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SUE SCHULER: Great. Thanks. Okay, Donna.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Sue. Thanks, everybody for joining this RA/RAA amendment discussion. We did have a pretty frank conversation on Friday about where we think some of the challenges are for us. And there were a couple of action items that came out of that. One was Jeff was going to look at the side-by-side that Karla had done to see if where Karla had said we were aligned, that he agreed because he was concerned that perhaps we didn't. Jeff has said that he has not been able to do that. So, that's an outstanding item.

The other thing that we discussed, as a result of that conversation, was that we felt it would be helpful to define "searchability" and, perhaps, "lookup." Maybe there were some other terms in there. And I think Rick and Jim were going to take a look at that but I haven't seen anything on the list. And that's no problem if it hasn't been done. But Jim or Rick, can you give us an update on that?

And Rubens is confirming that there are instances where ICANN says we're aligned where we are not. So, we will have to pay some attention that when Jeff comes back to us. Was that you, Jim?

JIM GALVIN: Yeah. That was me. Sorry. Thanks. I just wanted to say yes. We're putting together a document to define, really, what searching is, as something to bring to the table for discussion. I think the issue here is

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just understanding where we're coming from. And I apologize that it's not ready quite yet today. But we'll definitely have something before next week. And then, we can more completely discuss what we're really trying to achieve here and go from there. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Jim. So, two other things. There's been some interaction with Karla on the list about the statistics. And I don't think Karla has really addressed the concerns that were raised about the stats. So, I just wondered if we wanted to have a conversation around that. Rick, go ahead.

RICK WILHELM:

Sure. So, following what I would call a very good tip from Maxim, I pulled down all of the data from the Open Data Initiative portal and looked at the data, specifically in 2019 and 2020. I didn't bother filtering for the specifics, dropping the months of May and earlier in 2019. And Maxim was correct in his commentary. And really, what the issue is, is that there are issues of alignment regarding the columns in the data that you can see pretty easily, when you go ahead and sort by the searchable WHOIS queries for these months.

What one finds is that, essentially, any time there's a month in which any registry operator is recorded—and I'll use that term carefully—in the Open Data Initiative portal as having any searchable queries that are greater than 250—any number greater than 250—that also correlates with a value for DNS UDP queries, either received or responded, that is

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below 1,000 for that particular month, which is obviously not a valid number.

So, essentially, as Maxim, I think, described in his email and as others have pointed out, this means that there is a column alignment problem. As the data is being pulled, either these are being submitted or being pulled and inserted into the Open Data Initiative thing where they columns are misaligned. And when you look at these things, it looks like they're off by two because these same situations, you can see that some other columns look off.

So, in other situations, we see where they are aligned properly. In the ones that I was looking at, where the DNS UDP queries received and responded had the correct numbers, looking at them, a high number there is 120. And then, they trend downwards from there—so, 120 queries per month and then they trend downward. So, this would be the total for a year somewhere around well below 100,000, as opposed to 25 million. So, it's hard to get an exact number. But just to ballpark it, it's going to be well below 100,000, I believe, as opposed to something like 25 million.

So, I wanted to just give credit to Maxim for talking about this column alignment problem, which led me to do the download of the data. It's certainly worth having somebody else check it, if they're interested. It doesn't take very long. This was like a half an hour of fooling around with a spreadsheet. But that's my quick report on that. I'm happy to take questions or comments. Thanks.

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DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Rick. Graeme, go ahead.

GRAEME BUNTON: There we go. Thanks, Donna. So, thanks, Rick and Maxim, for doing that dive there. My impression was that Karla and Russ [inaudible] that was or how ... We piecemeal asked them questions like we were clever detectives from CSI or something. And I wonder if we need to more clearly state to those guys that they've made a pretty critical error and how they've done it. Or do we think we actually have communicated that already and we'll come back and fix it?

DONNA AUSTIN: Owen, go ahead.

OWEN SMIGELSKI: I don't think ICANN gets it. Karla seemed to push back and said, "This is what we got here," and didn't really seem to see that there was any intent on their end to say, "Oops. Our bad." I think we need to push back and be rather direct and blunt about this because those are some significant differences in there. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Owen. So, one suggestion for consideration, and coming to what I also hoped to talk about, is that I think before we talk to ICANN again, I think we need to put out ... We need to respond to their latest iteration of the document they sent to us. And I think we need to address that on a high level, that the premise that the user experience

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should not change just because there's a new technology is flawed for a number of reasons.

