

Registrars' and Users' Consultative Committees

Minutes of 12 October 2021



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1. Attending remotely

Users

9 persons representing 11 members of the college

- BACHOLLET Sébastien, representing ISOC France
- JOLY-BACHOLLET Anne-Marie, representing Association E-seniors
- BEAUVILLAIN Caroline, representing INPI (French National Industrial Property Institute)
- BOUTIGNON Antoine
- BOUZIDI Yannis, representing BOUYGUES SA
- FITZJEAN O COBHTHAIGH Alexis
- LOUIS Benjamin
- PORTENEUVE Elisabeth
- TAYER David-Irving

Registrars

10 persons representing 10 members of the college

- CANER Emma, representing OVHCloud
- DULAC Bernard, representing DATAXY
- FRANCK Philippe, representing DOMAINIUM
- FRANQUINET Arnaud, representing GANDI
- GUILLEMAUT Frédéric, representing SAFEBRANDS
- JEAN-GILLES Sophie, representing OBS
- JUNG Scott, representing NORDNET
- KORN Jennifer, representing ORDIPAT
- POUSSARD Jean-François, representing SOLIDNAMES
- WITTERSHEIM Arnaud, representing NAMESHIELD

Afnic

- BONIS Pierre, CEO
- BERTHELOT Marie, Product Manager
- BOULVARD Nathalie, Senior Legal Expert and DPO
- CANAC Sophie, Head of Associative Governance
- CASTEX Lucien, Representative for Public Affairs
- DAMILAVILLE Loïc, Market Intelligence Manager
- DAVOUST Clémence, Events Communication Manager
- GEORGELIN Marianne, Director, Legal and Registry Policy
- MASSÉ Régis, Director of Information Systems
- TURBAT Emilie, Marketing and Commercial Director

2. Agenda

News

Presentation of items for discussion with the committees

- The switch of the .fr TLD to the new SRS.
- Problem of French citizens abroad and possible changes to the Naming Charter

Separate consultative committees

Feedback from the Consultative Committees

Subjects of information and discussion items with members

- ID4Me
- Market trends in domain names

3. Welcome and news update

Pierre Bonis welcomed members.

Mr Bonis recalled the agenda and the principles of the committees, with the consultation in the morning and the subjects of information and discussion items in the afternoon.

The elected trustees Sébastien Bachollet and Benjamin Louis for the Users' college and Arnaud Franquinet and Arnaud Wittersheim for the Registrars' college welcomed members.

Pierre Bonis announced that following the State's call for tender, Afnic had been appointed as manager of the .fr TLD for five years from July 2022, renewable once.

In the commitments that Afnic had given to the State, emphasis had been placed on its status as an association, particularly as regards its ability to discuss matters with stakeholders. The consultative committees are becoming even more "strategic".

New consultative mechanisms need to be put in place in parallel, for example a "liaison committee" comprising DNS players and State representatives to shed light in advance on decisions of the legislator and the government that affect our members.

All the generic and brand TLDs managed by Afnic have been successfully migrated to its new SRS. The switch of the .fr TLD in 2022 was the subject of this morning's meeting.

The European NIS Directive and its transposition into French law had led to a decree designating Afnic as an Essential Service Operator (ESO). As members know, Afnic was at pains to apply the rules imposed on it in this regard.

An NIS 2 Directive is currently being discussed in EU bodies, and Afnic, like other DNS players, is paying close attention to this proposal, its wording and the impact it could have on registry operators and the various other DNS players.

In the draft NIS2, two articles present problems, notably Article 23, which reads:

"For the purpose of contributing to the security, stability and resilience of the DNS, Member States shall ensure that TLD registries and the entities providing domain name registration services for the TLD shall collect and maintain accurate and complete domain name registration data in a dedicated database facility with due diligence subject to Union data protection law as regards data which are personal data."

- The way in which DNS actors are presented seems to equate them <u>all</u> with essential service operators; in the absence of further specification, the draft gives the impression that all entities would have the same obligations and would therefore be subject to the same rules and the same security audits as Afnic.
- WHOIS also falls within the scope of NIS2, even though it has nothing to do with DNS security or cybersecurity. If it is the responsibility of the registry operator and the registrars to guarantee the validity of the data provided by holders in the domain name database, then the door to a priori validation of data would once more be opened since each actor would be "responsible" for the data in WHOIS. Quite apart from the retrograde return to pre-2004 practices for the .fr TLD, there is also a considerable risk of losing market share to .com and the platforms, calling the domain name business model at European level into question.

