
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Welcome to the SSAC Evolution of the DNS Resolution Work Party Teleconference on Thursday 12th May 2022. Barry, back over to you.

BARRY LEIBA: Thanks. Andrew, would you put up the document? Or Kathy, whoever wants to do the ...

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Oh, I'll get it. I'm doing a Zoom juggle.

BARRY LEIBA: Ah, yes.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: There we go.

BARRY LEIBA: And so, Andrew and I talked this morning. Well, not morning for him, but whatever. We think that one of the things we need to do at this point, and the main thing we need to do at this point, is start trimming down what we're actually going to work on in this first or only document that we work on.

So, let's start flagging items in our now long list of things we're going to talk about and get the ones that we really want to talk about up at the top and start working on that, with the idea that we will likely make a

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more limited document than what this currently outlines. Does anyone think that is a bad thing to do? And so—

GEOFF HUSTON:

I have a comment there and it's kind of whether this work is goal-oriented or detail-directed. Is this a statement or at least a piece of work that says blockchain-based DNS is rubbish and the document is heading to that goal?

So in other words, there are a number of headline points that want to get made and that case is substantiated in the document. It's one kind of approach. It's resolve all this DNS, whatever. The other way is the way you're proposing, which sort of says, well, what do we want to highlight without necessarily knowing what the message is going to be?

And I must admit, I see a whole bunch of stuff here, which is all good stuff. It's the compendium that various SSAC folk prognosticate about the DNS, an encyclopedia of prognostications, but it has kind of got no point. Somehow, it is a case of merging the two. You're saying keep culling until we find a point. The other approach is find what we want to say and pick out the bits that lead us in that direction.

BARRY LEIBA:

Other thoughts on that?

GEOFF HUSTON:

I've got no problem either way but, in some ways, what is currently of interest in the ICANN world? Well, if I was going to hazard a guess, I would

actually say blockchain-based names and their ilk. Is ICANN irrelevant in the brave new world? Is this process irrelevant? And that's a fine thing to talk about.

BARRY LEIBA:

That's part of where the discussion between Andrew and me this morning was, because when I've been talking with people outside of SSAC, both in the ICANN world and elsewhere, what they're bringing up as the more interesting things are the alternative namespaces, including blockchain. And that's what a lot of people want more opinions on, more comment on, more discussion on. Other comments? Jim, Russ, Suzanne?

SUZANNE WOOLF:

I'm pondering. What Geoff's just said makes an awful lot of sense to me. I see what you're saying. I think it's going to be really hard to start with a conclusion and then backfill.

GEOFF HUSTON:

I've done it all my life, Suzanne!

SUZANNE WOOLF:

And yet not all of us can be you, Geoff! I know, okay?

GEOFF HUSTON:

The rest of ... Everyone else is right!

SUZANNE WOOLF: It's a damn shame, but we can't all be you.

GEOFF HUSTON: No, no, no, no. You'd all be wrong then, too. You'd join me in the wrong pen.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Oh, we're all wrong. It's just a question of how we get there. Yeah. But I've been staring at this and sort of looking at how to cut it down and I think Geoff has a good, solid ... You know, feet on the ground. One thing I was thinking about is not all of the things we've talked about here are relevant to the Internet, the public Internet.

I'll forestall Geoff: to the extent that we still believe there is such a thing, or that it's useful to reason from such a thing. So, maybe just look at some topics that are most relevant. Does that help at all, to start cutting things that might be of a great deal of interest to specific players but don't have as broad an influence?

But I admit I don't ... That's why I was sitting there quietly, trying to think about what would be the operationalization of that. What would be the result in terms of what would get cut out? So, I'm still kind of thinking about it. Perhaps I'm not wrong yet, so I will continue to ponder, unless someone else is seeing further than me, which is usually the case.

BARRY LEIBA: Well, we're not saying we're going to rip things out and throw them away. I want to sort of move things around, push things up to the top that we

want to focus on, and spend our effort on that. And if other things that are on this list tie into it in a sensible way, we tie them in. But if not, then they can drop off as we progress. Does that make sense?

