

**GNSO/SSAC
International Registration Data Working Group
TRANSCRIPTION
Monday 02 August 2010 at 14:00 UTC**

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Present for the teleconference:

Edmon Chung – Group Leader

Avri Doria - NCSG

Rafik Dammak -- GNSO Non-Commercial Users Stakeholder Group

Bob Hutchinson, GNSO Commercial Stakeholder Group

Yao Jiankang, GNSO Registry Stakeholder Group, CNNIC

Ram Mohan - Afiliias – SSAC Board liaison

James Galvin - SSAC, Afiliias

ICANN Staff

Julie Hedlund

Dave Piscitello

Steve Sheng

Gisella Gruber-White

Absent apologies:

Steven Metalitz -- GNSO Intellectual Property Interests Constituency, Commercial

Andrei Kolesnikov -- Nominating Committee Appointee

Coordinator: Thank you. The recordings have been started. Please go ahead.

Julie Hedlund: Thank you. Gisella, do you want to a roll call? Or, I can.

Gisella Gruber-White: Absolutely. I'll do that with pleasure for you. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening to everyone on today's IRD call on Monday, August 2. We have Edmon Chung, Rafik Dammark, Ram Mohan, Jim Galvin, Avri Doria. From staff we have Julie Hedlund, Steve Sheng, and myself Gisella Gruber-White. We have apologies from Steve Metalitz and Andre Kalashnikov. And, if I could please remind everyone to state their names when speaking for transcript purposes.

Thank you. Over to you Edmon and Julie.

Julie Hedlund: Thank you very much Gisella for your help, and we really appreciate it. I actually probably am going to ask Steve Sheng to assist. There's been some discussion on the list concerning variants, and I think that if it's okay with you Edmon, we were hoping to perhaps continue that discussion a bit here. And, Steve also sent around a document to assist in our discussion on Friday, and perhaps he'd like to speak a little bit about that as well. Steve.

Steve Sheng: Hi. Good morning everyone. Yes. As everyone know, variants of IDN labels that have more than one representations. In the Brussels meeting, someone from the community raised that for Indian languages, the potential variants could be like tens if not hundreds. And displaying and querying all of them could be a challenge. And so, we've been discussing on the email group what's the best way to query and display the IDN variants?

And one (unintelligible) suggested that - mentioned that in (sealing) - although they have many variants, they treat them into two categories. The delegated variants. That's the variants they actually put into the DNS file, and the other is the reserved variants. That means it's not in the zone file, but no one can register that domain name. And, the only - and the variants only available in the zone file are available for query and display.

So, I was wondering what does the working group think of this type of kind of solution to variants, where there potentially could be tens if not hundreds of variants for given TLDs - a given IDN label?

Thoughts?

Hello?

(Dave): Hi, Steve. It's (Dave). You're still alive. I just think...

Avri Doria: Yes. I - this is Avri. My attention wandered for a second. What solution did you propose? I - or did you? I'm confused.

((Crosstalk))

Man: Yes, Steve. Could you ask this question...

Avri Doria: I was stuck already on the two definitions of the variants, that accepting the notion that we've widened the notion of variants. But, I didn't understand what was being proposed as a solution.

Steve Sheng: Okay. So, sorry I'm not explaining clearly enough. So, variants are the IDN labels that have multiple representations in a given language. For example, in Chinese an IDN label in simplified in Chinese could have like traditional representation, and that could be a mixture of - even the character in the traditional representation, there could be variants. So, you could see a combination - you know, there could be lots of variants.

And one of the challenge here raised for Whois, is we require them to display all of the variants, then there could be a service level problem. So, the registries have service level requirements, and they may not be able to meet that requirement. I mean to what extent that is true, I'm not sure. But, that's what the registry has raised.

And then you know, it also posed a technical challenge. The registry has to keep you know, so many of these you know, variants available for query as well. And therefore, I think the solution being proposed is sometimes although a domain has many variants but only a few is put into the DNS zone file, that those names can actually be resolved if you put those in the browser. And, the proposal is that only to allow query and display of both variants. So, that's the solution that's being proposed.

