

*Consultative
Committees, Registrars
and Users*

**Minutes of the plenary meeting
of March 12, 2014**

afnic

1. Attendees

Registrars: 18 (out of 41 membres)

CLARANET SAS	Sophie PACAVE
CONNECTION SA	Jean-Benoît RICHARD
DATAXY	Bernard DULAC
EPISTROPHE	Philippe BATREAU
EURODNS	Luc SEUFER - (<i>Participation à distance</i>)
GANDI SAS	Nicolas LHUILLERY
GIP RENATER	Elisabeth GOMES - (<i>Participation à distance</i>)
MAILCLUB/SAFEBRANDS	Frédéric GUILLEMAUT
NAMEBAY	Eric LANTONNET
NAMESHIELD	Eric LANTONNET
NORDNET	Scott JUNG
ORANGE	Sophie JEAN-GILLES
ORDIPAT	Sylvie DESTENAVE
RAPIDOMAINE	Alexandre BADELON
SDV PLURIMEDIA	Sylvie COPPE
SFR	Véronique DELEAU
SFR	Sylvie POUSSIN

Users, individuals and legal entities: 6 (out of 30 members)

Legal entities	
AMF	Véronique PICARD
CCI Paris IDF	Laurent DELIN
ISOC France	Marie-Astrid LERAY
Individuals	
	Sébastien BACHOLLET
	Elisabeth PORTENEUVE
	David-Irving TAYER

Afnic

Pierre BONIS, Deputy CEO
Matthieu CREDOU, Marketing Director
Clémence DAVOUST, External Communications Manager
Marianne GEORGELIN, Registration Policy
Régis MASSE, CTO
Julien NAILLET, Communications Director
Virginie NAVAILLES, Membership Services Manager
Lucile RAVASSE, Marketing Manager for .FR
Emilie TURBAT, Sales Director
Mathieu WEILL, CEO

2. Agenda of the plenary meeting

- ✓ News briefing
- ✓ Plenary Meeting and presentation of the day's items for discussion:
 - Topic 1: Policy options for the *.fr* TLD in the coming years (both in terms of new features and methods to promote our namespace)
 - Topic 2: Priorities for members on the 2015 roadmap
 - Topic 3: Key findings of the audit on the operation of the Board
- ✓ CCU / CCBE: working sessions on three topics for discussion
 - ✓ Lunch
- ✓ Return of the positions of the Consultative Committees
 - ✓ Presentation of information updates and discussions with members:
 - Facts and figures (to date) of 1-2 character domain names
 - Proposal for the operation and composition of the committees of the Afnic Foundation for Digital Solidarity
 - ✓ Conclusion

3. Minutes

Mathieu Weill welcomed the participants present in the room and the remote attendants and invited Peter Bonis to present the agenda of the day. The subject on the policy options for the *.fr* TLD in coming years was to be the subject of an interactive brainstorming session. The participants introduced themselves during a round table.

The news from the Afnic Consultative Committees for the month of October 2014 was intense and marked by the launch of the *.paris*, *.bzh*, *.alsace* geoTLDs (the latter was in the sunrise phase), registrations of domain names with 1 and 2 characters, new services such as

FRLock and Registry Analytics, as well as the abuse management service for gTLD registries. Support services and counseling for gTLD registry customers also started.

In the beginning of 2015, Afnic became a multi-registry player that now managed ccTLDs and gTLDs. Growth of the .fr TLD continued to be 2 times higher than the European average. The new organization of the Afnic teams was now in place in its new premises.

Afnic was increasingly recognized within and outside its ecosystem. It had obtained "Recognized for Excellence-4 stars" Certification, reflecting its performance in serving customers and members, as well as its commitment with respect to its environment and to its stakeholders.