GEOFF HUSTON: But it still strikes me, Barry, as we don't know where it's heading but we'll keep on culling stuff until we find ourselves with enough to work on, which I still ... I don't know, I'm a little bit uncomfortable with.

BARRY LEIBA: Oh, no. The point that I was trying to make was that I think we should start working on the things we think are most important to cover and let things ... So, prioritize it that way and then let things fall off.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Doesn't that sort of presuppose ...? I mean, most important with respect to what? I think that presupposes where we're trying to end up.

BARRY LEIBA: Yes. I mean, it's our judgment of what we want to spend our time discussing, I think is what I'm saying. What we think is important for us to say or most interesting for us to say.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: I changed the document I was sharing to show the charter and the four bullet points that we agreed upon as a work party that would kind of drive the direction of the work. And it could be that there are some things in

the larger document that just don't fit in any of these four buckets. Or it could be that maybe these buckets need to change. Or maybe these are still the right buckets.

SUZANNE WOOLF: And I should have reread the namespace advisory because I forget how far we went down some of these roads. But there is definitely related work there.

BARRY LEIBA: Jim?

JIM GALVIN: I was going to say maybe I'll just jump in but you got me there, Barry. I don't know that I have a specific suggestion for us, here. I'm really just a reviewer for this work party but I did want to make sure I pay attention. But I'll make an observation here, only because I think it was Geoff earlier ... It might have been you, Barry, but I think it was Geoff who mentioned namespaces in general becoming an issue of greater significance in the ICANN community.

Certainly, it's something that the board is paying attention to. We'll all know that OCTO published it. I think it was number 34 where it just kind of looked at alternate namespaces to observe their existence, and they're there. And I think this issue of user confusability because of the use of domain names and other namespaces and the lack of resolution ... That that's a real problem.

It seems to me there is room in there for us to really focus in that space in some way. That's informative to the ICANN community. It's informative to the board, to give them a reason to understand why alternate namespaces really are something they need to care about and can't ignore.

And SSAC has been saying that for a while. We've said that in a few ... Never in this dimension. Never in the dimension of resolution. But we have tried in the past, and SSAC90 comes to mind. I know there have been a couple of others where we tried to speak to this issue of, ICANN, you've got to find a way to care about other namespaces.

And now, of course, we've got the NCAP project, hopefully looking to come to a close in this calendar year, and being its advice. I just feel like this is a space that is getting attention, and anything we can do to move in that direction or contribute to that discussion would be especially helpful. So, I don't know if that's helpful or not but that would be my suggestion. Thanks.

BARRY LEIBA:

Thanks, Jim. I think it is helpful.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Yeah. One thought that Jim's comment inspires was that one aspect of alternate namespaces, or the super namespace of global names, or however you want to put it: one thing that has always been hard to get across to people is that this is something that the ICANN community needs to be aware of, needs to be able to promote good thinking about

it and discourage bad thinking, but that ICANN is not in a position to dictate what people call things and will never be. So, where does that ...? Since ICANN can't direct this, where does that mean their influence is? What should people be doing, given that they can't impose fiat rules that say, "Don't do that."

GEOFF HUSTON:

Look, it strikes me as we're still not quite sure what we want to say and why. If I was going to get back to the headline question, resolution, and you kind of go, well, that's not ICANN's problem, the answer is, well, probably not. But it's pretty clear there is a tension out there. Application folk want the DNS to go faster. That's the statement. It's too bloody slow. It's too whatever. It's not good enough for us. We want to shave it down to nanoseconds.

And the answer from the DNS technical folk is you have to strain out all of the authoritative servers and recursive resolvers. You're throwing everything out when you want that. We can't do it that way. And the application folk go, "Resolve all this DNS, pre-provisioning, massive caches, store all the DNS in your backpack!" Blah, blah, blah.

