Scams & Fraud Prevention

ccNSO & GAC Discussion Summary and emerging themes

Australia's National Framework: The Star of the Show

Australia's **National Anti-Scam Centre** emerged as a concrete example everyone wanted to hear about. Here's what makes it work:

The "Everyone Does Their Bit" Philosophy

- To pull off a scam, you need a bank, a digital platform, and a domain name - so everyone in that chain shares responsibility
- Think of it like a relay race: telcos, banks, registrars, and registries all have to hand off information and take action

Real-World Example

When AUDA (Australia's registry) spots a scam on a legitimate business site that's been trading for 20 years, they don't just shut it down. They call the business owner and say "Hey, you've been hacked" and help them clean it up.

What's Actually Working

Quick Action Process

- 30 days to respond to abuse reports
- Suspend first, delete later
- **Fun fact discovered:** Scammers love Friday nights!

The Validation Advantage

- Australia's presence requirement (you need to be in Australia to register .au) significantly reduces malicious registrations
- Though not foolproof - stolen identities are still an issue (if you don't report your lost driver's license, someone can still use it)

Multi-Stakeholder "Fusion Cells"

- Australia brings together experts from different sectors in dedicated working groups
- The 2022 scam spike triggered major government action, new legislation, and industry standards

Emerging Challenges & Hot Topics

1. Bulk Registrations - The Definition Dilemma

The group couldn't agree on what "bulk registration" actually means, and realized it might not matter. The real tension:

- A brand registering 100 domains = legitimate

- A fraudster registering 100 domains = problem
- How do you tell the difference upfront?

2. AI: Friend or Foe?

Several ccTLDs are experimenting with AI to detect suspicious registration patterns - looking for things like similar DNS configurations, registration behaviors, etc. The consensus: AI is just another tool in the toolbox.

3. Information Sharing vs. Privacy

The billion-dollar question: How do you share threat intelligence with banks and other platforms while protecting consumer privacy? Australia's still working on this one.

4. Framework vs. Voluntary Action

Interesting split emerged:

- **AUDA's take:** "We don't need a legal framework - we'd do this anyway"
- **Reality:** Other actors in the ecosystem needed the legal push
- **Australia's approach:** Civil penalties and financial obligations (you get fined, but not for the actual consumer losses)

5. Reporting Mechanisms

Most ccTLDs are still figuring this out. Australia has a government-funded program where consumers report to an agency, which then alerts AUDA. The registry even resources a call center for direct reports.

Cross-Cutting Themes

gTLD-ccTLD Learning Exchange

Two-way street of best practices flowing between generic and country-code TLDs. Many ccTLDs are adopting gTLD abuse contractual requirements.

Consumer Protection vs. Cybersecurity Lens

Different countries frame the problem differently - some through consumer harm, others through cybersecurity. This affects which government agency takes the lead.

The Registrar Relationship

Surprisingly little pushback from registrars on takedown processes - much of it is automated. Some registrars proactively suspend domains before the registry even acts.

What's Next?

- **GNSO PDP:** Upcoming policy development on domain validation and abuse reporting

- **Global cooperation:** Strong communication lines between national anti-scam centers emerging
- **Outreach & education:** Public awareness is a massive component (consumers need to know where to report)

Bottom Line

The conversation revealed that fighting online scams isn't about one magic solution - it's about creating an ecosystem where everyone has clear responsibilities, shares information effectively, and acts quickly when scams are detected. Australia's framework shows it can work when you get government, industry, and consumers all on the same page.