Jim Galvin: I guess I'm trying to understand -- Steve, this is Jim Galvin -- what the alternative would be? I mean, are you suggesting - I would presume by default that you would always display what's in the zone and what's there. So, I'm trying to understand what the counter-proposal is that you're proposing something different against? There's an option to only ever display US ASCII, which is one of the things that we've talked about here. An option to display just one variant. There's an option to display all variants. But presumably in all of those cases, it would be whatever is in the zone file.

So, I'm - I guess I'm still not understanding what you're proposing against what's already on the table. What are you trying to balance against?

Steve Sheng: Well Jim, so here is - well, thank you for that point. So, here is an alternative. We want the users, at the general user experience question. We want the users to be query - to any variants of the label. So, let's say you know a given IDN label have 100 variants, only two of them is in the DNS zone file. But maybe a user prefer to query the other 98? You know, what would be - what will the kind of behavior that we want to show to the user when they - when he or she queried the other 98?

((Crosstalk))

Man: Hello?

Steve Sheng: (Unintelligible) want to say you know, domain reserved? Or, do we just say the parent - go ahead, Jim.

Jim Galvin: Yes. Right. So, I mean I think my response is what I said. I think that you respond to what's in the zone files. I mean although a language might have 100 variants, if 98 of them have not been defined in the DNS, then it's not at all clear to me how an authoritative server would respond to a query for a variant it knows nothing about.

Avri Doria: Yes. And this is Avri. If I can add. You also wouldn't want anyone to be able to say sort of to automatically reserve all of the possible variants that someone may think of, because that's making a lot of assumptions that I don't know that anyone, and certainly any system would be able to make at that point for the unregistered variants among them.

You know, I don't know how the dealing with the variants that aren't registered, or variants where some variant may be registered but they aren't going to be dealt with either at the first level, second level, third level; whatever. But, I don't see how Whois could make an assumption on that unless there had been some specific act of making a decision, other than to say that they're not registered.

Steve Sheng: Yes. I think that's a fair point. But in many cases, the registries reserve them. I mean, I'm not a - I think there are experts here that can speak better than myself. My understanding is that when there are more than - let's say when there are more variants than a DNS can accommodate, the registry or the registrar - oh, I think in this case, the registry put some in the DNS and reserve the rest so nobody can register them. I think that's the practice for some already.

And then, the registrant can choose which variant they want to activate. Because you know, maybe users prefer to see a variant of certain form in the

Web browsers that they may choose to prefer to activate another variant.
Then, they may have to pay for that.

And these are already in the - I think they are already in the registry
databases somehow. I mean...

Jim Galvin: Right. I mean, I think that's the answer, Steve. I mean, if the name is
registered, then Whois responds. And if it's not, then it doesn't. So, if there
are you know 98 variants, as long as they've been registered whether or not
they appear in the zone, then when you do a Whois query, you're going to get
the information about it.

Avri Doria: Yes. That's how most reserves were registered. Is that an incorrect thinking
on my part? They're not in the zone file, but they're registered?

Jim Galvin: That's correct. Reserved names are registered.

Steve Sheng: I think I may speak out of my expertise here. Edmon or Ram, who are experts
in IDNs, would you chime in and - I may speak out of my expertise.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon. I think it's probably - it seems like we have some sort of an
agreement that if the name is in the DNS then it should respond. So, that
seems to be clear. What is really the only part that's not clear is whether the
reserved ones, the registry should respond to. Am I right? I mean, everybody
feel that at least, the ones that are in the zones should at least - at least the
Whois should respond to. I think that seems to make sense.

The big question is whether the other reserved ones need to be - you know,
the registry needs to as a requirement respond to. I think that in that case, my
view would probably be that it's probably not necessary. I don't think all
reserved names at this point need to be in the Whois.

I'm having a little bit of Internet problem here. I was trying to figure out my contract - well, the registry contract, whether that's in there. But, I think there - I don't think there is any requirement for reserved names to appear in the Whois. So if that's the case, then you know, I think that it doesn't have to be required. If a registry so chooses that the reserved names are also responded to, the individual registry is deficient. That sort of seems like a reasonable way to think about it.