But then comes the issue, which is really where this pinches upon ICANN. It's if you go down that path, and certainly parts of the industry are hell-bent to go down it, what does that mean for the DNS as a namespace? What are the implications of these evolutionary pressures on the name system as we know it? We're busy flattening out the root. We're busy flattening out this space and massively populating it.

So, we've lost the awesome power of hierarchy. How does that impact on this pressure to go ever faster? Now, that could be a paper worth talking about, but it's more of an alert paper than an "ICANN should do A, B, C, or D," because it's very hard to tell what ICANN should do in this space.

Now, I proffer this only as a thought, but it's sort of this, if I was going to be goal-oriented and you're going to take resolution as the starting stone to jump off from, then that kind of conflict of desire ... Because the name publisher, from the other side of the coin, doesn't want fast.

They want timely. In other words, if I make a change in my zone file, if I use conventional DNS parlance ... If I make a change and want everyone to understand and use that change right now, whatever I publish I'd like everyone to know about at the time I publish it. So, they want fast at the publication side. The user—and I'd say the user here is the application—wants fast as in, "I don't care how stale it is. I just don't want to spend three hours resolving it."

JIM GALVIN:

So, I want to just comment on one phrase that you used, Geoff, there. You commented about we're busy flattening the namespace. I want to challenge that assertion. I kind of let that phrase go by a lot in some SSAC discussions and elsewhere. Now I want to challenge that assertion. I get it, we're growing the root zone, so sure, in a conceptual sense, we're flattening the namespace.

But I'm sorry, .com has got 200 million names in it. There are 350 million SLDs in the world. 1,000 TLDs is just not even hitting the radar in my book.

So, I am just not comfortable with use of the phrase “we’re flattening the namespace” and using that as an argument for anything about the root zone. We’ve got to come up with something better. That’s all.

GEOFF HUSTON:

But this is not an argument about the root zone, Jim. The fact that there are 300 million .com names, or whatever the current number is, is further evidence of flattening the namespace. It’s not that .com is a damn fine hierarchy, God knows. No, it’s not. You’re being a bit sensitive that I’m talking about the root, and I’m not. I’m actually talking about the namespace.

Part of the issue was deep hierarchies have their own tradeoffs. Flat spaces have a different set of trade-offs. The market is busy deciding, almost unconsciously, about those trade-offs between what the publisher wants and what the consumer wants, what the application that uses this stuff wants, and the interplay of those tensions. “I want better caching. I want [inaudible]. I want, I want, I want,” versus “I want control over my namespace from the publisher.”

How does that play out? I suppose, for ICANN, how does that play out in name policies at some point? The way we use the namespace. So, I didn’t want to create the flattening the root red herring debate. No. It’s not that. It’s flattening the namespace.

BARRY LEIBA:

Jim says in the chat, “I like framing it as the tensions that manifest when flattening namespaces.”

GEOFF HUSTON: Absolutely. Absolutely, yeah.

BARRY LEIBA: Right. And with some of the alternative stuff that we're talking about, some of it is talking about breaking off pieces of the namespace and managing them elsewhere. Some of it is talking about parallel namespaces, which gets us worried in many different ways. So, I think we have a lot to talk about in this regard.

JIM GALVIN: So, let me come back to the first point that I made, back at the beginning of all this. It strikes me that focusing on this DNS resolution issue ... We've got this flattening of namespaces and there are some tensions in there. One of the things that manifests is competing namespaces. And what that creates is user confusability.

It's interesting to talk about the technical details of what's going on but that's less informative to the ICANN community in a broad sense than really trying to drive at the user confusability that comes from it. Clearly, that's something that ... To me, that's something that registries and registrars would care about as this need, or this perceived need, for alternative namespaces, or blockchain and its various derivatives, is sort of the canonical stepchild right now. But that strikes me as something to really try and explain and talk about.