And I think when we do that, we can also add in the definitions that we have of "searchability" and "lookup" and where we think there may be confusion. But also, point to the fact that it's unfortunate that they're relying on a number of 25 million plus to substantiate their claims that searchability is being used on a pretty widespread basis, when what we've come up with in our analysis is 100,000. So, we need to reach an agreement on what that number actually is. Or at least, we'll show our workings and see what they come back with.

I don't know that there's any value in doing a back-and-forth with Karla any further. If she hasn't been willing to do a mea culpa now, I'm not sure it's going to be forthcoming. But maybe, if we give her a couple of days, it might come. Rick, go ahead.

RICK WILHELM:

I think that one of the things ... Thank you, Donna. I think one of the things we might ask for, in order to suss this out is we could say if we could get a breakdown by TLD, by month of the queries that are attributed, that would be helpful because then that would allow us to point out which ones don't match up with the particular reported TLDs. That would be one way to clarify the issue there.

I think it is important for us to make sure that we keep the topics of searchability and lookups separate here because you'll also recall that ICANN asked for query volumes on lookups from the Registrars. And this here, what we're talking about on "searchable" is a different topic. So,

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when we are discussing this with ICANN, we do need to make sure that we're keeping them separated.

And I think Rubens made a point in the chat that it's an honest mistake. I think it's an honest mistake because they asked someone for a number and the person who got the number didn't do any ... They just looked for a total. And it would be a total. And they didn't look and dig into it at all deeply, and look to see any sort of anomalous data. So, I think the person who was asked for a total got the total. So, I think that just came out because it's a little bit of a garbage in/garbage out situation. The problem there is with the Open Data Initiative platform underneath that they have. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Rick. So, how do folks feel about addressing the stats as a separate piece? Or do we ...? Because what we could do now is write this up in the manner that Rick has explained and say, "This is what we believe the data is telling us and these are the stats." So, there's a big difference between 100,000 and 25 million. This is our workings. Can you provide us with your workings?" or explain the difference.

Do we do that as a separate thing or do we lump it into the response that we provide to ICANN? Do we have any thoughts on that or do we just see how this all melds together? Rubens is saying we should also add up the other two WHOIS types to show what the percentage searchable is.

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DONNA AUSTIN: So, Rick and Jim, I don't know how you feel about this, but does the narrative fit into ...? Once you do the definitions of "searchability" and "lookup," is there a way that the data flows underneath that and you can extrapolate to make the point? Rick and then Jim.

RICK WILHELM: Well, no. Not from the ODI platform because the problem is that the data is loaded into the ODI incorrectly. That's the fundamental issue, is that the data ... When the reports got pulled from the registries and loaded into the ODI, the data is loaded in there incorrectly. So, for example, it shows for com in 2019, there were zero DNS UDP queries responded. And I'm pretty sure that in 2019, in the month of October, com responded to non-zero DNS UDP queries.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Jim?

JIM GALVIN: Yeah. I think the data's essential. Just to build on what Rick said, from my point of view, part of their argument about wanting searchability, without understanding what it is ... But wanting searchability was based on the idea that there's a huge need for it, based on data. He's clearly demonstrating that, "No ..." And none of us believed it, anyway. We were all processing that. So, I think we have to do that.

And then, the second part is, I do think that even once we get that, part of our concern ... We have a secondary argument here that we've been putting forth, which is that searchability in RDAP is not the same thing

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as searchability in WHOIS. And that's what I want to make the case for is get to a place where ... Let's define what we're really looking for because then we can clearly state that, "If this is what you want, I'm sorry. That just doesn't exist and we're going to have to plan for that in the future."

So, I think these are independent things, I guess, is the sum total of all of that. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. So, any other thoughts about how we want to deal with the data? Do we want to try to wrap it up in a bow and put it aside? Or do we want to incorporate it into the document that we go back to ICANN with? As Jim said, they're using that 25 million as the case for the need for searchable WHOIS. So, it would play to us a little bit to keep it in an overarching document. But it seems to also make sense to wrap it up.