Steve Sheng: Okay. That's an excellent point. So, only display - only those in the DNS should be queried and displayed. All right.

Ram? Any thoughts Ram?

Oh, I guess Ram is not on the line.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon again. I sort of want to add a little bit to that. While I did say DNS, there are peculiar situations where a name is registered. And for example, the named servers are not given. It's still registered and Whois is still given. In those cases, I think it really depends on the language policy which variants are automatically sort of delegated to the registrant. Really, those are the ones that we're looking at, and you know I think that corresponds to what (Yow) mentioned in terms of the (scenic) handling the matter. You know, that at least to me seems like a reasonable approach.

Jim Galvin: This is Jim again, and I - you know, I think that - I guess I'm not familiar with a broad spectrum of registry agreements. But you know of those that I know of, you are required. I mean if the name is registered, then Whois has to respond for it. And, I think it's a pretty simple statement and pretty simple concept. You don't get to arbitrarily make choices about what you're going to reply to and what you're not. And you know, the DNS is an entirely different thing, separate from the registry database.

So you know - I mean if you want allow for a registry agreement to do something different, then you know, you just say that you respond to everything in the database - everything in the registry unless otherwise directed by an agreement, right? I don't think that we change the rules.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon again. While we - well, what you said is right I think in terms of registrars, but the question is whether reserved ones are registered. There are plenty of reserved TLDs by now, and they don't appear in IANA Whois either. I don't think in the issue of reserved names, that -- I may be wrong -- but it's unclear. In terms of registered, yes you are right.

Jim Galvin: So, you're talking about reserved TLDs.

Edmon Chung: Yes, TLDs, but reserved names in the second level as well.

Steve Sheng: Yes. But I think Edmon was using a knowledge - I think for the IDN variants, it's similar to like a reserved TLD type of situation where nobody can register it.

Another proposal could be - so if in India it's reserved, it's know to be a variant of a given label and is reserved. Maybe as a general user experience, we can allow a user to query it, but then in the display we display saying something like this name is a reserved variant of that. You know, please (rate that) for Whois or something. Does that work?

Jim Galvin: You know, I mean I think what bothers me about this is that in order for Whois to respond, it has to know something, and you know you have to know where the Whois server is for the particular name that you're asking about. I mean, that's the end, and that's sort of an (unintelligible) kind of knowledge, right. Most people who do - individual users who do Whois lookups are going to go to a Web site somewhere, which means the TLD has to exist, because it'd have to be in the DNS in order to get to the Web site which is going to have the little Whois you know, input box.

The alternative, if I'm going to use some kind of command line thing, is I have to know the (unintelligible) name - the DNS name of the Whois server for the name that I want to look up, and I put that on the command line as part of looking it up, right. So, I think that TLDs and alias TLDs, or variant TLDs have a special situation here in this whole system, unlike second, third, and fourth level names which could be in the registry but not in the DNS.

For a variant TLD to you know, exist -- shall we say "exist" -- it has to both be in the registry and in the DNS; otherwise, things just don't work.

Edmon Chung: Jim, this is Edmon. I think you probably got me wrong when I talked about the TLD analogy. What I was saying is that the IANA Whois, which is the Whois for the root zone, doesn't provide information about reserved names. And, some TLD registries - the registry - the TLD Whois probably doesn't provide Whois data for reserved names either. That was the analogy I was talking about, not a variant TLD.

It had nothing to do with variant TLDs. It was about you know, TLDs that are reserved such as .www for example. That is a reserved name in the TLD level - in the TLD zone, and in the root zone, but the - like the root Whois, which is the IANA Whois, doesn't provide that information. So in the second level domain space, the registry - the TLD registry Whois may decide that - you know, whether or not to respond to Whois queries for reserved names. That was the analogy that I wanted to draw.