And you have to talk at slightly above the technical issue that's going on. You don't want to lose that information. But that's one of the tensions

that comes out, creating competition in all of this. Users care. Or they don't care until things don't work. So you're creating fragmentation on the Internet. Existential threat. I'm done.

BARRY LEIBA:

Russ?

RUSS MUNDY:

Thanks, Barry. Yeah. Listening to all this ... And I must admit, one of the reasons that I have signed up as observer/viewer rather than an active participant is I didn't really, and still don't have, at least to my satisfaction, a good understanding of what the work party is, indeed, trying to accomplish. I think the issue of user confusability is certainly one that is getting a fair bit of attention.

But one of the things that I have seen, I'll say, come and go is attempts to do things that are similar to DNS but make, by design, absolutely no use of DNS, that try to be completely and totally tied to the application, usually, that is wanting to create something. And those things have happened a number of times over the last four years, but I don't think that that's what the work party is looking at.

But I'm not sure, because putting on my RSSAC liaison hat from the SSAC, I say, okay, if there was something that turned out to be a really successful set of alternate things that made little or no use of the DNS, what kind of impact would that end up having on the RSS, or the individual root operators?

I'm not sure but it would have some impact. That's something that I think at least that specialized subset of the ICANN community would be very interested in. But I don't know how much of that is actually going on. But one of the things that I think is, at least, inferred by all the discussions of replacing DNS and the DNS hierarchy with blockchain things is, in fact, the effort to completely separate from the DNS as it exists today.

So, I'm not sure what the best approach is for this and I've kind of wondered ... But then, my brain is still confused, somewhat, about what we're trying to do with the work party. That's it. Thank you.

BARRY LEIBA:

Yeah, I have something to follow on with that. But first a comment, because both Russ and Jim mentioned being reviewers, or observers, or whatever. My sense of what that means, as opposed to participant or whatever we call it, is that there is less of an expectation that you will be on all the calls and participating. But I certainly consider that, when you are able to be on the calls, I want you to participate as much as you care to. I don't care how you signed up.

The follow-on to that, to what Russ said, is ... And I look at the blockchain stuff as two different mechanisms. One is where, when I go down a certain path through, let's say, a certain TLD, or a certain, even, second-level domain, that's where the blockchain kicks in and things below that resolve through a blockchain. As opposed to the other mechanism, where the entire DNS from the root is duplicated in a blockchain. I see them as different problems, different mechanisms with different problems associated with them. Suzanne.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Yeah. Thanks, Barry. Suddenly a thought strikes me and I'll try to hit it back. We're talking, in this conversation, about both DNS protocol and the domain namespace the DNS operates on. If we're going to talk about the consequences and changes to how people use the protocol, we end up talking about ... What is a unique identifier, anyway? How does DNS fit that bill? How do domain names fit that bit? What's happening to those characteristics? Names are separate to how they're resolved and it feels like we can talk about both but maybe trimming it to certain interactions is part of how we narrow the focus.

BARRY LEIBA: Yes, I agree with you.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Because the namespace ... I mean, people kick around the word "identifier" an awful lot without knowing ... Without needing to know, to be honest, what it means. But it is a technical term. It does have a definition. The attributes it describes are relevant. How do we get that into something useful or educational for this community? We're still laying down those flagstones. Because it's a terribly abstract approach and I would like for us to do something more concrete. But the protocol and the namespace are separable.

BARRY LEIBA: But a lot of what you're talking about came from how the applications developed. Everything got used to using domain names for things.

Everything got used to using e-mail addresses for things. And then, we started using domain names and e-mail addresses, or things that look like them, for other purposes because the applications were used to them. And yes, that's a big thing to discuss, where that came from, where that's going, and what the implications are.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

I think one of the big risks of alternate namespaces is just that they blur at what qualities domain names serve, besides being a made-up good to have a market for.