Okay. All right. So, Graeme's saying he thinks we need to correct them and doesn't think it needs to be in the same doc. And Jim's agreeing. So, can we ... I think it would be helpful if we just identify one person that can go back with the number that we came up with and how, on behalf of the group. So, yeah. I was going to ask Rick if he wanted to do that.

RICK WILHELM:

Yeah. I can take the spreadsheet and show what ... Sure. I'll take a whack at it and send it out to the group.

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DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Rick. Okay. So, that's the data piece to put to one side. I don't know if folks have seen the discussion that's been going on, on the list this morning. It was essentially started by me, in terms of a review of the call that we had with ICANN last Tuesday—so, this time last week, I guess it was. And I think we need to address ICANN's fundamental premise that what they're trying to ... One of the objectives that they want to get out of the RA amendment process is that there's really no change to the user experience as it related to WHIOS. And I think that's flawed for a number of reasons and I think we need to address that.

So, I think Jeff has started with some text and I know JC's added to some of that. But I wanted to have a discussion about whether folks are on board with thinking that this is really what our next concrete step should be. We need to go back to ICANN and say, "On a fundamental principle level, we don't agree where you're coming from on this. And these are the reasons why." So, is that a fair place for us to come at this as a next part of our tactical strategy?

It would be good to hear some different voices. Or if you can turn your video on so I can see everybody nodding in agreement or violently shaking your head, "No! Don't do it!" Thank you, JC. Sam, go ahead.

SAM DEMETRIOU:

Hey, Donna. I just figured I'd chime in, give everyone a break—give you a break, specifically. I think I really liked Jeff's direction of highlighting the things that RDAP does improve on and leading with that. So, instead of just trying to replicate an experience one-for-one, RDAP is meant to

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improve upon a number of things, including ... I think Jeff highlighted the ability to search for strings in non-ASCII characters.

So, I think if we lead with that and all the other benefits that will take place before we then say, "But this is all the reasons why it can't be a one-to-one replacement. But here's why it's still good ..." I think the overall direction outline Jeff was taking was a good one. I will admit that I have not had time to read it very, very closely. I did just skim it. But I think directionally, I think this is a good path to go down.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Sam. Personally, I think that we need to go back with something in writing before we have another conversation with ICANN because I don't think another conversation with ICANN is going to get us very far, if we, as a group, can agree that, fundamentally, we're at odds with ICANN on what their primary objective is here.

Sue, are you able to bring up Jeff's ...? Thank you. Of course you are. Rob had some concerns about the use of the word "efficient." And JC changed that to "flexible," which I think was a good replacement.

So, this is where Jeff started. I think I'd like to open up with something that's a little bit more direct to ICANN's want for a one-to-one replacement. Sam, I take what you're saying but I think we need to address the overarching problem we have with the approach that they're taking to this. And then, we can lead into ... There are benefits to RDAP that are going to outweigh what we have now but one of them may not be searchability. So, it would be helpful if we're upfront about that.

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So, either everybody's burnt out or ... I don't want to drag this non-conversation on longer than we have to. So, if we're all in violent disagreement and we're not saying it, then I think we can go ahead with next steps and see where we get to. Rick, go ahead.

RICK WILHELM:

One thing. This thing here. This paragraph is really focused ... So, I'm in agreement with this. This is solely focused on SLAs. There's other stuff that is important here. And for one thing, one of the things that they did, also, is they linked in WHOIS retirement into the SLAs. And they also have double jeopardy going on here. And so, one of the things that I think we should be cognizant of is not doing all of this stuff piecemeal. So, I think that this here, what we've got, is important and good. But I think we should be mindful of not addressing all of this stuff in a series of one-offs. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Rick. So, what you're suggesting is ... I think you're in agreement that maybe it's time to go back to ICANN in writing but we need to be more comprehensive in what we're putting back to them. So, address all of the main points that we have issue with, with their last version.

RICK WILHELM:

Yeah. That's fair. Yep. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. Thanks, Rick. Jody, go ahead.

JODY KOLKER:

Thanks, Donna. So, I guess what I was wondering is ... One of the main concerns we have is the SLAs matching exactly what WHOIS is. And I'm not sure. I'm throwing this out there and I don't know if this is the right time. But one of the items we want to produce is maybe how RDAP is not really accepted yet. I shouldn't say it that way. The number of RDAP requests that GoDaddy is getting, compared to the number of WHOIS requests is a fraction. And it's really hard to put SLAs around something when you only have it getting hit a fraction of the amount of what WHOIS is.