Jim Galvin: Okay. Thank you for that. So - then, I think the - so the question that we're asking here is do we want to take a position on reserved names in TLDs? And, those reserved names could be because of variants or whatever other special purpose. Would that be correct? Do I have that right?

Edmon Chung: Right. I think that is a question that we might need to ask when we talk about variants, because there are variants where they are only reserved and you

know, what - it's - whether you considered them registered, it could be a matter of policy for the registry.

Jim Galvin: Okay. So with that, then I think - I mean, I'll go back to the answer that I had suggested before, which I think you said something similar earlier -- Edmon -- and that is that we can certainly call out as a question as to whether or not there needs to be a more uniform policy with respect to reserved names. Whether they be because of variants or other special purposes.

But you know absent that, maybe we need a default recommendation that - we should decide on a default recommendation of whether or not Whois should always respond or not respond to reserved names, which of course could be superseded by whatever happens to be specified in the registry agreement with ICANN. Would that be right?

Ram Mohan: This is Ram. Jim, this is Ram. I'm wondering why we're talking about Whois - what Whois should display for these kinds of names, et cetera. Is that really what our group is about? I mean, isn't that the kind of stuff that a contractor or other places are going to take care of?

Jim Galvin: The issue came up...

((Crosstalk))

Ram Mohan: Rather than...

Jim Galvin: Yes. The issue came up because Steve asked the question what happens when there are hundreds of variants? And you know, some of them may be reserved, but not otherwise registered or visible. And, how do we want to respond to those? What advice do we want to provide with respect to them?

Avri Doria: This is Avri. Something I'd like to add on that, but divide into to questions. On what should be the case is yes. Is a policy created somewhere else on

whether there's a potential for the tool or requirement of the service to display things other than what is probably in the Whois is the separate question. So I think we're answering not the should they be, but should it be possible for? If I understand what our group task is. It's to talk about what it should be possible to do, not what should necessarily be done.

Ram Mohan: Okay. Good. Thank you. That is helpful for me because I would rather - I would very much want to keep our group on what it should be possible to do rather than what should be done. Because, what should be done should be decided elsewhere.

Steve Sheng: So Ram, what do you think will be the possible to do?

Ram Mohan: Well, I mean it doesn't. And Steve, that really ties into what is - the prior discussion, my intervention was to clearly separate these two things that Avri has so helpfully and more articulately than I have said it. That's that our focus is on what the capabilities ought to be rather than whether those capabilities should be deployed, or in what manner they should be deployed. Because that is I don't think in our (arena).

Jim Galvin: Right. So I mean, I think the answer is we simply call out this question and observe that this is an issue. How do we deal with large numbers of variants, which is what was saying right. So, we call out as an issue that if there are a large number of variants, there's a question of whether or not there should be a specific action. And, I didn't - I wasn't suggesting that we necessarily had to decide here, but certainly related questions are that if you have all of these, do you want to respond to them? Do you want to have a default?

I would think that our advice regarding this issue is to call out the question, right?

Ram Mohan: Yes. Jim, I think that the danger in talking about variants as a homogenous thing is that it's not. And in this area, we might be better advised to not only

just call out the question, but to explicitly ask for some level of consultation for the major language groups that have to deal with variant issues. What is the local practice, or what is the best current practice, if you will? Or, to ask for such best current practices to get defined or documented. Because, I fear that one size do not fit all when it comes to variants.

Steve Sheng: Excellent Point. To ask for major languages and local practices.

Now Ram and others as well, you know Jim suggested, we can call out this issue, but maybe we don't say anything about it. Is that - we don't make any recommendations? Is that all right, or is that you're saying? I'm happy...

Jim Galvin: No. I'm saying that we call out the question, and then like Ram said, what we do is we suggest that the question should be answered or should be addressed. And perhaps some best practices developed if possible, but noting that the major language groups that had this issue you know, should themselves get together or as part of a larger group get together and talk about this issue and decide how they're going to deal with it.

So, our advice is to call out the question and recommend that some action be taken by those groups that are most affected by this. That's what I heard.

Steve Sheng: And, who will...