BARRY LEIBA:

Right. No, I had an extensive argument with somebody relatively recently—it was sometime in the last six months—where he insisted that something wasn't an e-mail address because it looked like an e-mail address, it had the syntax of an e-mail address, but it wasn't being used for e-mail so it wasn't an e-mail address. And then we'd say, well, it was an identifier. It had lots of ... That had lots of implications on the protocol that he was trying to use it in. Geoff.

GEOFF HUSTON:

I'll simplify like crazy. Is this just another "alternate namespaces are bad" paper? It's an option. It has been said so often that I think we're all getting a bit tired of saying it but it's a valid thing to say. Alternate namespaces are bad. We should not go there. A gentle reminder to all of us, don't go there. I'm not sure the value of alternate namespaces are bad ... Mark 50,

because there will be mark 51, 52. We'll keep on saying it. No one will listen.

The other way of looking at this is to actually think about the tensions that operate between scaling, sizing, performance, and motives, and try and talk about why the DNS as we know it is changing and the potential to impact upon the namespace. Is that useful? What I would say is a useful observation—and I really don't know who we're saying it to—is that, to be perfectly frank, no one is in charge of the DNS and no one is in charge of its evolution.

The signals between players are purely market signals and the reasons why we do resolver-less DNS or any other hinky little thing is because someone sees a reason to do the hinky little thing and you never need permission. You just don't. It's a market. And in some ways, the outcome of all of this process are almost at odds with ICANN's outcomes of the deliberative process of trying to make careful decisions each time in the context of preserving some structure.

Whereas, on the other hand, you've got this sort of open, free-wheeling market which is constantly throwing rocks or pressures to change it. Where does that lead? I don't have a clue. I'm not even sure of the value of such a paper. It's certainly the case, but so what? So, something can be said about the fact that the DNS is purely random. Its evolution is purely random. Does it matter? I don't know. Have I elicited ...? Someone? Oh, Barry.

BARRY LEIBA:

I don't look at this as alternate namespaces are bad. I look at it as alternate namespaces have implications and we need to study them and lay it out. I had a friend years ago who said he would never buy a dictionary that had the word ain't in it, because ain't ain't a word. And then we got into the conversation of whether dictionaries ought to be prescriptive or descriptive, whether they should talk about how language should be or how it is in use.

And I think dictionaries should be the latter, and I think we should be writing a document that's more on the latter. What's happening? We may or may not like alternative namespaces but they are coming. Some of them are here. More are coming. So, I don't want to look at it as a bad/not bad. I want to look at it as, how can we make them less bad? What can we do to understand the problems that are being caused, and mitigate them, and keep us stable? Russ.

RUSS MUNDY:

I'm thinking that, perhaps, it would be useful for us to try to get at least some definition of what we expect, or who we expect, the target readers of the document to be. If they are people who are beyond the ICANN non-technical crowd, if it's the ICANN technically centered crowd, if it's people that just want to understand more about how the whole naming thing works ... Because I would argue that, for the general, broadest population, not only do they not know what DNS is, they don't care.

And if these other ways of doing naming and name resolution help them get done what they want to get done, whether it's through a Facebook thing or a chatroom, they truly don't care. They just want it to work. So,

maybe it would help us to target our audience a little more specifically, who we want to write for. Thanks.

BARRY LEIBA:

Okay. That's useful input. I have always thought we were writing for people who understand what naming is and, basically, how it works. Because we're not writing for Warren's auntie, as he likes to say. And yeah, you're absolutely right, people don't care about how things work. They just want it to work the way they expect. So, we're looking at the implications that cause the expectations to fail. Suzanne, it looks like you were trying to say something.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

No, just I'm trying to get my head around pointing this in a particular direction. My null hypothesis is starting to be that we started this effort as much because this is a topic we think is interesting ...

BARRY LEIBA:

Yes, that is how it came up when we got together at, probably, the 2019 retreat and listed topics we wanted to work on. It was one of them.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Yeah, but I am not sure where we go from there. Because I'm listening and nothing is really grabbing me as where we need to go.