Afnic, and the other DNS players in Europe therefore need to make their voice heard by the decision makers, which they are unaccustomed to doing. It is important for everyone to be involved alongside Afnic. Afnic is acting as a registry operator but also in the interests of its stakeholders.

An update on progress of discussions concerning NIS2 will be given quarterly from now on.

4. Minutes - items for discussion with the committees

4.1. The switch of the .fr TLD to the new SRS

4.1.1. Presentation by Afnic

Emilie Turbat reminded members of the historical context of the project, referring in particular to the Focus Groups which had allowed the **feedback from our** registrar and registry **clients** to be **integrated** into the development of Afnic's new registration system.

An overhaul of Afnic's information system by iteration

- MVP delivered at the end of 2018
- Closed TLDs migrated in Q1 2020
- Open TLDs migrated in Q3 2021
- Migration of the .fr and French overseas TLDs planned in sandbox in Q4 2021 and in production in Q2 2022.

The constant considerations throughout the development were:

- Respect for standards
- Quality
- Performances
- Ergonomics
- Security
- Data protection

Roadmap for the migration of the .fr and French overseas TLDs.

- 30 September 2021: first communication to registrars of changes and sandbox and production dates
- 7 December 2021: sandbox launch of the new .fr platform
- Between 30 May and 10 June 2022: production migration of the .fr and French overseas TLDs

Communication with registrars

The first communication to all registrars was sent on **30 September** 2021 and contained two documents:

- Code Breaking: a document listing all items requiring action on the part of the registrar prior to migration.
- Information and New Functionalities: a document listing the changes not affecting the registration system and announcing the new functionalities provided to registrars

Afnic will contact each registrar to offer support. Other communication media will be used to inform registrars (video tutorial on the use of the Extranet, functional documentation, etc.).

Marie Berthelot and Régis Massé presented the code breaking actions that needed to be taken by the registrars prior to migration and various new functionalities that would be included in the new system developed by Afnic.

Code Breaking

- Each TLD to have its own independent system: With the new system, each TLD will be handled by an independent application.
- Changes to the EPP FrNic TLD: Update of the TLD with the change to .fr. Details of the FrNic 2.0 TLD will be provided prior to opening of the new sandbox.
- **Reinforced system security**: New process for generating passwords; TLS versions 1.2 and 1.3 authorised; Duration of an EPP session 24 hours. Protection of the system against attacks, session locking.
- **Simplification of calculation of expiry dates:** Expiry dates for restore, recover and transfer operations will henceforth be calculated in the same way. 12-month extension across the board.
- Implementation of EPP status codes: Possibility of establishing "client"-type EPP status codes.
- Changes to services (via REST-compliant API): Changes to the Domain name Availability Service (DAS) via REST-compliant API. Changes to the domain name portfolio download service (FTP) via REST-compliant API.

Important information and new functionalities

- **Provision of REST-compliant APIs:** Possibility of carrying out all operations authorised on the .fr and French overseas TLDs through these APIs.
- No downloading of host objects not associated with a domain name: Host objects not associated with a domain name at the time of migration of the .fr TLD will be deleted.
- Afnic's default anonymisation of natural persons' data: In compliance with the Naming Charter for the .fr and French overseas TLDs, when a domain name is created, Afnic will systematically apply restricted publication of the information of a holder registered in WHOIS as a natural person.

- Possibility for a Registrar to delete the NIC handle of a contact: Registrars will be able to delete a contact's NIC handle by means of a delete contact operation, provided the contact is not associated with a domain name.
- Configuration of the number of EPP sessions: Each Registrar will be able to choose the number of EPP sessions it wishes to activate, within the limit imposed by the system, which will be higher than in the current system.
- **Integration of EPP fees 1.0:** TLD will allow Registrars to consult fees for operations, including promotional fees.
- Access to the directory via the RDAP protocol: The new Registry system will enable this information to be accessed through the RDAP standardised protocol.

New functionalities on the Extranet interface

Batch operations:

The new Extranet interface will allow Registrars to carry out batch operations on domain names. Create, update, delete, renew, transfer and restore operations will be able to be performed on a list of domain names.

Promotional operations:

The new Extranet interface will enable Afnic to invite Registrars to take part in promotional operations affecting the price of operations on domain names in the .fr and French overseas TLDs.

Document management:

A document management functionality will allow Registrars to consult the reference documents of the .fr and French overseas TLDs. It will also allow Registrars to upload documents for their own use or to transmit documents to Afnic.

