activating are more or less the same arguments we saw at the time for not going. It's the same thing. It's oh, we have to re-brand. We need a sponsor who is going to manage that. There's the money to pay to ICANN. But then it's the money to re-brand and so on.

So my view is time will do the job because I cannot see - a lot of people are investing in those and I think that by education and with the proof you're giving here that if you manage them the way an ordinary extension would be, you would get the same results meaning the ICO will be safe.

You will see customers educated. And I think that time will do the trick even if it might be a bit longer. And that might be a (precious) view for the eventual next round.

Martin Sutton: Thank you. And we'll cover that in a minute in terms of next round. But I think you're right. In terms of the effort that's involved in terms of re-branding and doing all that process internally to get it through in terms of a process that people can readily adopt and push through. Perhaps new services and products can go onto that new area whilst they consider what they do to the existing legacy services and TLDs. Okay. Sorry.

Jordan Buchanan: Hi. Jordan Buchanan from Google. Not a BRG member but we have some .brands anyways. I think it's important to note that you guys are talking about a lot of hurdles that you might run into trying to get to the point that can convince someone to want to use a .brand.

There's an additional hurdle that you run into once you decide you're going to do it. And largely revolving around the fact that there's a large amount of Internet infrastructure that assumes that the smallest unit of control in the DNS is going to be a second level domain, not a top level domain by a single entity.

So for example, something that I think a lot of brands would probably be very familiar with and comfortable today would be being able to share cookies across third level domains within their second level domains.

So if you had a bink site, bink.com or something like that, you might have a login.bink.com, you might have an investing.bink.com, you might have a

accounts.bink.com. And all of those would be able to share cookies across them.

So once you log into one of them, you can be logged in and have a consistent experience. You'd have marketing metrics tracked across all of them and so on. That's just not possible to do with the second level domain.

You can't say star.bink is all going to be the same Web site and I can set a cookie that will sort of work across all of them. The way the browsers sort of recognize sort of shared ownership through the public suffix list doesn't allow you to specify .com as being a - I mean not a .com - a .brand as being a non-public suffix.

So there's that problem. You know, it's similar problems around like SSL certificates for example. I think companies are used to being able to get at something like star.bink.com as their SSL certificate. So every time they launch a new third level domain, they don't have to go back through that whole process of getting additional SSL certificates.

In theory you can create an SSL certificate today that would be like star.bink but it won't work depending on the browser you're using. It will have some affect like either making it so that certificate just silently gets ignored. Or worse, if that certificate has the wild card and then it has additional names in the certificate as well, it'll ignore the entire certificate so other things will break.

So there's a lot of assumptions that are built into Internet infrastructure that just assume that people are going to have ownership at the second level or third level, not at the top level of the DNS.

And I think there's quite a large amount of technical work that's going to need to take place before bands can use sites in the same way that they're used to using second level domains today.

Martin Sutton:    Thanks Jordan.  Yes.  And I think that again, with activating the TLDs and starting to see actually some use cases working through and at least the volume starts to be created there is going to be those questions about how does it - how should this be simplified?  How should things work more effectively?

And one of the advantages that we need to think about that will require changes and, you know, bodies like the BRG and others that will be able to help push forward with some of those ideas is something that we explore outside of this ICANN arena.

So our members will be looking at, you know, sharing best practices or thinking about what good practices should emerge going forward and what sort of innovation needs to be applied to these because this is not your traditional model.

So it's all new stuff.  There are going to be things that we find along the way.  But by sharing some of that information, hopefully if it's a negative thing, by sharing that people avoid it.  But also what can be done more proactively to build new ideas into those spaces that have never been considered before because typically they just distribute second level domains.  So thank you.

Woman:    (I heave something).

Woman:    We have a question.

Woman:    (Unintelligible).

Woman:    We have a question on Adobe from Phil Buckingham.  Martin, have you got a handle typically on how much this will cost a brand for budget purposes?

Martin Sutton:    Thanks Phil.  I mean I have a handle on it from my experience of setting one up.  But that's going to vary.  So there's some core costs that people are aware of that from the first round but regular ongoing costs I think will be different for different providers, et cetera.

So within - again, within the BRG, there's work on how these things should look.  And Phil I - with some kind of estimates about the costs involved but it's not prescriptive in any way because it's just a moving target still these days.

I mean what would be helpful in the future obviously is some of those costs, especially the application fees, may be eased back a little from the original 2012 application fees.  But I think that's just going to be something over time.