Ram Mohan: My thought is that you know, I think this consultation with the language groups - it's tough again. It's an activity that can get coordinated from within ICANN. It can be something that is done between the G, and the CC, and the (unintelligible) again. But you know, this working group kind of lays out the groundwork for what is the set of problems, or at least some set of problems, and then they might need to be further study groups created in order to actually determine what kind of answers are the appropriate answers.

You know, variants is - the experience - my experience with variants is very similar to my experience slicing onions; you know, lots of tears and many layers. And, I just think that that's - our advice should be to A, suggest that this kind of work be done. And then B, I think actually that ICANN is a natural home for it, but it's not necessarily the only place where this discussion ought to be started.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon. After that, I wonder if it's appropriate to add some examples of what is being done by certain language groups.

Ram Mohan: Just to quickly respond to that, Edmond. I think we could add some examples. The only caution I would advise is that we be willing to either simply state it as - on an as is basis. In other words, we do no validation. We don't provide any extra credibility to the claims that whatever group - whatever example is being brought out.

My concern is that we put something out and then we have some expert from somewhere criticize that piece saying it's riddled with errors or it's factually incorrect or something like that and for the sake of an unresearched example we take away focus from the main point.

Edmon Chung: I hear you but at the same time if we try to describe it too vaguely I worry that, you know, the reverse would happen in a way that actually distracts people from the thing being discussed as well.

Ram Mohan: Yes, don't mistake me, Edmon, I am in favor of adding the example but I'm more specifically - I'm proposing that such examples be placed in clearly labeled sections, for example in appendices with clear labeling that we are not doing any extra validation or we're not checking the validity of these examples or even of the methodology used we're simply providing it for the sake of illustration.

You know, so I want to walk away - be able to walk away from it if somebody comes up and says this thing is all wet we can say but this is what is reported by the local folks. If you have a beef with it take it up with them and not with us.

Edmon Chung: Yeah I think that sounds reasonable.

Steve Sheng: What do others on the call think about Ram's and Jim's suggestion?

Avri Doria: This is Avri. I think it's useful to collect information of how others have approached this. And I think putting disclaimers on that say this is as we received, you know, etcetera is always a good idea when that's the case.

I mean, you know, it's just normal to include something, put it in appendix, don't treat it as truth but don't, you know, to sort of be respectful to the example and say, you know, this is documented as-is, no warranty is implied and not go into, you know, necessarily indicate that we want to walk away with it because people might not like it but just be blunt and say what it is. That's how I envision that.

Steve Sheng: Thank you Avri. See if I can understand the - at least summarize the conversation here. It seems that Ram suggested - and Jim - that we outline the issue of variants in the IRD - in the report and also the problems that we discussed that could be many variants that have issues and recommend these - maybe ICANN for this or maybe the, you know, the GNSO, ccNSO form a study group to study the query and (unintelligible) variants in Whois.

And that study group should get input from the major language groups and registries of it and those (unintelligible) handle variants. Is that correct summary or...

Jim Galvin: Yeah, Steve. I think you did an excellent job certainly of paraphrasing my thoughts into something that is clearly actionable.

Steve Sheng: Okay thanks.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon. Just one I guess maybe adjustment - I'm not sure but maybe I heard it incorrectly but recommending that some study be done and where it's done is that - is that what we want to do? I think, you know, I think it could make sense. I'm just - I just want to make sure that that is part of the recommendation that we want to put out.

Ram Mohan: This is Ram. I'm comfortable...

((Crosstalk))

Avri Doria: Oh sorry.

Ram Mohan: Sorry. I am completely comfortable making that recommendation, Edmon, and making the suggestion that the study be done. And suggesting potential homes for that study there's got to be another cross (unintelligible) or cross-SO group for so. But I am comfortable with it.

Avri Doria: This is Avri. Can I ask something - or question something? I think it makes sense except that I don't understand why we're suggesting the creation of yet another group to figure this out. That I don't understand; we've already sort of got a group or is it that this group isn't wide enough?