BARRY LEIBA:

Well I'll just throw something out because I did say that a lot of the people I've been talking to bring up the issue of blockchain, DNS on the blockchain, or blockchain DNS, or whatever, however they refer to it. But what I get from them is that they have no idea what that means. They've just heard this as something that people are talking about.

And they said, "Well, what's going to happen with that?" So, I think a lot of what we need to do is study what is actually being proposed and what is actually being implemented and describe that to the readers of our document, and then take that into what the implications of it are and how we avoid having that fragment things in harmful ways.

GEOFF HUSTON:

At this point, I sense a certain amount of overlap between that role and OCTO. I suppose the question as soon as you say that is, well, what was wrong with what OCTO said? The dividing factor of SSAC is the poor old Board is forced to read our papers. No one else is. And oddly enough, with OCTO, I don't know what the reality is but the Board is not forced to read OCTO papers. OCTO can't really create that advice directly to the Board, we can.

And so, in some ways, if the Board is forced to read SSAC papers, everyone else reads it to make sure that they're keeping track with what we're saying to the Board in case they need to say something different, or "me too," whatever. And so, in some ways, advice to the community, no matter what that community is, is kind of a second level for SSAC, because we can't force anyone to read it, nor can we give them motivation as to why they should read it.

So, I would have thought, from that analysis, that if we're just describing stuff then the real question is, what is wrong with what OCTO has said and why don't we have a conversation with OCTO if we truly believe there are things that should be said that haven't? One of the policy implications of what we're saying? Wow, that's SSAC material because that goes straight into the Board and its policy role. Maybe that's a helpful observation here.

BARRY LEIBA: Okay, thanks, Geoff. Andrew.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Yeah. So, about OCTO 34. I had a couple of e-mails back and forth with Alain, kind of about the scoping of that paper, where I was wondering why OCTO didn't take a broader scope with it. Because OCTO 34 really focuses quite consciously on namespace issues and name collisions, and that kind of stuff, and that was really Alain and OCTO's intention with that paper.

They needed to get a paper out. They needed to keep it focused. They didn't want to have it be too long and they didn't want to spend forever writing a paper that went into all the different implications of these kinds of naming systems, and I think that's fine. So, Geoff, to your point, I think there is a lot more the SSAC could say that OCTO didn't say in what I see as a pretty focused paper on one aspect of that space.

GEOFF HUSTON: I don't know where to take that. I understand what you're saying, Andrew. I heard the words easy, all that.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Like what else could the SSAC say that OCTO didn't already say?

GEOFF HUSTON: Well, more to the point, I suppose, to what extent it chimes and resonates with existing issues/community concerns. Because, at some point, you've got to be part of a conversation, not picking up random stuff on the way. We had this—

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Well, one thing ... Oh, go ahead.

GEOFF HUSTON: No, no, no. You.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Well, one thing they didn't talk about is a lot of the ... I mean, the fact that anything to do with the blockchain is permanent. You make an edit to the blockchain and you're stuck with it, or you lose your private key and you're just kind of screwed. There is nothing like URS. There is nothing like UDRP. There is no way to ... I mean, how would you deal with DNS abuse with blockchain domains? You can't remove them. There is no central authority. There are a lot of issues like that.

I mean, I think if you just look at issues that are going ... Things that the ICANN community regularly deals with. I mean, just using DNS abuse as an example, how would you even conceive of that? How would you have something like WHOIS? Or how would you get information about who a registrant is? What even is a registrant?

GEOFF HUSTON:

“Blockchain is a terribly, terribly bad idea from a security and stability perspective” is, A, a great title and probably, B, a great document. Is that where we want to go? It is, because there is all this stupid hype about this crap and the answer is, as you say, Andrew, the reality is as ugly as you can get. It’s awful.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

The reason why I’m laughing, pardon the interruption, is that I am actually writing at least part of that paper in my day job capacity, and you’re right. Everything I read makes me more appalled and sad. Pretty much everything. So, Andrew, you’re absolutely right about all of those things.