The issue here is that for some brands they don't really actively use it beyond a couple of domain names.  But they're still achieving a huge amount of traffic online.  So there are some kind of resource uses there.  But no Phil.  Precisely we haven't got a figure that we could band around.  Do you have…

Cecilia Smith:    Yes.  This is Cecilia.  I just wanted to piggyback off what Jordan said.  And so he mentioned SSL certs.  And so we are looking at that from within the BRG to see, you know, technically what we can do and what we can't do.  And we are working with certain vendors who support that to see what changes they have to make.

But I think the other component with that is it's more complex and whether technically if we can - cannot do that.  Even if we can, we may not want to do that within an organization because of the managerial nightmare that that could pose with having one cert at a top-level domain.  So those are things that we are looking at both, you know, should we, can we and would we?

(Dushain):    This is (Dushain) from (JPR).  We are not a member as well.  First I thank you very much for sharing information.  Very, very good that you (may use) such cases.  And the - I have a question for - not only for the BRG member

but all people in this room that the - I think that there is a - regarding the using domain names to manage the way we're using.

One is the - for Web site addresses. And the - we can usually find the - using the .brand compared to the two years ago like in the presentation. There are a lot of Web site with the brands - .brand TLDs. And some major - some companies brand TLD or there's changes - (main site) to its own TLDs.

And the - but the - another way is the email addresses using (for). But the - unfortunately I don't have any information that using a .brand for the email - main email addresses or migrate its employee or the customer's address to the .com - not only .com but (unintelligible) do it's own brand TLDs.

Is there any specific reason or just it's a next step thing or some technical difficulty exits or is there any BRG members or the others now have any plan to using its brand TLD to email addresses or not? Thank you very much.

Martin Sutton: So I'm aware of a number that have started to use email. But it's probably on a low scale. One of the reasons for that - the practical side of that is you've got a lot of business cards if you're a big organization to sort out. There's confusion for the people that have year old address, okay, that can be sold in technical terms.

But it again is a big shift for people to redefine their email. There could be advantages. Say large organizations that have acquired lots of businesses over a period of time have got all different email extensions. So it's a good opportunity to rationalize that and promote your single brand. So I'm sure that there is many that have looked at that advantage but it perhaps is on the too hard to do list at this stage.

But I am aware that some are actively using it. There have been issues as they've gone through it. But they've managed to resolve those and it's working. But not extensively, yes.

It's a good point though that you're raising in terms of visibility. The stuff that we've talked today is because you can go out there and find it. For a brand registry there's also opportunities to use that database - a global database for internal purposes as well. So you may not have any visibility of what a domain is actually being used for on that TLD. So there's some hidden stuff.

But at least what we can see we can try and put together some trends analysis and really just to indicate to everybody that yes, people are activating. It's a slow process for many. But by actually sharing this information, it may encourage more and give confidence to others to push ahead internally with their activation plans.

So I'll move ahead just then thinking about the next round in fact. Because, you know, is there anybody? So does anybody want to put their hand up here?

Well I've had people come up to me and they're talking about next round. I've talked to many others that had the same and they've got a queue forming for the next round. So it does appear that there is an appetite for more particularly in the .brands.

What is interesting is that they're not all big corporates, some well known brands. In the first round there were even some smaller brands that were more B2B market that took the opportunity to move from a non - an extension on .com perhaps that didn't really match their brand.

They were able to leapfrog them into their .brand environment and create that new structure for them going forward. But on a B2B scale you may not actually see any of that unless you're and engineering business for instance (with ware).

But also with regards to newcomers, startups, small business, medium businesses that are building up and thinking about going forward in the future to structure their business.

So I've been approached with ideas about - okay, I can't get what I want at the moment. Yes, there's these new gTLDs out there. So that kind of could work for me. But it's still not quite what I want. So the .com space, no nothing that I can get hold of unless I go and pay somebody an extortion amount of money. So Martin, what can I do about that?

So talking them though that process there's some short-term wins in terms of using the new gTLDs at least for an interim period of time. But then to go forward and leapfrog into running their own .brand so their business empire can gradually fall into a zone of the Internet that they control, they run and they can push out new products, new services, new parts to their organization very effectively, very quickly without the onerous task of trying to buy back any spaces that exist on the gTLDs as we see them now.

So that's an interesting factor I think to relay is that it's not just the big corporates that are coming into this space. It is going down the market. And so with fees if they come down, if it's simplified process, all of these things would start to work towards other opportunities coming in from those players that you wouldn't ordinarily have expected to come forward at this stage for looking for .brand.