Because looking at that information of what is done and what might be needed in a new service unless I totally understand - misunderstand this group's scope doesn't seem to need a new group that may need some checking of our scope with our, you know, our convening the group or chartering the group.

But - or is it that, you know, some group is missing from this (unintelligible) how many groups are making this one up so...

((Crosstalk))

Ram Mohan: I guess Avri.

Avri Doria: Is it that we don't have - I forget whether we have ccNSO in this group or not?

Ram Mohan: And Julie and Steve can answer the ccNSO question. This is Ram. My - I don't have a problem with this group taking it up. Once the group's scope is thus defined. I feel like right now our scope is not defined enough to talk about, you know, what should - not - I think I thought our group's charter was much more focused on what kinds of internationalized registration data should be displayed, how they would be displayed etcetera.

And the variants issue is a little bit more than just internationalized registration data sitting in a database it's - there are other threads that inform it so therefore my slight reluctance. But I can certainly be persuaded that this group's charter ought to get expanded or its scope ought to be revisited and we get their appropriate endorsement for that we can go and do it.

And I don't even know if you need endorsements I'm simply saying that I'm happy for - the group has sufficient knowledge - knowledgeable people in it. And if you need to add more people then we should go get duly chartered to add those people that we can go and finish that piece of work. I don't have a problem with that.

Avri Doria: Okay thanks. This is Avri again. Just because the amount of bureaucratic expense that's involved in starting up another - yet another working group just was something that I was looking to avoid if it could be avoided.

Steve Sheng: Understood.

Ram Mohan: Okay.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon. I think if I got that conversation correct then, you know, we really shouldn't throw the ball away just yet. We - in our document that will come out we should talk about this that we need to do more study but not necessarily throw it out to any particular group. Is that what I gather from the discussion that we just had?

Ram Mohan: Yeah. Edmon this is Ram. That's what I took away from it. And it also means that potentially it means that this group does not issue a final report that it issues a report that says here is the state of where we are and here is where we're navigating to.

But, you know, as a co-chair one of the things to look at is what is our scope? What is our charter and whether, you know, the CCs and other appropriate folks are engaged and if not to make the - to ensure that the charter allows them to get engaged.

Edmon Chung: Right, okay. Steve does that help clarify - the issue and you're comfortable with it?

Steve Sheng: Yes, I'm fine with - whatever the working group come up.

Avri Doria: As long as...

((Crosstalk))

Steve Sheng: I will take this (unintelligible) and try that.

Bob Hutchinson: Yes, this is Bob Hutchinson. Hello?

Edmon Chung: Go ahead Bob.

Bob Hutchinson: Yeah, I guess I agree with the recommendation or the consensus that is forming that we should make a proposal but at some point it's going to have to be tested by a wide variation of the languages that are going to have to implement it.

And I don't know whether this group is going to do that before or could do that before we make a final report or whether we would just make a proposal and say it has not been tested by the wider ICANN community. But I think for variants we should make a proposal that is a uniform way of dealing with variants.

Ram Mohan: This is Ram. Bob I'm - I'm really fearful of a uniform way of dealing with variants because I don't think - at least with my limited knowledge I don't believe such a - an (unintelligible) actually exist. Several technical groups have come together to try to find a uniform way. And I haven't seen that actually work so far.

So I guess what I'm proposing is somewhat more modest. I'm suggesting that we try to get to uniform best practices on a, you know, based on different languages that have variants issues and then to see if we can at least evangelize that and try and arrive at some uniformity. But it'll have to be kind of heterogeneous uniformity rather than a homogenous uniformity.

Bob Hutchinson: Are you mostly concerned about historical handling of variants or going forward with IDNs, various internationalized new registries or is it a combination of both?

Ram Mohan: It's probably - this is Ram. It's probably neither; it's - let me give you a couple of specific examples. The way variants are handled in say the CJK, the Chinese, Japanese, Korean experience is vastly different than the way variants would be handled in say the Arabic script experience.

Arabic as a language if you look at it each character has four different forms. And the form of a character is dependant upon the succeeding character that comes up with it. And even adding a space for example changes the form of the prior character.

