

Personal Comments on ICANN's Receiving Inputs from Non-English Speaking Communities

From the very beginning, ICANN had encouraged the broad participation of its business and continuously making ICANN known by the world. However, in those non-English speaking regions, most stakeholders, accomplished or not, may have difficulties to understand English or clearly express their ideas in English, and that could be the main reason for being inactive. For instance, some of ICANN key documents last hundreds of pages, which usually cost the non-English speaking stakeholders over half of their time and spirit to translate (for both reading and writing, financial cost is excluded). Comparatively speaking, these people have much less time to study the case and make proper comments. Meanwhile, lack of simultaneous interpretation from English to the mother tongue of some non-English speakers in ICANN meeting discourages the broad participation as well.

ICANN's missions make itself a global public organization. To achieve the goal, ICANN should invest sufficient money and resources to solve these problems. I learnt that in recent years, ICANN had made great efforts on key documents translation and conference simultaneous interpretation, while comparing to the vast webpage content and diversified needs of language communities, there are still long ways to go. Therefore, I propose the following two suggestions on ICANN's document translation and conference simultaneous interpretation, which I hope can be helpful in improving ICANN's transparency and expanding its influence.

Part I Suggestions on ICANN's Document Translation

I suggest ICANN improving the construction of its multi-language translation team, making the communication much easier for non-English speaking community by following the similar steps proposed hereinafter.

Phase one: Besides documents need public inputs, list more documentaries into ICANN's translation plans, which include but are not limited to GAC communiqués, ICANN Board resolutions, ICANN's annual reports.

Phase two: Unlock the language limitations in online public forum. Basically, ICANN may allow people to use 6 working languages of the UN to clearly express themselves. When receiving non-English inputs, ICANN should initiate the translation ASAP, and send the translated documents back to the commenter for review before posting on the website.

Phase three: Speed up the translation process, shorten the release time differences between language packs.

In addition, to those key documents that attract multi-stakeholders' attention, DAG for instance, ICANN is recommended to disclose general releasing dates for different language versions right after the original document posted online.

Since ICANN introduces IDN into gTLD for the first time, DAG became the priority of vast non-English speaking gTLD applicants, yet one month after releasing of DAG4, there's still no other language versions available yet, so is ICANN's explanation.

To save the cost and assign the resources efficiently, ICANN may do two things: one is to carry out survey on translation needs, and collect the data such as required languages, widely concerned issues/docs and community scale in a timely manner, then post a report for public review. The report could be developed as one of ICANN working models and updated when situation changes. The other is to rely on the translation efforts of local communities. ICANN may ultimately have more local translators trained as professionals by baring some cost. This could be discussed between ICANN and GAC or local registries.

Part II Suggestions on Simultaneous Interpretation in ICANN Meetings

Simultaneous interpretation is necessary in ICANN meetings without any doubt. ICANN should provide simultaneous interpretation between English and 5 other working languages of UN. Meanwhile, ICANN should encourage local participants using their mother tongues to speak up in the public forum, which will greatly stimulate local community to participate for sure, and I believe this is what ICANN board of directors are happy to see.

As for languages that are not the working language of UN, ICANN may obtain the translation needs in advance by simply adding a checkbox in the registration page.

The live broadcast of ICANN meetings is an important channel for expanding global participation. Downloadable vice materials are also widely welcomed. The two approaches for remote participation of ICANN meetings are proved to be effective. I believe that there is no technical obstacle for adding more language channels in live and more language selections for downloadable materials, but this project might at least double the population of remote participation. The project is out there, it is meaningful, and it is what ICANN can do now.

Thank you in advance for taking these suggestions into consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
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