Messaging:

A messaging functionality will allow Registrars to consult all the notifications sent by Afnic concerning operations under way requiring exchanges, such as requests for authorisation codes, for example.

Questions for consultation:

- Is the envisaged planning acceptable to you?
- What support do you need?

The discussions and questions-and-answers between the members and Afnic allowed the following points to be clarified:

- For end users: The transition to the sandbox will have no impact. At the time of going into production the impact will be almost zero since resolution is not involved. The

- only effect will be a period in which it will not be possible to register new .fr domain names.
- The increase in the number of EPP connections is for registrars who use the system carefully and responsibly for their day-to-day activity. It is not related to .FR RUSH, which serves for other kinds of activities and which will continue in one form or another.

4.1.2. Feedback from the committees

4.1.2.a/Registrars

- The registrars (small and large) were pleased with the initial iterations observed and the exchanges with the technical teams. They congratulated the Afnic teams.
- They had no comments on the planning
- Nor did they have any specific requests for support
- Concerning promotional actions with .fr, whether free of charge or low-cost, this should be kept "in-house" so as not to tarnish the quality of the .fr TLD
- They were expecting further details on EPP connections and changes to .FR RUSH and the power to enforce the maximum limit on the number of EPP licences (witness the "sub-renting" of EPP connections, which was continuing in the absence of sanctions). Will the new system make it easier to enforce the rules?
- Questions:
 - o How long will service interruptions last and in what time slots for the .fr migration?
 - Digitisation: will this extend to DOAs (Afnic Operation Requests) in the context of Syreli?
 - Will it be possible to keep email alerts rather than just messages on the platform?

4.1.2.b/Users

- The users had no particular comments, as there would be no direct impact for them
- Among the users' college there was one observation from a registry that had already migrated to the new SRS to the effect that, if possible, the information on or notifications of all the TLDs managed by Afnic should be included in a messaging system to notify the registrars and should also be posted in a specific space on the .fr platform where registrars can recover it, otherwise there is a risk that registrars would not connect to platforms of smaller registries.

Afnic responded in part to the committees' questions and observations and will study the rest later.

- Concerning the request regarding .fr promotional actions, this subject will be placed on the agenda of the next consultative committee meetings. It will of course be possible to have exchanges between Afnic and registrars who so wish ahead of the committee meetings to contribute to reflections. Promoting the .fr TLD is one of the major commitments made by Afnic in the context of the new concession, with 2% of .fr revenues being allocated to it.
- "Sub-renting" of EPP sessions, whether free of charge or for valuable consideration, is contrary to the accreditation contract since it was stipulated that the registrar is not entitled to share passwords or to sell or pay for these connections. Some registrars had already been called to order in this respect last year. As for the possibility of monitoring this point technically in the new SRS, this is not something that had been envisaged as such, but Afnic will study the matter.
- Concerning the duration of the service interruption when migrating the .fr TLD, Afnic is not yet able to say how long it will be, except to say that it will be longer than a standard maintenance operation. The teams are currently working to get as accurate as possible a view of this and to alert registrars in advance. This service interruption will take place during the week (not at the weekend) and will inevitably affect working hours in part, since it is important for everyone in Afnic to be "at their stations" at that time. It seemed appropriate to recall that CIRA interrupted its services for several days when changing systems. Afnic is aiming for a shorter interruption.
- The Syreli procedure is already 100% paperless, except for the letter of notification of opening of the ADR procedure sent to the holder at the same time as the email, which is important to avoid identity theft. Concerning the DOA (Afnic Operations Request) in the context of a Syreli procedure (signed and stamped), it should be possible to sign without having to print anything with the current tools. Afnic accepts documents signed electronically. More precise feedback will be given on this point. More generally, Afnic will be moving towards the online filing of documents.
- Having a single point for registrars bringing together the notifications and information for all the TLDs managed by Afnic appears difficult since these are not the same contracts.

4.2. Problem of French citizens abroad and possible changes to the Naming Charter

4.2.1. Presentation by Afnic

Marianne Georgelin presented this issue, which arises regularly at Afnic.

Recap of the rules of eligibility for the .fr domain since 1999

1999 to 2004

• **Legal persons** resident in **France** could register .fr top-level domain names subject to their proving a pre-existing right

2004

• The restrictive "right to the name" was abandoned

2006

• Opening up of registration to **natural persons resident in France** (of legal age and able to prove an address in France) – subject to restricted publication

16 March 2010

- French nationals resident abroad became eligible for .fr domain names
- · Natural persons of legal age:
 - → domiciled in France; or
 - → of French nationality resident abroad.