Blockchain is a ledger-based database. It’s not a good database. It’s certainly not all that good for everything else. But yeah, I guess except for making people think they have discovered something amazing. In any case, we could do worse than to say, “Let’s pick up where the OCTO paper left off because they didn’t feel they could get really militant and maybe we can be more direct.”

BARRY LEIBA: I will point out that SAC109 did not give any particular advice. It laid things out, it talked about different implications to people with different concerns and that sort of thing; what we call perspectives. And I have heard a lot of positive feedback for SAC109, or a lot of people said it was very helpful to them. So, it's clear that at least some people are reading our papers and some of them appreciate that kind of document when it's appropriate for us to put it out.

SUZANNE WOOLF: I admit I'd have a hard time saying anything good about blockchain, though.

BARRY LEIBA: Well, my view of blockchain is that it's the nail because everyone has a hammer. Whenever anybody says, "I have this thing I want to do, what's the answer?" right now the answer is blockchain.

SUZANNE WOOLF: It's much worse than that but, anyway, okay. I will be quiet because it sounds like ...

GEOFF HUSTON: No, but there is an interesting and, I think, useful commentary that talks about a crypto-based mechanism that supposedly has security at its very foundation that creates a system that is unusable in human terms for relation to the DNS and the name system. It is actually a decent myth-killing paper. This stuff is crap. Let's not spend more time on this.

You just can't make this work the way you intended because such systems don't have the necessary flexibility, scalability, whatever. And arguing that might be a useful thing to argue, taking OCTO and pushing it further and being far more damning, maybe.

BARRY LEIBA: I could certainly get behind that angle.

SUZANNE WOOLF: That might even be fun, in addition to useful.

BARRY LEIBA: And we in SSAC are all about the fun.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Warren's not here and Warren is the Chief Fun Officer.

BARRY LEIBA: CFO, I like that. Yeah.

SUZANNE WOOLF: I think it was Jason Livingood that christened him many years ago. But I am certainly willing to explore the ...

GEOFF HUSTON: So am I. And if you want to go down the informatory path, the more general ... You know, the framework that we've got here in this idea collection, as you say and correctly observe, lacks focus, specificity, theme. It's just stuff that has been lying on the road as we went down it. If you wanted to sharpen it up and say an SSAC perspective on blockchain-based names, that would actually be a decent thing for others to cite when the next blockchain delegation rolls up at some meeting saying, "Let's all use blockchain!"

SUZANNE WOOLF: I think it could be kind of fun to talk into the NCAP Discuss Group with some of the folks there. But again, see, it's fun already.

BARRY LEIBA: I'm waiting for Jim to come off mute now, but not seeing it. Okay. All right. So, we're down to the last quarter of this. What are we taking out of today? Andrew, have you picked up anything that leads us forward in the discussion?

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Well, yeah. I mean, this group has an idea of the kind of paper they want to write. That's a bit different than what's in the charter.

BARRY LEIBA: The charter has part of it.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: It does, yes. So, maybe one thing we can do is think about how to amend the charter to cover this, and then let the larger work party review that. We did pass this charter through the SSAC.

BARRY LEIBA: We did, yeah. Suzanne.

SUZANNE WOOLF: But I think part of what we're talking about here is we can certainly discuss blockchain-based names as poor candidates for the job of Internet identifiers, which sort of crosses over between what's there and what we've been talking about.

GEOFF HUSTON: From a security and stability perspective, I'm there.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Hey, there you go. No, because they are unstable, not secure.

GEOFF HUSTON: Absolutely, Suzanne.

SUZANNE WOOLF: I'm sorry, I will be quiet now. No, sorry, like I said, I'm spending a lot of time on that corner of the world, anyway. Every time you peel back another layer, when you think you've gotten all the way to the bottom of some of these things, nope, there are many more layers to go.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: So, I proposed a sentence there. Does adding that sentence to the charter ...? Do people ...? Is this what we have been talking about this session?