So the way variants get handled in that kind of a right to left script vastly different - the principals that apply are vastly different from something that is geographic versus something that is purely alphabetic.

So I think what the different (unintelligible) that are in existence I find it difficult to imagine a single uniform set of methods to deal with variant display or variant - even variant recommendations. I hope that clarifies it.

Bob Hutchinson: No. I guess I'm missing the point. You know, as something either resolves through DNS or it doesn't, okay. And if it resolves through DNS then that variant should also respond through Whois.

Ram Mohan: So what I'm saying is that if you look at Arabic let's say Arabic language for example you can have a particular word that resolves through DNS that has variants of it that are not in Arabic language at all that are say in the Java language or that are in Urdu. And the Unicode code points are vastly different.

And the different ccTLD registries follow different policies for instance so the .sa registry from Saudi Arabia decides that it's only focused on the Arabic language not the script. And so if there is a word that is registered in Arabic it doesn't bother registering or reserving the variant in Farsi.

But that may be different for a gTLD. And even...

((Crosstalk))

Bob Hutchinson: Maybe I'm missing - I'm getting something wrong here. I'm not talking about creating policy about how the individual registries or the TLDs have policy around how variants can be created within their registration mechanism; I'm talking about once they do have a variant for a particular registration name that's essentially a computer problem. It's either - it either resolves or it doesn't resolve, okay?

Ram Mohan: And I understood. I guess what I'm saying that in some languages there are strings that would be considered variants but not labeled as such. And you will find registries that simply reserve them or block them from registration because they're variants but they're not - they don't actually sit - they're not labeled variants.

And what do you want to do about displaying something that clearly is - some set of folks would consider a variant but that the registry has decided it's just a reserved name?

Bob Hutchinson: Yes, once again this is an area where the given TLD has a policy about reserving names. There's kind of two classes of variance here, there's a reserve variant and there's a variant that's registered, okay? Is that the world that we're facing here that you're concerned about?

Ram Mohan: It's actually - yeah, that's certainly one subset of it but I think there are more than that Bob. You get the name that is registered then you get other visually similar names that are reserved as reserve variants. But, you know, you also get some cases in some languages where it is established kind of lore that certain other words are the same therefore they will not even be registered; they won't be - as a registrant you cannot even look up that name or register that name.

And, you know, when you're saying it should be a uniform variant policy all I'm pointing out as a specific examples is that you get edge cases where

something is considered a variant in the local community but is actually not treated as a variant in the registry.

Bob Hutchinson: Right. So that's a situation that is once again TLD-specific right? Because the final arbiter of how that gets handled has to be the registry.

Ram Mohan: Yes. And I don't disagree with you all I'm saying is that asking for a uniform variant policy I think is asking a lot. And I worry about that being an (unintelligible).

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon. (Unintelligible) to this. I guess I understand what, Ram, you're trying to say and Rob was trying to achieve. The question perhaps for this group is whether we sort of have identified two or three of these types of variants given the Whois - whether the Whois needs to respond or how it should respond. The question is whether we have the super set of the universe in such that we can have a sort of overarching policy for it.

And I guess Rob's point is that besides it being delegated and registered and it being reserved. And what else - what are the other possibilities? If there aren't then perhaps in the case of whether we could make a recommendation where it says anything that is in the zone or either - or automatically given to the registrant that should be queryable the Whois whereas for reserved ones it's purely up to the registry policies given the particular of the policies they have.

Is that - did I describe the question correctly?

Bob Hutchinson: I think that's a pretty accurate summary. That's what my sentiment is is we should document it and propose that each TLD has its own policy for the creation of variants but that variants come in a couple of different flavors and Whois deals with those flavors of variants in a particular way. Okay?

And I think from what I'm hearing that probably covers the problem. But like Ram says we may be ignorant of the intricacies of it in certain languages. And so I think that you - we can't - I certainly don't have the knowledge and I think nobody here could count - or can speak for all of the language or all the language options that we may have in TLDs.