I think Rob Hall might have said this in some of the email that was going back and forth. We didn't have SLAs on WHOIS for years but we're starting out with SLAs on RDAP almost, when it's not being very well used by the community yet. And I think it's ... It's just a point I wanted to bring up, that maybe that should be part of this conversation, that we don't have enough data yet on how RDAP is being used or how hard it's going to be used, I guess, compared to what WHOIS is. Or I guess we do because if everything switches from WHOIS to RDAP, we'll know. But we just haven't tested it with getting millions of queries as compared to thousands of queries. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Thanks, Jody. I don't know if I'm recalling this correctly but I think that was one of the conversations that might have been had during the development of the SLAs, that it is necessary to have the lead-in period so people get used to using it and to understand and to understand

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whether the SLAs are actually—relevant is the wrong word but whether they're being developed reasonably, I suppose.

So, I take your point and we can certainly have a think about that. It takes me back to one of the ... One of the things around sunseting is ICANN wants to ensure that the user knows ... While they want the same experience, they want the user to be aware of the change.

And one of the questions I asked of this group in an email I sent is whether ... Karla had mentioned they've got some kind of communication plan that they've been working on in relation to this. So, is there any reason that we wouldn't start that education/communication now with users? Or do we need more time to have RDAP in use before we send all the people using the WHOIS system to RDAP? So, that's a bit of an open question. Jim, go ahead.

JIM GALVIN:

Thanks, Donna. I guess I'm going to say out loud stuff that's already been said. But since you were looking for other voices to speak on this issue ... I like where Jeff was going here but building on what Sam said, and I think JC said this out loud, and as I look at JC's comments in the message later on and relook at the thread there, and what he said at the end, for me, what's important here, that I think it's lost, is ICANN is coming at this from the point of view of serving the user community. I think that we all know that. And that manifests itself in a couple of different places. One of the places in which it manifests here is the SLAs.

But I think what ICANN doesn't account for ... And maybe we ought to tweak what Jeff had started with. And even I like JC's replacement of

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“flexible” for efficient, along with his other things in there. But I think we need to give a slightly greater emphasis on the fact that RDAP is feature-rich as compared to WHOIS. And all these discussions about SLAs don’t acknowledge the fact that it’s just not the same thing. And even though I appreciate that Jeff suggests here that we’re willing to sign up for some comprehensive service level requirements but we need to sit down and talk about what’s really going on here.

And to build on Jody’s point, that’s why the SLAs that are there are focused very much on unauthenticated public data queries because everything else about RDAP is a new feature and a new service that we not only don’t have any experience with RDAP, we don’t have anything with anything else.

So, I think perhaps there needs to be an extra sentence or a phrase in here somewhere to emphasize the point about RDAP being feature-rich. It starts to get in that sentence but we need to say more about that because, for me, that’s the fundamental basis for not being able to agree upfront what the SLAs can be. Until we get some experience with this, there’s just no way. And I think that’s just being fair to all parties in this. Thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Okay. Thanks, Jim. Rick?

RICK WILHELM: Thanks, Donna. I wanted to bring up something that came up on the RDAP Working Group call that was interesting. And Jim, please chime in

and add into this because you were there and you heard this also. Mark Svancarek from Microsoft brought up a comment where ... I guess he was looking at the transcript or listening to one of our calls related to this. And he picked up a comment. Actually, I think that I made it, just to take ownership of my own words, where I said something like, “Really, what does it matter about two seconds versus five seconds? Because the only thing that benefits is miners.” M-I-N-E-R-S, not young people hitting the RDAP. We serve all ages here in the TLD space.

And Mark Svancarek brought up, after being warned by me ... I will offer, just for the good of the group, that there are ICANN people on the call and I didn’t want this to turn into a negotiating session, etc. He brought up, “Well, look. Microsoft use RDAP query publicly-available data.” They already are concerned about being throttled and something like an SLA difference of two seconds versus 5,000 milliseconds might make a difference to them. And so, it would matter to them—that sort of thing.