So I don't know if anybody else has got any experiences they want to share just to support that. But it would be interesting just to - well I saw a few nods anyway. So we know that there's some queues forming for the next round application window, whatever it's going to be.

Woman: There's a comment. There's a comment on Adobe from Michael Flemming.

Martin Sutton: Just come forward.

Michael Flemming:     I'm sorry.  It's just that (unintelligible).

Woman:     So as of today there are about 2200 plus brand TLD second level domains that are set with MX (directories) to use emails.  However, we are unable to see internally how they are using those.

Man:     (Unintelligible).

Woman:     No problem.  Is there we can get (a handheld)?  Is there a handheld mic?

Man:     (Unintelligible).

Woman:     Thank you.

Martin Sutton:     So thanks Michael.  It's fate rather than a question.

Michael Flemming:     It was a comment.

Martin Sutton:     Thank you.

Michael Flemming:     I put comment…

Martin Sutton:     I'm sorry.  Yes you did.  Sorry.  Okay.  All right.  Then just moving ahead and to sort of bring this session towards a close and any further questions and answers.  I just thought I'd mention some of things that we've been doing and got lined up ahead.

So some of this work that we do is obviously focused around ICANN policies and the GDD elements.  So this week we had the opportunity to run a BRG workshop for its members and go through some of the pains and the gains of activating a TLD.

So we do take those opportunities as much as possible to have that face-to-face engagement and working through some of the issues and those cheerful moments of when it all works to celebrate.

And in going forward we're also actively working with - making sure that the GDD Summit appreciates that there needs to be different strands or different sessions available that are more focused for .brands where they're not worried about distributing domain names and they probably want to understand a bit more about how things work because this is never their core business.

So look out for those. GDD Summit to be hosted in Madrid in May. And the draft agenda has already been published. So it's worth taking a look to see if there's enough on there to interest you and wet your appetite to come along.

And also external events. So we sit on various panels externally trying to raise awareness or, you know, what's happened in this space, just similar today in terms of saying things are being activated, make them aware what - how things are moving along.

Also about, you know, what is likely to happen for the next round in terms of timeframes, which is always a good guesstimate. So we take the opportunity to do external events as well.

So we support events and one in particular coming up later in the year is brands and domains in The Hague later this year in October. I think there's some cards there if you're interested. Come pick those up and it's got more details on - for that event.

And then really I know we've taken some questions and comments along the way. But please we've got a few minutes left to go through any questions with you here today. Hi (Jay).

(Jay): Hi. Yes, I'm (Jay). I'm not with the BRG. With top-level spectrum. We just bought .observer off of a .brand because they didn't want to go forward with being a .brand. They're a news organization. They're not making a lot of money, so.

Yes. I think that a lot of - a lot of brands that have applied for generic top level domain names if they didn't want to carry forward, they could find a buyer as well, so. Jut putting that out there.

Martin Sutton: Nice plug.

Woman: Let them know they…

Martin Sutton: Yes. Please. If you need to move forward and ask your question, plenty of microphones around the room. Don't be shy. Nick.

Nick Wood: Yes. Nick Wood from (unintelligible). Martin, you mentioned that you've been speaking to people interested in applying in the future. But many people here have been involved in first round applications. We've probably all heard the same type of things, which is the brands were applying because they were interested in control or security. They're interested in a platform for innovation.

But really for many of the brands it was about a defensive play. They were concerned about someone else - different class of goods and services coming in. What have you been hearing now for Round 2?

Have you had people coming back saying it's still about defense or people think it's going to be easier? Because if people do think it's going to be easier, by the way, then please turn out for things like subsequent procedures and other working groups that are going on here because you can influence what happens in the - in subsequent procedures or Round 2 by being there and talking about things like singulars or plurals.

So if there's an existing application for singular, would you encourage someone to allow a plural? These are really difficult questions. And anyone here can go and make their voice heard. And it's really important you do.

But have heard is it about defense? Is it about this opportunity to use it Martin? And, you know, Roland or (Luke) or someone, what are you hearing?

Martin Sutton: I'm happy to start with (Karen).

(Karen): I was just going to give a plug for what Nick was saying. As the Chair of the working group that is considering singulars or plural, please join us. We do need input for Track 3.

Martin Sutton: So…

Woman: He's coming.

Martin Sutton: …come on Michael.