So I think there is a certain amount of reserve or humbleness we need to go into this one with.

Man: This is (unintelligible). I think the current - (unintelligible) there is Arabic character or Arabic language is they have different (unintelligible) have different domain name registration or (unintelligible) registration policy. And - but I think is (unintelligible) because Whois policy is (unintelligible) or Whois (IRD) working group is focused on the variants (unintelligible) focused on how the variants are registered.

But this - whether you - any registry policy there are two kinds - two kinds of (unintelligible) names, some are reserved, some are input into DNS. So we discuss how to put - how to (unintelligible) domain names and (unintelligible) to display. So I think it's - different registration policy is not a problem for us. We just careful the variants which are putting into the DNS and the variants are reserved. Thank you.

Julie Hedlund: This is Julie. Steve, do you have a sense then of what you needed to capture from this discussion? You have any questions for the group or the...

Steve Sheng: So I'm a little bit confused here. It seems at the beginning a proposal that calls for a study to be done seems to be the way to go. But then later streams of conversation from Bob, from Edmon and from (unintelligible) seems to suggest that the registries make their own policies regarding variants and that's not - and we don't - the working group does not have anything to do with that.

And once they make the policy and the variants could be delegated or reserved. And then, you know, it's not too difficult for the IRD to make recommendations. So, you know, I hear a conversation going that way. So I guess I don't know who has the final word on this.

Edmon Chung: This is Edmon again. I think - Steve, I think you've got most of it correct. And I think - so perhaps the only confusion there is that, you know, we went down the path of discussing variant policies in general and I think - I don't think that's really where this group needs to talk about.

Everything that you summarized earlier I think is still valid. And what we, you know, it's general consensus of the group at least discussing here except for that whether, you know, there's a point that was brought up is not to throw the ball away and, you know, if the study is to be done (unintelligible) perhaps can also take it on, that might be in our report that that's group might continue to work on this.

The other thing is - the other thing to add which is from - resulting from the discussion we just had is also to ask one more question is whether it is possible, you know, whether it's possible to say that there really is just, you know, the primary domain that registered the variant and that are in the zone or active and reserved, three types. Have we covered everything?

Have we - we maybe what we can do is ask that question to the broader community because it seems like of course we don't - around the call today we don't have - we don't have coverage of all the languages. But if these are really technical the statuses that can happen at a registry perhaps it's not so bad to make some recommendations based on that framework.

Steve Sheng: Okay...

Edmon Chung: But we won't be able to - yeah, we won't be able to come up with a recommendation specifically for that at least not at this time.

Steve Sheng: Okay. All right that's very helpful. I can summarize that.

Julie Hedlund: I think we're - this is Julie - I think we're reaching the end of the call. We'll go ahead and schedule a call for two weeks. And I think maybe we'll stay at this same time if that's acceptable to people. I think it maybe works for - better for people who are in Asia rather than rotating to the later time which we were doing mainly for Australia for Jay to join but he hasn't been joining.

But Steve, before we sign off did you want to mention the document you sent around and perhaps tee it up for discussion at the next meeting?

Steve Sheng: Sure. So last week I sent a summary document of the working group discussions. This is really - so I take the PowerPoint presentation from Brussels and turn it into text as requested. I think this exercise is helpful at least it helps me to see, you know, to just general - just compile all the discussions we have so far.

And, you know, what we seem to have agreed on and what we do not have agreement and what are the issues that are left to tackle. So I encourage you to read that document, I think, and give some thoughts in terms of, you know, the next steps. And maybe in two weeks we can discuss that document? If Edmon or - if that's okay with you?

Edmon Chung: Sounds good.

Steve Sheng: Okay.

Julie Hedlund: Great. Well thank you everyone. It's now the top of the hour. I wan to thank everyone for joining us. And we will rejoin again in two weeks at the same time and we'll send out reminders and notes in the meantime.

Steve Sheng: Thank you.

Julie Hedlund: Thank you everyone. Bye-bye.

Bob Hutchinson: Thank you.

Avri Doria: Thanks everyone. Bye-bye.

END