And Jim Galvin, very helpfully to my mind, brought up that he thought that for people like security researchers like Microsoft, that there should be a way for them to come in and get special, what he termed “bulk access” to the data, rather than coming in versus a publicly-available port—something like that.

Now, ICANN was on this call. Karla was there. She’s a regular participant in the RDAP Working Group call because there’s some open outstanding items for ICANN proper to deal with there. So, she heard this. So, they have that in their mind. So, I just wanted to share that with the group. Jim, feel free to add on any color that I might have left out or any what

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that you might want to frame that, or things that you might have thought of since then. But I thought that Jim's add-in—his response—was very helpful there. Thanks.

JIM GALVIN:

Yeah. Thanks, Rick. More generally than just the bulk access point, which you did bring up, I had suggested that one of the things the RDAP Working Group might consider—and this might be helpful to this group, too—is it occurred to me that the SLAs really ought to be based on usage and user communities. Bulk access is one type of usage. Searching, if you will, is another type of usage. And there's a different kind of user that uses that.

And it occurred to me that as a work item for the RDAP Working Group, is what I was offering—in that context, something concrete—was we might consider, as we visit the technical profile version 2.0, which some work along those lines will come around as part of EPDP 2 and SSAD and things like that, we might consider SLA 2.0 and we might think about trying to offer some guidelines about SLAs from a user scenario point of view, not as broad, sweeping, one-size-fits-all point of view.

And I don't know if that's useful to us here or not. But Rick, at least at the time, has suggested that, "Yeah. That would be interesting to think about. We'll worry about that when that opportunity comes around." But I think that's important in all of this, too. That's part of the basis for our rejection of all of this SLA conversation with ICANN. They're trying to pin us to an SLA that we just don't have any experience with it. So, anyway, thanks.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Jim. So, ICANN isn't taking into account the evolution that we need for RDAP to understand, even though it's feature-rich, just what is reasonable, what maybe needs tweaks or whatever. And I wasn't involved in the SLA development but I think that was part of the thinking that was going on as well, that it was difficult to develop SLAs for a new technology that hadn't been tested. So, maybe that's a point that we also need to make. Rick, go ahead.

RICK WILHELM: Yeah. You're correct, Donna. It hasn't been tested and is also, as it's been said many, many times, is fundamentally different. And I think that's the thing that we really need to anchor ourselves on. It is fundamentally different. It is more complicated than WHOIS. There's a lot more going on. It's oranges to the WHOIS apples. So, therefore, the SLAs shouldn't be the same. I thought that Kurt Pritz really did a good job the other day on a call where he put into the chat, "I can make an ice cream in 2,000 milliseconds. What makes you think I could make a sundae, now, in 2,000 milliseconds—" that sort of a thing, which I got a grin out of. Thank you.

DONNA AUSTIN: I believe there were many former ice cream professionals on that call. Okay. And I think it's probably important for us to make the point that while this is about—ICANN seems to be focused on the user experience—there has to be some consideration for Contracted Parties and their experience with the new technology as well. So, we're still in

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an understanding how this works phase. That might be an overstatement but I think it's worth making that it's new technology for us, too, so we're still working our way through it.

Okay. So, I think we're on the same page here, that in terms of our next interaction with ICANN, we need to have something in writing first that goes back to them, just to ... It would be a comprehensive, overarching response without getting too much into the weeds or the detail, is what I think we've agreed to. So, is that where ... Zo, I'm sure you're taking the notes. Is that consistent with where your notetaking is going.

ZOE BONYTHON:

Yeah. I think so.

DONNA AUSTIN:

Okay. All right. Any other items that anybody wants to discuss on today's call? Okay. I don't see any hands so I expect that everybody's going to rush to the freezer and get ice cream now or head down to Macca's or something.

So, I think what we'll do is I'll work with Sue to get a document—get another Google Doc—to get the beginnings of what Jeff has drafted. Get that into a Google Doc but actually scope it out a little bit more, in terms of what the expectations are, and what we want to address, and maybe give a high-level reminder of what the purpose of the communication is. And then, if people can respond, that'd be great.

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Okay. All righty. Everyone, go and get an ice cream. There's none in my house so I actually can't go and get ice cream at the moment. I think we can end the recording, Sue.

SUE SCHULER:

Thanks, Donna. Andrea, please stop the recording.

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