Michael Flemming: I think with a name like Mike, they'd give me my own microphone. But I just wanted to echo what (Karen) said. For anyone that wants to learn about the Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group, feel free to reach out to me after this session. I'll answer any questions and send you the link where you can sign up. Believe me, I want you in the Working Track 2, which I co-Chair. Thank you.

Martin Sutton: Thanks Michael. Right. So for shameless plugs and for all of the working track work, yes, great. And if you have got something that you don't want any longer (Jay)'s going to buy it off you before you get out the door.

But in response to Nick's question, I think it's different. I think this time around there'll be less coming in with the initial idea of protecting their brand. It will be more of a business case that they want to execute as quickly as possible to activate, see it work and take advantage of leaping forward.

I'm sure that they don't want the pain of 2012 round. So any way to simplify that including cost would be helpful. And I think that would open the market up even further.

But certainly they're going to be coming in with a business case and intent to use. And for those that have been shy so far in terms of launching or having faced various difficulties internally, there might be that encouragement also to activate. Roland.

Roland LaPlante: Yes. Thanks. Roland LaPlante from Afilias. We're a registry service provider. We have - we did have one customers that's going to apply in the next round for brand purposes.

But the senior guy came to an ICANN meeting and we introduced him to all the senior people at ICANN. And he walked out shaking his head. He could not figure out how to engage with the community or engage with the decision process. He didn't understand the decision process. It is kind of convoluted. I mean, (Yurin) talked this morning about the 25 meter long process thing that he was trying to develop that's taken six months.

It's - if somehow we can make that intelligible to folks who've never engaged like and don't know who ICANN is and make that look like it's a - make it look like it's logical and reasonable and approachable, that would dramatically I think enhance the engagement from brand people who are actually, you know, doing a real day job every day and not doing this kind of stuff.

Martin Sutton: Good luck Raymond. I agree. I mean it's something that many of them will not ever want to face. This will be at arm's length to them. But as long as

they get their product and service turned on and switched on ready to go, that's what they're more focused on. And they will not really want to get wrapped up into policy development work and…

Roland LaPlante: Yes. Totally not predictable to most people though. There's no timetable. There's no specific set of things they have to do. There's no guidebook. There's no - I mean there's only the historical stuff all of which is changing and being discussed at 50 different working groups. It's really hard for them to get their minds around it.

Cecilia Smith: Yes. And Roland, I mean that's exactly what the - one of the core functions that the BRG provides. It's taking this chaos of ICANN that nobody understands and bringing it back to corporations so that they - we can give them bite size information to digest.

I mean telling our executives that yes, we paid for something be we can't use it after three years and you can't use it in certain ways or you can't use certain second levels in certain ways is a really difficult conversation to tell our marketing department what we can and can't do because ICANN said so.

Roland LaPlante: Yes.

Cecelia Smith: You know. So trying to distill that to bite size pieces and try to put timelines around that and communicate that in a different way is what we are here for. And many of our members don't attend ICANN because of this craziness, right. I mean there's a handful of us that's always here. But many don't and they choose not to. (Jay).

(Jay): I think it's good to point out to the brands that maybe not - or following so closely that the two character names are pretty much wide open at this point. And I know a lot of brands would probably like to use the two characters to have a brand strategy across the globe.

Woman:          Okay.

(Karen):        To follow up on the idea of making it more understandable and making the mountain not quite so arduous to climb, one of the ideas that's currently being discussed within the Subsequent Procedures is instead of the 350 page applicant guidebook that was last round, is that all of that information will be necessary in the next round.

But almost creating an AGB for dummies so that the business people and the companies that are applying - especially the brands or the communities who aren't professional registry operators can have an application guide process book that they can read in their terms that makes, you know, sense to them.

And then we'll have this other document that is, you know, at the higher normal ICANN level. So there are a lot of things - there are things being considered to make it not so scary in the future.

Jordan Buchanan: Thanks. It's Jordan Buchanan again. So I think Martin and I think to a certain extent Roland both sort of are - many people around this room are sort of talking about a new round for brands in a - a new round that will allow brands whether or not it also allows other things as almost like a - as an implicitly good outcome.

And I think it would be interesting to think about why we think that's the case. Obviously like it - if you look at it from the perspective of the BRG want to have more members, that's great. But is that good for the world?

Obviously if you look at it from the perspective of affiliates, then you want to have more customers. Looks good but is it good for the world? If you look at it from the perspective of consultancy, you get more customers, that's good.

