Consultative Committees, Registrars and Users

Minutes of the plenary session

6 March 2014

1. Participants

Registrars: 7 (out of 42 members)

Claranet	Sophie Pacave
Mailclub	Frédéric Guillemaut
Namebay	Eric Lantonnet - *(Remote participation)*
Nameshield	Emmanuelle Helleux
Nordnet	Scott Jung
Orange	Sophie Jean-Gilles
Ordipat	Sylvie Destenave & Jennifer Korn

Users, individuals & legal entities: 8 (out of 31 members)

Legal entities	
ACFCI	Thierry Hinfray
Association des Maires de France	Véronique Picard
Bibliothèque Nationale de France	Clément Oury
CCI Paris Ile de France	Guy Frankin
Haas Avocats	Guillaume Sanna
Individuals	
	Sébastien Bachollet
	Elisabeth Porteneuve
	David-Irving Tayer

Afnic

Loïc Damilaville, Market Research
Pierre Bonis, Deputy CEO
David Chansard, Customer Service Representative
Marianne Georgelin, Registry policies
Julien Naillet, Communications Director
Virginie Navailles, Member Services
Emilie Turbat, Sales Director
Mathieu Weill, CEO

2. Agenda of the plenary meeting

✓ **Items for discussion**
  o Forum on the Governance of the Internet
  o New services for members

✓ **Progress reports and reviews for the past period**
  o Afnic's new organization
  o Market trends and data for domain names
  o Implementation of the new naming policy
  o Support fund for the development of the Internet

3. Minutes

Mathieu Weill welcomed the participants physically and remotely attending the meeting and announced the agenda. The two topics of discussion were governance of the Internet and proposals for new member services. He invited participants to reflect on the role of Afnic in the governance of the Internet over and above its role as a registry and to indicate their needs concerning the ways in which Afnic can support them through the services it provides for its members.

Since the consultative committee meetings on 17 October 2013, Afnic teams had been heavily involved in the major projects underway, some of which were entering their final phase: gTLDs, .fr TLD commitments, the move and the new organization. Afnic's strategic objectives for 2014 had been approved by the Board of Directors: successfully launch the gTLDs (the technical files of 17 clients had been validated and pre-delegation testing had started for 4 customers who had signed their contract with ICANN, maintaining the momentum of the .fr TLD (despite a sharp market slowdown), respect the program to control costs; obtain external recognition for the quality initiative that began in 2008, as well as successfully move and implement the new organization.

This new organization, which was in tune with Afnic's new business activities, would be effective as soon as the association had moved on 31 March 2014 The organization was characterized in particular by the creation of sales departments (registrar relations, gTLD key account managers, customer relationship officers and support), marketing (market studies and monitoring, new products, registry policies) excellence and security (quality, security, certification and sustainable development). The technical, administrative and financial departments had also changed, respectively integrating R&D (Afnic Labs) and finance-based steering as well as structuring of the Purchasing function had been set up.

The three cross-business sections (communication, legal affairs and member services) are managed by Pierre Bonis.

Mathieu Weill concluded by recalling the vacancy of one of two registrar representative positions on the Board. Ascio Technologies having indicated to Afnic that it did not wish to appoint a replacement for Eric Lantonnet, the election of the second representative would be held at the Annual General Meeting on June 6, 2014.

User and registrar representatives were present and confirmed the importance of the role of director to make their voice heard on Board.

3.1.   Discussion Points

3.1.1. *Forum on the Governance of the Internet*

Peter Bonis announced that Afnic was the co-organizer of the Forum on Internet Governance (http://fgi2014.fr) to be held on March 10, 2014 in Paris. The subject was not new at the international level as the Forum on Internet Governance had been created in 2005 by the United Nations, but the wealth of events in recent years had rekindled the need to stimulate discussion on the subject in France. The issues involved were so far-reaching, from cybercrime to the reform of ICANN, that no one organization could cover them all. Consequently, several stakeholders, including AFNIC, had decided to work together rather than compete.

Sébastien Bachollet, Frédéric Guillemaut, Pierre Bonis and Julien Naillet were involved in the organization, several Afnic members including Orange and ISOC were sponsors and co-organizers, and Mathieu Weill, Mohsen Souissi and Pierre Beyssac (a member of the Afnic Scientific Council) were to speak at the Forum. The event provided Afnic with a major opportunity to enhance its visibility and sales drive.

The day was to consist of two plenary sessions on international issues of Internet governance and to present all the French stakeholders in the governance of the Internet and 6 workshops: *Can the network stay impartial?, Can anything be said on the Internet?, Can the cloud be trusted?, Big Data or Big Brother?, Cyber-security and e-strategy: what are we afraid of? And The Right to be Forgotten?.*

Peter Bonis invited everyone to take part and to express their views on Afnic's place in the governance of the Internet. The legal framework, practices and organizations in France mane the country is legitimate is making a powerful statement on the subject at the international level. Mathieu Weill was a member of the working group that was preparing the conference in São Paulo on 23 & 24 April 2014 (http://netmundial.br/).

The position of users:

- ✓ They thought Afnic was legitimate and right in taking part in the event. The topics on the agenda were extremely wide-ranging, so they deplored the absence of a common thread for the day, and were concerned about the sustainability of the event. They suggested a questionnaire be sent to the community about continuing the Forum.
- ✓ They requested the production of written summaries and videos that could be shared with all the members by the representatives.

