



Report to the Board August 1, 2007

We begin a monthly letter to the Board reporting relevant results and issues. This report will evolve with experience. The primary sections below are: **Completed, In Progress, Under Consideration, Internal**. SSAC generates Reports, Advisories and Comments. Reports cover substantial projects. Advisories are shorter and faster. Comments are usually responses to queries from staff or to documents posted for formal response. All of these are noted in the **Completed** section.

The **Under Consideration** section describes the ideas and preliminary work to develop specific project plans. This is perhaps the most important section of this report because it provides notice of issues on the horizon.

The **Internal** section documents changes in our processes and organization.

SSAC reports, advisories and comments are generally available for distribution to the community. Occasionally, specific matters require confidentiality. Such projects will be reported separately and marked accordingly. Discussions and work underway is generally private to the committee until complete.

Feedback on the content, process and format are welcome. Full information on the Committee and its completed reports is on the ICANN web site at <http://www.icann.org/committees/security> . This report is suitable for general distribution and will also be available on the SSAC web site.

Steve Crocker, Chair

Completed in July 2007

In response to a query from Craig Schwartz, Chief gTLD Liaison regarding whether certain strings could cause technical instability if they were used as TLD labels, we commented (7/21/07) any string could be used as a TLD label providing it complied with the subset of ASCII used by the DNS protocol. We see no reason to be concerned that some TLD labels, e.g. .com and .net, are also used as file system extension.

In response to Tina Dam, IDN Program director, on the implementation plan for IDN testing, which involves adding IDN TLD labels for the TEST TLD to the root level of the DNS, we commented agreement with RSSAC that testing should proceed as indicated in the plan. (31 July 2007)
<http://www.icann.org/committees/security/sac020.pdf> .

In Progress

IDN Security and Stability: This project is considering issues related to homographs and transliterations. If possible, specific recommendations should be made for each issue. In addition, the project will identify any remaining questions and indicate if they are technical questions or policy questions.

This project is proceeding as a sub-group of SSAC and operating independently. **This group is not meeting in July and August due to schedule conflicts.**

WHOIS and Spam: Ram Mohan conducted a series of tests to determine whether the WHOIS service is used by spammers to obtain email addresses and whether insulation of WHOIS access would reduce the incidence of spam to registrants. Dave Piscitello, the SSAC Fellow has completed all the elements of the report except those that rely on additional review and filtering of the data collected during the study. The new data should be available in August. SSAC will review its findings and conclusions and will make the draft available for review by ICANN staff and legal counsel.

Fast Flux: A recent phenomenon bad guys use to prevent their sites from being taken off the net is to change their address very rapidly. They make repeated changes to their DNS entries to avoid having law enforcement or others track them down and issue orders to have their offending sites shut down.

SSAC is studying fast flux hosting and DNS with an eye on publishing an advisory on this subject. Dave Piscitello has prepared a preliminary draft of the report. The Committee is reviewing the draft and will consider a set of possible measures that can be recommended to service providers (e.g., DSL and cable broadband access providers), registrars, and registries. Dave also participated in a podcast of Radio Free Internet as a guest speaker on the subject of fast flux.

Anti Phishing Working Group (APWG): The APWG is developing draft reports of interest to ICANN and SSAC:

- A document for accelerated phish site suspension at the registry level
- A document on registrar best practices when dealing with Anti-phishing

After discussing APWG's objectives, Dave Piscitello was invited to participate in APWG's Industrial Policy Forum.

DNSSEC

During 2002 and 2003, SSAC spent much of its time focused on how to foster deployment of DNSSEC. A separate, quite substantial, effort was organized which has its own reports and meetings. In future reports, we will include a brief summary of relevant activities and notable events and pointers for additional information.

Under Consideration

Registration Pre-Emption: There has been some anecdotes suggesting there is "spying" on individuals who check the availability of domain names, and that names not registered immediately are registered by another party, thus making it unavailable to person who made the initial inquiry. We are gathering more information to determine if this is actually occurring. If it is, we will design an experiment to observe this "pre-emption" activity.

Consumer Reports WebWatch (CRWW): CRWW is now participating in ALAC and has asked to speak with SSAC to determine if there are studies CRWW might conduct in the area of consumer protection and domain names. Nick Ashton-Hart and Dave Piscitello held a preliminary teleconference with the WebWatch editor, who is interested in providing consumers with a better understanding of ICANN's role in Internet governance and Internet security. Everyone agreed there are opportunities for Consumer Reports and ICANN to collaborate.

IPv4 depletion and IPv6 Transition: The publication of predicted dates for the depletion of the IPv4 address pool has triggered much discussion and concern throughout the Internet community. There are multiple technical, economic and policy issues to be sorted out. Some of the focus is on IPv4 and some is on the transition to IPv6. We are looking at which aspects we can usefully contribute to. It's evident that eventually IPv6 service will become ubiquitous and hence there is lasting value in working out what is needed to transition to full IPv6 service. Dave Piscitello is gathering data on the readiness of security products such as firewalls to operate in IPv6 networks. Preliminary examination suggests these products do not yet provide the same capability in an IPv6 environment as in an IPv4 environment. We will gather more information and formulate a plan.

Internal

SSAC Wiki: The SSAC wiki is now live. All SSAC members, liaisons, and guests have been issued invitations and most have created credentials. This is a private site hosted by ICANN to be used primarily for archival purposes within the Committee.

SSAC Policies and Procedures: SSAC has been in operation for over 5 years. We are producing a document that details how we conduct our business so as to have a more stable and robust operation moving forward. A draft document is currently circulating within the SSAC executive committee and will soon be distributed for broader review, first to the rest of the Committee and then to the ICANN staff, counsel and Board.