

QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE TRANSITION OF THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE INTERNET ASSIGNED NUMBERS AUTHORITY (“IANA”) FUNCTIONS (Q4 FY2016)

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Public Law 114-113, directs the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) to report on all aspects of the transition of the U.S. government’s stewardship role over the IANA functions. This report covers activities from July 1, 2016 to October 24, 2016.¹ NTIA’s contract for the stewardship of the IANA functions with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (“ICANN”) expired as of October 1, 2016. This report will serve as NTIA’s final report to Congress on the IANA stewardship transition as required by Public Law 114-113.

I. Status of IANA Stewardship Transition

On October 1, 2016, the IANA Functions Contract between NTIA and ICANN expired. With the expiration of the contract, the agreements and accountability mechanisms developed by the global customer community for the performance of the IANA functions come into effect. Further, the revised ICANN bylaws devised by the global community to enhance ICANN’s accountability also become effective. On October 20, 2016, NTIA relieved Verisign of its obligation to get NTIA authorization to make changes to the authoritative root zone file. With this move, the privatization of the Internet domain name system (DNS) is complete.

The global multistakeholder community has reacted positively. Gonzalo Camarillo, Chairman of the Internet Society Board of Trustees, said, “We commend the NTIA for its trust and confidence in the multistakeholder Internet community to achieve this important accomplishment.”² Internet Architecture Board Chairman Andrew Sullivan wrote, “Like many things on the Internet, this is the result of many incremental steps by many people. It is incremental change that brings us the stability of the Internet.”³ IETF Chairman Jari Arkko said, “This is a good day — but also in many ways just like previous days. It is what we are already doing. The Internet will continue to work as it has before.”⁴ The IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group (ICG)—which coordinated the three technical portions of the transition proposal—noted, “The ICG is honored to have played its part and gratified that today, the Internet is functioning just as smoothly as it did yesterday.”⁵ The Internet Governance Coalition, an industry coalition of Internet stakeholders, wrote, “The transition of IANA from the U.S. government to the global internet community is the

¹ NTIA’s previous reports and other NTIA publications on this topic can be found at: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/category/iana-functions>.

² See the Internet Society statement at: <https://www.internetsociety.org/news/internet-society-congratulates-global-internet-community-successful-iana-stewardship-transition>.

³ See the IETF and IAB statements at: <https://www.ietf.org/blog/2016/10/iana-stewardship-transition-goes-ahead/>.

⁴ Id.

⁵ See the ICG statement at: <https://www.ianacg.org/iana-stewardship-transition-coordination-group-icg-faq/>.

result of years of hard work and collaboration and validates the multi-stakeholder governance model.”⁶

II. NTIA Engagement

Prior to the contract expiration, ICANN informed NTIA on August 12, 2016 that it had completed or would complete all of the necessary tasks called for in the IANA Stewardship Transition Proposal by the end of the contract term.⁷ NTIA reviewed this report and affirmed to ICANN CEO Göran Marby on August 16, 2016 that, “barring any significant impediment, NTIA intends to allow the IANA functions contract to expire as of October 1, 2016.”^{8 9} On the eve of the contract expiration, September 30, ICANN CEO Göran Marby sent NTIA a follow up communication confirming that all the remaining outstanding implementation tasks noted in its August 12 report had been finalized.¹⁰

On August 22, 2016, ICANN submitted its final report on the Parallel Testing of Post-Transition Root Zone Management System. The report documents that ICANN and Verisign successfully concluded a 90-day test of a parallel root zone management system to ensure the production of the root zone occurs in a stable and secure manner in the absence of NTIA. This represents the only technical operational change associated with the transition.

On September 14, 2016, NTIA Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information Lawrence E. Strickling testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts.¹¹ NTIA also responded to letters from members of Congress answering their questions and affirming that IANA stewardship transition is consistent with long-standing, Congressionally supported U.S. policy.¹²

On October 20, 2016, NTIA amended the Cooperative Agreement with Verisign to release Verisign from its obligation to get NTIA authorization prior to making changes to the authoritative root zone file as the root zone maintainer. A Root Zone Maintainer Agreement (RZMA) was negotiated between ICANN and Verisign for Verisign to continue performing the root zone maintainer functions directly under contract with ICANN. The ICANN Board approved the contract on August 9, 2016, following an ICANN community review process. As of October 24, 2016, the RZMA became effective and now codifies how ICANN and Verisign will perform the root zone management system processes.

⁶ See the Internet Governance Coalition statement at: <http://internetgovernancecoalition.com/statement-transition-iana-u-s-government-global-internet-community/>.

⁷ See ICANN’s letter at: <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/iana-stewardship-implementation-planning-status-12aug16-en.pdf>.

⁸ See NTIA’s response to ICANN at: <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/20160816marby.pdf>.

⁹ See NTIA’s blog at: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/blog/2016/update-iana-transition>.

¹⁰ See Letter from ICANN CEO Göran Marby to NTIA

at: https://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/implementation_letter.30_sept_2016.pdf.

¹¹ See Assistant Secretary’s speech at: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/speechtestimony/2016/testimony-assistant-secretary-strickling-protecting-internet-freedom>.

¹² See NTIA response letters to members of Congress at: <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/page/reports-congress-iana-transition>.

III. Conclusion

For the last 18 years, the U.S. Government has worked closely with businesses, civil society groups, governments, and technical experts to develop a multistakeholder, private sector-led system for the global coordination of the domain name system. With the expiration of the IANA functions contract on October 1, 2016 we have finally realized the bipartisan goal of previous administrations to privatize the domain name system.

The U.S. Government will continue to play an active leadership role in advocating for a free and open Internet and U.S. interests within ICANN as a member of the Governmental Advisory Committee, and in other international venues.