The position of the registrars:

- ✓ No specific comment from the registrars on this topic

3.1.2. New services for members

In order to develop proposals for members about new services and submit them for approval by the committees, Virginia Navailles benchmarked the offerings, prices and conditions of membership, content and events, community management and related services available to the members of some twenty organizations (registries, associations, federations, groups and trade unions) in the industrial, technological, communication and R&D sectors in France and abroad with between 50 and 15,000 members.

The annual satisfaction survey of registrars also showed a need for communication about membership via specific channels to avoid confusion between the status of customers and members, partly due to a single extranet.

The proposals were designed to establish a "life cycle" for Afnic members, from the moment they join (key contact, identification of representatives on the board, welcome breakfast, welcome kit, etc.), through events (consultative committees, General Assembly, annual dinner, breakfasts, cocktail debates, invitations to events organized or sponsored by Afnic, etc.) and publications and resources made available to members (newsletters, studies, members directory, work by Afnic Labs, Afnic Industry Report on Domain Names, etc.).

The position of users:

- ✓ They pointed out that thinking about what being an Afnic member means and what the association can offer them is more complex for users than for registrars, for whom Afnic's role is fairly clear.
- ✓ They wanted Afnic to provide them with communication tools, for example, simple fact sheets on topics such as "what is an *.fr* TLD?", "What is the use of a website address ?", "Why have a *.fr* TLD rather than a *.com*?" as well as on current legal issues involving the Internet.
- ✓ They recommended setting up working groups, legal or technical thematic workshops, such as "ICTs for Dummies."
- ✓ Finally, in order to have more user members, they suggested a free or a reduced rate for the first year of membership and communication on the role of users by the two representatives on the Board of Directors.

The position of the registrars:

- ✓ They validated all the proposals
- ✓ They asked Afnic to launch a debate on the right to vote.
- ✓ They proposed to add questions to the annual satisfaction survey sent to registrars to identify the reasons why they were not members of Afnic and what their motivations might be for the future and added that the proposed free training for members only would be an asset to encourage registrars to join.

3.2.   Progress reports

3.2.1. Market trends and figures for domain names

Loïc Damilaville presented the CENTR statistics on the growth in the ccTLD and gTLD markets over the last 5 years. The entire market was still experiencing a slowdown. The numbers of creations of domain names were closely correlated with the global economic situation, and with start-ups in particular. Registrations for domain names under the *.fr* TLD were below expectations for the months of January and February.

The impact of new TLDs on ccTLDs was difficult to predict but the forecasts showed a fourfold increase in the number of TLDs in the next 4 years.

An analysis of the 40 largest registrars showed that the medium-sized ones were dynamic.

The position of the registrars:

  ✓ They asked if it was possible to receive this market report each month with a historical comparison

The discussions focused on the reasons for the high growth of the two Scandinavian *.se* and *.no* TLDs.

3.2.2. Implementation of the new naming policy

Peter Bonis gave an update on the progress of the notification of the texts to the European Commission. On 20 February 2014, the EC ended the status-quo period and thus validated all the legislation that had been forwarded to it by the government (Naming Policy, State-Afnic agreement, WIPO Experts ADR).

Afnic now had to resign the State-Afnic agreement, obtain approval of the WIPO Experts ADR by the Minister and have it published in the Official Journal as well as the new naming policy and implement the new features of the *.fr* TLD, i.e. open the multi-annual registration of domain names with 1 & 2 characters, the WIPO Experts ADR procedure and the Registry lock. These features would be launched from October and all of them would be available in late 2014.

The delays in implementing the new features were explained by the major impact on the billing of multi-year registration and on the EPP status of the Registry lock, the need to find the best times for the launch and visibility of domain names with 1 & 2 characters (not during the main gTLD sunrises) and the requirement to publish in the Official Journal of the WIPO Experts ADR procedure and the time taken to select the experts.

Philippe Renaut added that Afnic had chosen to "package" the launch of the new features and submit the terms of all the technical specifications to be implemented to the registrars in one go rather than several times.

The position of the registrars:

  ✓ They wanted to help in the tests and suggested setting up a working group to discuss and consolidate the specifications.

✓ They pointed out that, if priorities had to be made, registrations with 1 and 2 characters would be their priority

It was agreed that as soon as the first version of the specification was complete, it would be sent to volunteer registrars to serve as beta testers.

The position of users:

✓ Their priority was the launch of multi-year registrations.

✓ They also requested that anniversary dates in the same portfolio of domain names be aligned to simplify management.

3.2.3. Support fund for the development of the Internet

Pierre Bonis explained that the launch of the FSDI incurred a change in the articles of association that could not be passed by the General Assembly. The goal therefore was to present a proposal to the General Meeting of 6 June for the creation of the FSDI, to open it before the end of the year and perhaps also to allocate the initial funds.

Discussions were under way with the Fondation de France and in parallel with the Ministry for Industrial Recovery on the basis of a proposal for its initial operation. The enlargement of the scope of the fund for social economy projects or educational projects for example was also still under discussion.

Sheltered foundations (the model chosen for the FSDI) had no legal entity, therefore no board of directors. Afnic would not have a majority say in the governance of the Fund, but it had to make sure it would be represented and heard. Afnic members could choose their representatives to sit on the steering committee of the fund, which defined the strategic priorities.

The next meeting of the consultative committees was scheduled for Thursday, October 7, 2014 at 9:30 am.