Since 2011: Territorial criterion

22 March 2011

- Article L. 45-3 of the CPCE (French Post and Electronic Communications Code) / Article 5.1 of the Naming Charter
 - "The registration or renewal of a domain name can be requested by any natural person residing and any legal person having its registered office or main establishment: * in one of the European Union member states; * in one of the following countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland (European Free Trade Association: EFTA)"
- Opening of French TLDs to legal and natural persons resident in countries of the European Union, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein (.fr, .re, .wf, .tf, .pm, .yt)
 - → No mention of French nationals resident outside of the EU.

→ No nationality criterion

What changes are possible?

- Article L. 45-3 of the CPCE refers to the notions of residence and establishment, not that of nationality:
 - → Taking account of the domain name holder's French nationality would entail having to **amend the wording of this Article** in order to widen its application to French citizens resident outside the EU or EFTA.
 - → As the law currently stands, the holder of a .fr domain name domiciled in the EU or an EFTA country but residing definitively or temporarily outside these territories would no longer be eligible unless he or she could produce proof of residence in one of these territories, even if this were not his or her principal residence.

Reminder: In a "justification procedure" (check) on a holder's particulars, it is sufficient to produce evidence (electricity bill, lease contract, etc.) of residence, even if secondary, in the EU or EFTA in order to keep the domain name.

- Extending eligibility to French nationals resident outside the EU or EFTA would therefore require:
 - a change in the law and
 - an amendment to the .fr naming charter
- On this basis the registrar could ask for proof of registration with the French
 Consulate (register of French citizens established outside France) instead of proof of
 residence, as an exception to the general rule of establishment in EU or EFTA territory.

One cannot but note that the CPCE does not send a very positive message to French citizens established outside the EU and EFTA. In carrying out justification procedures, Afnic attempts to "save" French citizens living abroad who had already been holders of domain names and who no longer reside in EU or EFTA territory.

Afnic cannot simply change the .fr naming charter; the law would in any case have to be changed, which would not be easy.

A consultation had already taken place in 2010 on this subject, so the question is a recurring one.

It might also be considered that opening eligibility to French nationals outside the EU and EFTA would increase the catchment area of the .fr TLD.

The discussions and questions-and-answers between the members and Afnic allowed the following points to be clarified:

- Consular registration is not obligatory for French nationals living abroad. On the other hand it is necessary for certain purposes (for example in order to be able to vote) and therefore represents a form of assurance that the holder is indeed who he or she claim to be, which is a plus point from our point of view
- According to data from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, there are
 2.5 million French citizens living outside the EU/EFTA but only 1.7 million registered with consulates
- British citizens are now in neither the EU nor EFTA, but since the law is not retroactive, those with a domain name prior to Brexit have been able to retain it. However, they can no longer register new .fr domain names.

4.2.2. Feedback from the committees

4.2.2.a/ Registrars

The registrars made the following suggestions:

- The registrars were in favour of a change, providing it did not create additional complexity or risk of fraud (fake documents, administrative overload that could be entailed for registrars)
- Why not extend eligibility to all EU citizens residing outside the EU/EFTA in that case, although this would lead to the problem of having to check documents from all over the EU (opening the door to abuse?).
- Consular registration appears the best, i.e. most reliable, assurance
- Is it economically worthwhile to make this change? Is there really a market, given that if these French citizens really wanted a .fr domain name they could always find workaround solutions (trustees, etc.)?

4.2.2.b/ Users

- The users would be in favour of this change providing it applied to all EU citizens (equal treatment).
- The CPCE currently defines eligibility for .fr domain names on the basis of geography, not nationality, and this must be revisited since the .fr domain is for French people.
- There is a particular risk for companies outside the EU/EFTA held by natural persons of French nationality resident outside the EU/EFTA, which might easily find themselves 'stateless' for purposes of domain name eligibility
- What about men of straw?
- If the law can be made to move on this question of eligibility depending on nationality, there might be an opportunity to also bring up the question of the

usefulness or appropriateness of calling for tenders for the role of registrar every five years.

Afnic responded in part to the committees' questions and observations and will study the rest later.

