
Strategic Outlook Trends Identification Session

Session 23

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Briefing provided by ICANN Multistakeholder Strategy and Strategic Initiatives (MSSI)

Background

In recent years, the ICANN organization initiated an annual process to identify and monitor the evolution of trends that affect ICANN and its larger ecosystem. The process entails collecting inputs from the ICANN community, Board and org. The exercise is beneficial to help surface opportunities

and challenges that lay ahead, inform planning and help with prioritization considerations. Coordination also occurs with risk management and short-term opportunities. For example, ICANN's new [strategic plan](#) was informed by this effort.

With the rapid evolution of the Internet, and the variety of influencing factors, trends may change rapidly in unexpected ways, and new trends may emerge. To give the community an opportunity to provide input into how those trends are evolving, ICANN org will hold a series of [Strategic Outlook Trends Sessions](#) at ICANN67, including a session with the GAC on Wednesday 11 March 2020.

The outputs collected through the process serve as important resource for the community, the Board and the org, in particular for prioritization discussions, and any adjustments to ICANN's planning processes.

Structure of the session

Participants will be presented with the trends identified in previous years as a basis for discussion. The group will be divided into subgroups to engage in informal brainstorming discussion, the output of which is shared back with the whole group to confirm observations.

Questions posed to participants will include: *How do you see trends evolving? Are there new trends? What impacts do these trends pose to ICANN, either in terms of threats or in terms of opportunities? What should be ICANN's top priorities?*

Subgroups will then share their conclusions with the whole group, for further discussion and group confirmation.

Trends identified in previous years

The following key trends were identified by the community in 2018.

- On **Security**: The exponential growth in security issues is challenging the stability of the domain name system and the root server system, as well as ICANN's ability to finance increasing investments required to ensure continued stability.
- On **ICANN's governance**: ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance, which grew to fit ICANN's needs, has the potential of becoming less effective and more expensive as it matures and scales up to respond to increasing needs of our community.
- On **Unique Identifiers System**: The rapid evolution of new technologies requires ICANN to be responsive to these changes and ensure that the unique identifiers system evolves and continues to serve the global Internet user base.
- On **Geopolitics**: The increasing importance of the Internet across all sectors increases the possibility of governments intervening to gain control over the DNS through legislation

and regulation. At the same time there is an increasing risk of Internet fragmentation as a result of geopolitical, technical, and organizational pressures.

- On **Financials**: Consolidation in the marketplace, continued uncertainty surrounding the expansion of the gTLD name space, and other factors are putting pressures on ICANN's ability to support the growing needs and demands of its global community.

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