To conclude on the institutional level, the Secretary of State had taken part in the FrenchNight organized by Afnic at the ICANN meeting in London and inaugurated the new premises of Afnic in November 2014. It had invited Emmanuel Sartorius, Mathieu Weill and Peter Bonis on February 17 for a working meeting on Internet governance and the launch of the Afnic Foundation for Digital Solidarity.

3.1. Discussion items

The discussion points were presented in the various committee meetings so that the workshop could be held on the policy options for the .fr TLD.

3.1.1. Policy options for the fr TLD in the coming years (both in terms of new features and methods to promote our namespace)

In 2014, in extremis the .fr TLD reached its target of 5%, growth forecasts having been revised twice downwards, from 10% to 8% and then to 5%. The growth in stock was primarily due to the "good" renewal rate, creations generally being below target.

The first assessment of the promotional campaign launched in September 2014 showed that the www.reussir-en.fr website, presented as a "contributor" of leads for registrars, attracted visitors interested in the content and advice but generated no leads or sales for reseller partners. However, the campaign was well received by Afnic's ecosystem, and for the first time promoted uses close to the needs of domain name users / holders. For Phase 2 of the campaign, thought had to be given to certain aspects of the promotional campaign, in order to increase sales directly, keeping the approach based on uses.

To date in 2015, the trend was a slowdown, to approximately 3% of growth in stock. Growth reserves existed, such as the low penetration rate of domain names among French users (just over 4%) and the digital culture which still had to be developed. Afnic was therefore developing means of counteracting this trend and maintaining the momentum of the .fr TLD.

Lucile Ravasse proposed members join in a "wake up" workshop, designed to facilitate the collection of new ideas. The brainstorming sessions was organized internally: "idea cards" were filled in by employees, detailing the ideas they had (needs, markets, targets, etc.). The collected files are then presented by the teams at a special "Wake up" meeting. Each file was

subject to an assessment based on criteria such as feasibility, potential market, etc.), the top rated ideas being the subject of an opportunity study to input the product & innovation roadmap. The same methodology was therefore proposed to members through workshops organized during these consultation committee meetings.

Two brainstorming themes were proposed to members: "What new services and features can we include in the .fr TLD?" and "What actions are required to keep the .fr TLD useful and attractive for its users?"

The position of users:

- ✓ They thought communication should be based on the response to user needs. To do so, a phone number and an email address were needed. Thought had to be given to the services that registrars could offer around messaging products so that they chose domain names instead of Google type messaging systems.
- ✓ Configuring e-mail systems was always complicated for individuals and SMEs. It was important to offer services related to domain names.
- ✓ Afnic could offer domain names under the .fr TLD to institutions that had none, or double the registration validity period with the introduction of multi-annual registration (X years purchased, X years offered), or run promotion campaigns and carry out these operations with organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the IT Club for French majors (CIGREF), the French employers' association (MEDEF), etc.

The position of registrars:

- ✓ They suggested opening registrations under the .fr TLD to other countries with media relations abroad
- ✓ In terms of promotion, they suggested communicating on simplifying the .fr TLD and/or on the legal safety / stability / value of the domain name, producing tutorials on the interests of a domain name in the .fr namespace.
- ✓ Joint operations with the registrars should be pursued with incentives on registrations (points / gifts won for each .fr registration)
- ✓ They would like to have customized statistics (market share, average duration of registration of a domain name, geographical segmentation, etc.), reserved for members only, on their registrations under the .fr TLD as a means of self-assessment in relation to other registrars of the same size.

Discussions focused on the constraints on the registration of domain names in the .fr namespace. For those who wanted one, Mathieu Weill suggested a working session to identify the constraints. The Association of Mayors of France, with which Afnic had produced teaching material (https://www.afnic.fr/medias/documents/vieasso/ccube/2015/plaquette_AFNIC_AMF.pdf) on the uses of domain names, had volunteered to work with Afnic in identifying uses and usability issues with a sample of users.

3.1.3. Priorities for members on the 2015 roadmap

Régis Massé recalled the deliveries in H1 2015 and sought the views of members on their priorities for the second half with a list of suggestions.