- Afnic is well aware of the increased risks of fake documents, particularly if the .fr domain were to be opened up to all EU citizens.
- As for proxies and men of straw, they are not recognised by the .fr domain. The holder
 is the person whose name appears. One possible solution might be to have one or
 more validated proxies for French nationals living outside the EU/EFTA, which would
 be treated differently but would still involve the need to check the particulars.
- Afnic has taken due note of the fact that the financial cost of this possible change is a crucial point for the registrars.

The Chief Executive Officer thanked members for their valuable feedback on the subjects addressed in consultation.

4.3. Other business:

The registrars were unanimously in favour of returning to face-to-face meetings of the Afnic consultative committees.

In the separate committee meetings, users had also addressed the following subjects:

- The Afnic Foundation
- NIS2:
 - How users could help Afnic in its lobbying of the EU (through their corporate offices and professions)
 - NIS2 is unlikely to be a solution, since the GDPR is not applied.

5. Minutes - subjects of information and discussion items with members

5.1. ID4me

Marie Berthelot presented Afnic's ID4me digital identity service for the .fr domain.

What is the problem needing to be resolved?

In 2019, the average Internet user managed nearly **200** accounts (username/password) every day to access his or her online services.

- 200 usernames and passwords to remember
- 200 times their personal data are disseminated
- 200 times more risk of having their personal data pirated
- 200 service providers that receive their data and use them

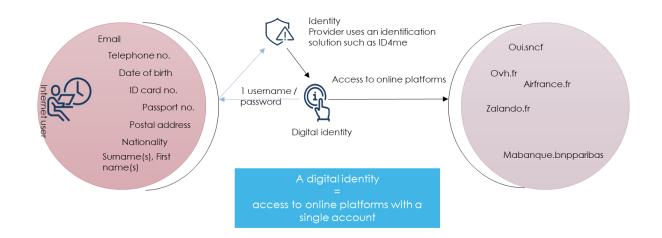
A few figures to illustrate the security problems associated with the dissemination of personal data

- 65 data thefts per second
- **5.6 million items of personal data** (email address, password, debit or credit card number, etc.) **are pirated** or lost each year
- One huge cyberattack targeted **16 sites**. **617 million items of personal data** were stolen and are now on sale on the dark net.
- 1.1 million banking card fraud victims per year (fake "official" emails purporting to be from the bank or the revenue department asking for account number (phishing), or pirating of customer accounts through e-commerce sites.)
- 1.2 billion items of consumers' personal data lifted from social media accounts, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and others, were exposed on a single unsecured online server.

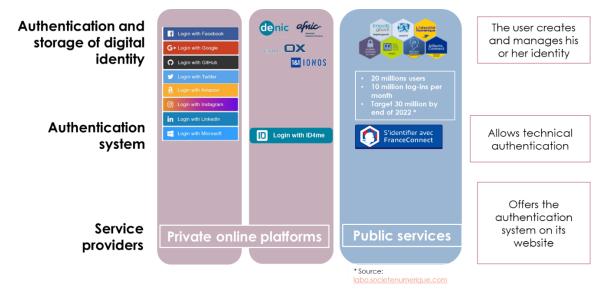
A solution to this problem: digital identity!

What is digital identity?

It is a sort of online ID card based on certain personal data of the holder allowing him or her to access all the platforms that offer this system of authentication.



What services are there for the general public in France?



A new service for holders of .fr domain names

A digital identity service available to holders of a .fr domain name, providing access to websites and online platforms by means of a highly secured identification process.

Afnic ID4me becomes an "Identity Authority" for the digital identities of holders of .fr domain names

Its role is to:

- promote this service with the registrars;
- manage the database of digital identities and put in place a monitoring system to ensure the security of holders of .fr domain names.

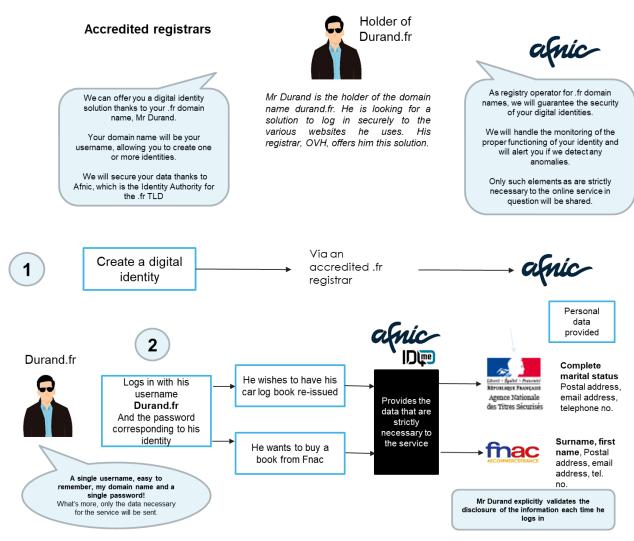
It calls on the resources of the ID4me group to promote the development of this service with online platforms and support the technical development of this DNS-based solution.