GEOFF HUSTON: Well, yes. And actually, concentrating on just that as a focal point.

BARRY LEIBA: Yeah, I think that's more the point, that that can be part of the bullet right above it. It's the point that the bullet you just wrote is what we want to focus on, rather than the other things on the list.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: So, should I delete the other ones?

BARRY LEIBA: No, I would just put that in that bullet, that that's really where we want to put our focus. Somehow say that that's what the work party has decided to focus on and see where that brings us. Yeah, something like that.

RUSS MUNDY: And it might be worth noting that it sounds like we would most likely want to be targeting this to the ICANN audience/ICANN-centered audience.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: I don't like that edit I made.

SUZANNE WOOLF: ICANN community audience.

BARRY LEIBA: You mean as opposed to the Board?

RUSS MUNDY: As opposed to the Board, as opposed to the larger, bigger application world users.

BARRY LEIBA: Fine. So, when we send out the notes from this meeting, I think that's the point we need to highlight in it in big, bold, "if you don't read anything else in this message, read this," that the work party has decided to focus on that so that everybody understands that we're now paring it down and we're establishing focus.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: So, there's a section in the notes called "considerations." I'll just put that as a consideration. And as an action item, I think we can just say the work party should consider this proposal.

BARRY LEIBA: Yes. Yes, that works.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: Okay.

BARRY LEIBA: All right. I think our 50-minute hour is up. Shall we call it a meeting or would we like to babble a little more?

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: And just to Russ's note on the intended audience, we have this sentence on the intended audience. Is that good enough, Russ?

RUSS MUNDY: Well, I don't know that we even want to say "the greater Internet community." It seems like it would be better to focus specifically on the ICANN community. Others may disagree, which would be fine.

SUZANNE WOOLF: This is kind of a big shift for a small subset of the work party to be proposing.

BARRY LEIBA: Well that's why, as Andrew said, the action item for the work party is to consider what we are proposing today and be ready to discuss that next week.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Okay. And encourage people to come and join us.

GEOFF HUSTON: I'm not entirely comfortable if you're sitting up there with a document that says "blockchain really isn't fit for purpose," then say, "oh, we only meant the ICANN community to pick up on this." It's kind of a bit odd. It doesn't seem to work right for me. I'd be more inclined to leave the words there at the moment. Sure, if you want to read it and use it.

RUSS MUNDY: I wouldn't object to that. My thought was it might help us focus more on content if what we are targeting for results is aimed specifically at the ICANN community. But I'm fine either way.

ANDREW MCCONACHIE: I will add ... I will have two considerations in the notes and two action items. Consider the changing focus of the work party's roles, consider the changing audience. We can talk about it next week.

GEOFF HUSTON: If you're going to come out with a document that says the Blockchain Emperor has no clothes, really, believe us, and it's a well-argued paper, it's going to get more readership than just the Board.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Yeah. There has been a lot of attention to how cryptocurrencies are not all they're cracked up to be but very little about naming and trying to generate identifiers off of a blockchain.

GEOFF HUSTON: Right, and this whole idea of automated ledgers, etc., the next layer down. To actually point out that, too, is nonsense is actually a good statement to make, from my perspective. I believe it. I think it's true. But there is an awful lot of hype that says precisely the opposite.

SUZANNE WOOLF: It's the next big thing.

GEOFF HUSTON: Oh, yes. Sorry, yes. Sorry, I forgot that. Yes, it is the next big thing. Yes.

SUZANNE WOOLF: So, I guess we're done with the meeting because Geoff and I are both wrong.

GEOFF HUSTON: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. We're both wrong. Sorry, Barry. Your meeting. You can have it back.

BARRY LEIBA: Any last words? All right. Thanks, everybody, for joining. We'll see people next week.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Thank you for your patience.

GEOFF HUSTON: Thank you for your patience. I agree, Suzanne.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Hey, we did make progress here. I think.

BARRY LEIBA: Thanks.

RUSS MUNDY: Bye, all.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]