The multi-annual registration feature for the .fr TLD, the display of the calendar expiry date and the implementation of the renew operation were scheduled for 30/03/2015.

Securing the Trade operation by adding an authorization code and separating the Transfer and Trade operations, implementing 5-day grace periods for creation, transfer and renewal operations and the merger of the administrative and technical update operations were scheduled for 30/06. Régis Massé wanted to check that the date was convenient for the registrars.

Part of the roadmap for the 2nd half was defined by the 2015 action plan (technical consolidations and groundwork on infrastructure and business services, the launch of gTLDs not yet registered in the root, the launch of new services and provision of new features based on feedback from the registrars (surveys, direct feedback, etc.), but Afnic technical teams would be able to implement some additional features chosen by the registrars, such as abandoning a Trade operation via the Extranet, reissuing Trade e-mails, the provision of EPP statuses for the .fr TLD and the overseas ccTLDs, making it optional to input the date and place of birth of an individual, strengthening the resilience of the extranet by reducing the service life of the former extranet to 3 months, etc.

At the end of the workshop, the Afnic technical teams would evaluate the workload related to the requests and establish a general action plan and schedule for deliveries, which would be communicated to the registrars.

Discussions focused on the lack of work on the Whois. ICANN having announced plans to change the Whois format, discussions on the standardization of the .fr Whois and gTLDs were on hold for the time being.

The position of users:

- ✓ They wanted registrars to communicate on the methods for implementing the 5-day grace periods for creation, transfer and renew operations.

The position of registrars:

- ✓ They requested that priority be given to delivering the following features: management of premium names for the .paris geoTLD, reissuing Trade emails, the abandonment of a Trade operation, communication of the list of bugs to be fixed and the associated delivery schedule, programming a termination, a more advanced export function for portfolios (with more criteria) and making optional the input of a holder's date of birth for registration purposes (+ proposals for the management of homonyms)

3.1.4. Key findings of the audit on the operation of the Board

Mathieu Weill explained that the Board of Directors had initiated the audit of its operations in 2011 under the previous Chair, and many areas for improvement had been identified.

An initial self-assessment had been carried out and resulted in the creation of committees, and a major overhaul of the agenda: more strategy, more substantive issues such as HR or IS, and the establishment of an annual strategic seminar.

In 2014, the Board decided to conduct an external audit, entrusted to the votre-administrateur firm, overseen by an ad hoc committee of the Board consisting of Messrs. Sartorius, Bachollet and Donath.

The audit highlighted the strengths such as the well-organized and structured governance of Afnic, the handling by the board of all the topics that fell within its scope, the structured discussions and efficient decision-making, the excellent relations between the board and

senior management and the professionalism and commitment of the management team that helped make the governance of Afnic so dynamic.

votre-administrateur, however, did make 23 recommendations for improvement which had all been analyzed by the Board and which aimed to make it more proactive in order to offer members a vision and project for the association for the years to come. This obviously had an impact on the agendas, the information provided, the integration of new directors and their training. The recruitment of members of the Association also had to be boosted later in the action plan for member services initiated in March 2014.

Mathieu Weill invited the members to focus on certain key issues that might lead to a change in the articles of association, such as the role of the Board in terms of HR and pay, the respective assignments and delegations between the Board, the CEO and the Commitments Committee, and the scheduling of the renewal of directors' terms of office.

The subject of director compensation was addressed as part of the audit at the initiative of the directors "*as a possible solution to their greater involvement in the life of the Board,*" but "*with very mixed feelings.*" The consultants of votre-administrateur concluded: "*At this stage we do not recommend setting up a compensation scheme without having previously conducted an in-depth analysis of the role and future of Afnic.*" However, discussions on the subject helped identify the issues involved, in terms of increasing the number of candidates to the Board, the involvement of the directors (time spent and quality of contributions), cost control, the image / reputation of Afnic and its governance.