But like why is this actually helpful especially when you look at the 2012 round and you see that very many brands applied but not many of them are using the TLDs.

So I really like the notion Martin that there are people waiting, the have ideas of exactly what they want to do and they're not just, you know, it's not just people want them for the sake of getting them because it seems like roughly that's what happened last time around.

And I think if you guys could try to consolidate from the - whether it's the BRG's perspective or .brands in particular, why are these valuable? Why should there be more .brands? Because that's really missing from the conversation today.

I think there's a lot of people acting under the assumption that we want to have more of these things but I think that needs to be accompanied by a statement of why it would be valuable to the world.

And I think that will really help advance the work more than being involved in the work streams because there's really no pressure on the work streams to complete any time soon because there's no - there's many people that don't want there to be additional TLDs. Right.

And until there's a good argument for why there should be more TLDs, there's going to continue to be backpressure on the process. And so to the extent you're talking with people that have really strong ideas about how to, you know, they - how to use names in order to advance progress on the Internet and make business better, I think you're going to continue to sort of see slow going.

Martin Sutton: Thanks. I think that's a really useful point. And we'll take that away as well. But I think in terms of whether it's BRG or not, it, you know, there's a lot of

business cases that were formed.  It's probably got very common themes in those and that can be extrapolated into (that stage).  Good point.  (Jack).

(Jack):  Yes.  Just to follow up on the cost.  I remember that in many conversations we found ourselves discussing with the customers and trying to explain what the $185,000 compared to the word domain name was.

And I found myself in a situation when (I felt and glad to be mine).  But the ICANN advocate.  And having to explain that ICANN was a non-profit organization that nothing was going to be kept by the members for themselves and so on.

So the general idea behind that I think that if there is a next round and ICANN can be even more clear and advertise more than these are costs which will be made so your .brand can be born because of the structure, because it's a complex process and nothing will be kept, you know.

This is money that we will use for you and not money that will be kept in any way because we're non-profit, because we're working for the community.  That might help a lot the future eventual applicants feeling that the money is legitimate versus what they are looking at.

Man:  Hello.  I would like to turn now to those domain names that are not active.  And I would like to know a little bit more of what's happening to them.  I mean are they going to be (unintelligible) or are companies thinking about them?  Is it really needed to keep them if you're not planning to use them?  Are there any numbers of the companies that have returned them or I mean now looking at the other side of the coin, what is happening to those domains?

Martin Sutton:  So you mean within their brand TLD.  So there could be a variety of reasons that you'd need to go one to one to be able to try and find out what those reasons would be.

But they could be testing things out. They could be used internally for some reasons, which they're not going to publicize externally. So it could be creating a structure that they're going to apply in the future so that they've got it - they're ready and can start putting on content if they want or to set up email, whatever.

So I think there's going to be such a variety of reasons. It would be a matter of having to talk individually to any of those brands that they've got a hoard of second level domains that appear to be inactive. Jordan.

Jordan Buchanan: Just to echo the point that (Jay) made earlier though. If you do have a brand that you're not sure what to do with, it is probably not the right thing to do to just give it up without investigating other options. Just as by way of anecdote, I won't mention the brand.

But internally someone - a team came to me recently and said oh we'd really like to get the TLD, whatever, 111. And I was like, "Well that's too bad. You're going to have to wait a while." Then I went and looked and someone had applied for this TLD. A brand had applied for this TLD.

And then subsequently they had withdrawn their application. And so we would have been happy to pay that brand probably a reasonably large sum of money in order to take over their TLD. But since they dropped out, it never got delegated and that wasn't an option.

So I would definitely, you know, talk to (Jay), talk to someone. But these are valuable resources, probably well in excess of the initial application fee. So I wouldn't just drop them if you can't quite figure out what to do with them.

Martin Sutton: I think there are a lot of the inactive ones anyway at the moment are - it's still a wait and see. What shall I do? Because I'd like to see some innovation but I haven't seen it yet. So they're going to be watching for a period of time.

Quite happy to have it on the shelf there ready to use when it's most appropriate for that organization to use it.

It's one of many, many, many (chores) that business has got to try and run its organization and supply its customers and businesses. So I think this is still early days. Very early days.

Cecilia Smith: So I think we're at the end of our time. We've actually passed the - like two minutes. So thank you everyone for sitting in on the BRG Trends and Use Cases especially for those who've been standing the whole hour. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Woman: You can stop the recording now.

Man: Yes. I'm with BRG and…

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