The Board wanted to know the opinions of the committees on whether to introduce into the articles of association the possibility of remunerating one or more directors and introducing staggered renewals of Board members to smooth them over time and ensure its continuity (at present the terms of office of all elected directors are renewed every 3 years).

The position of users:

- ✓ The discussion on the remuneration of directors was long but not conclusive. They proposed to continue the discussions on this subject.
- ✓ They understood the concern about staggered renewals but that analysis had to be conducted in parallel with that of the operation and composition of the Board
- ✓ They proposed to work on these issues with all of the members.

The position of registrars:

- ✓ They were in favor of a staggered renewal of the Directors' terms of office and the involvement of the Board in HR issues. This point needed be clarified.
- ✓ They were not opposed to the compensation of directors in order to attract candidate Board members and suggested increasing the representativeness of civil society on the Board.
- ✓ They also suggested reducing the association's membership fees and requested that the audit of membership fees as part of setting up member services be shared. Discounts on membership fees could be considered based on the attendance at meetings of governing bodies and / or the number of domain names managed.
- ✓ The registrar representatives recalled that only half of the Board members were elected and appointed directors should receive no compensation.

Mathieu Weill concluded that consensus had not been reached, but that it was important to hear the points of view of the two committees. Peter Bonis added that these topics would naturally be discussed again within the working group on members.

3.2. Information updates

3.2.1. Facts and figures (to date) of 1-2 character domain names

The last phase of registrations of domain names with 1 and 2 characters was coming to an end. Peter Bonis recalled that the project had two objectives: that members' rights be respected in accordance with the impartial nature of Afnic and that financial equilibrium be reached.

During the sunrise phase, 119 domain names had been allocated, 54 applications had been rejected and charged € 200 in accordance with the general terms and conditions. The Landrush phase had lasted 4 weeks with a declining weekly rate. 7 domain names had been registered the first week, 1 second, 9 the third and more than 550 during the final week.

Sales turnover of more € 250k had been achieved, almost covering costs, and uptake by domainers had also been avoided.

Peter Bonis asked the opinion of the registrars on the positive and negative aspects of the operation.

The position of registrars:

- ✓ The processing and management of applications had been good
- ✓ Operational communication for each phase had to be systematic, clear and detailed
- ✓ The provision of conference call lines would be better, for example one hour before and after a launch

3.2.2. Proposal for the operation and composition of the committees of the Afnic Foundation for Digital Solidarity

Peter Bonis recalled that the proposed creation of the Afnic Foundation for Digital Solidarity had been approved by the Board of Directors of the Fondation de France on December 4, 2014.

The purpose of the Afnic Foundation (voted at the general meeting on June 6, 2014) was to support the development of an Internet solidarity, training and awareness of its uses, by supporting local digital solidarity initiatives and research projects on this topic.

Its governance bodies consisted of an executive committee, and a scientific and steering committee.

The executive committee would take all of the management decisions for the Foundation under the umbrella and control of the Fondation de France. It consisted of six Afnic representatives (volunteer directors, the CEO and a member from the Afnic staff for the 1st year) and 3 qualified persons.

The purpose of the Scientific and Steering Committee was to provide the Foundation with priorities for action, justified either by the results of studies on needs in terms of digital inclusion, or by the wish to coordinate the actions of the Foundation with certain public policies the same purpose as that of the Foundation. It consisted of four government representatives, four qualified persons and 2 Afnic representatives.

The signing of the agreement to create the Foundation would take place on 10 April 2015. By then Afnic had to contact and appoint the qualified persons and obtain ministerial agreement on the Foundation's operational procedures. Then, by June, the Afnic Foundation for Digital Solidarity had to convene its first executive committee meeting and appoint a service provider for the operational management of the Foundation in order to launch a first call for projects as of September 2015.

The next meeting of the consultative committees is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 9:00 am.