The accredited registrars are the "Identity Agents" for the holders under the authority of Afnic

Their role is to:

- offer this service to domain name holders:
- provide the holder's data and identity to Afnic (data already collected in the .fr domain name database)

ID4me: a solution for holders of fr domain names



ID4me digital identity allows the user to connect to online services using a single username (the domain name) and a single password. The ID4me connection system allows the user to select the data (fields) of his or her digital identity that he or she wishes to send to the service. The service will be able to access only such information as is strictly necessary for it to be used.

Afnic will notify the user:

- of any unsuccessful attempt to log on using his or her digital identity
- of any new connection via a new device
- of each connection to a new online platform.

What are the advantages of this ID4me digital identity for a holder of a .fr domain name?

Simplicity

- My identity is easy to remember: my domain name as username and a single password.
- I can create several identities with my .fr domain name.

Command

I'm in command of my personal data thanks to my digital identity:

- I contact my Registrar to manage my data.
- I can transfer to another registrar if I so wish.

Security

- My identity is managed by Afnic, an ISO27001-certified ESO, which gives me assurance of a high level of security for my personal data.
- The password I use complies with the rules on high level of security

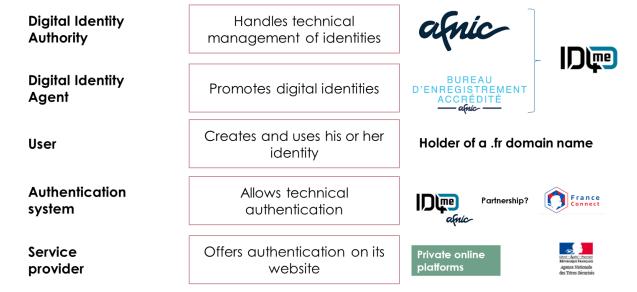
Trust

- I know my registrar and trust it with my domain name and hosting.
- My data are hosted in France and will never be transmitted outside the EU

The ID4me project is part of Afnic's strategy

- Creation of a new use for the .fr domain name for holders. Adds value to the domain name product (website, email) + identity
- The digital identity creates value for its flagship product, the .fr domain name, by offering a new service based on Afnic's technical experience and security.
- DNS-based digital identity is an innovative service that protects Internet users.

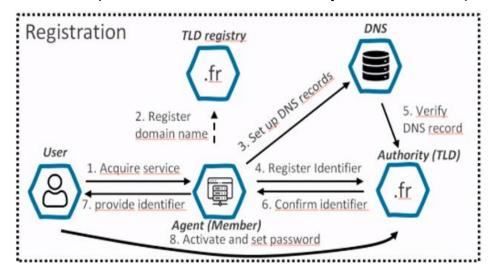
Complete organisation of the ID4me/Afnic digital identity



ID4me: system for managing digital identities.

This service allows a user to create one or more digital identities thanks to his or her domain name.

- Users authenticate themselves with platforms using their domain name and ID4me password
- ID4me transfers to the owner of the website only such personal data as are necessary for the functioning of the service, securely and in accordance with the GDPR.
- The system **ensures control and security** of the information provided.



What makes the ID4me solution unique?

ID4me is a unique authentication solution based on open source technology and relying on the fundamental principles of protection and portability of data.

- The only solution offered by a grouping of European players
- The first identification solution to use the DNS
- Based on the OpenID Connect (OIDC) protocol (like other systems) but completed by the ID4me protocol, which reinforces security
- The system allows the transmission of only such identity data as are strictly necessary to the online service.

How does Afnic intend to implement this solution?

Afnic's membership of the ID4me association

- Participation in discussions
- Construction of the ID4me offering

Technical integration of ID4me

- Technical integration of the service
- Product POC with registrars and holders

Promotion of the solution with the ID4me association

- Communication plan aimed at registrars
- Promotion of the identification system with online platforms
- Dissemination of information to the general public

Would you like to become involved in this project with us?

To launch our POC, we are looking for Registrars and users to Beta test the product.

=> Would you be interested in taking part in this project with us?

We could organise a working group to exchange views on this solution.

=> What do you think?

Exchanges and questions-and-answers between members and Afnic:

- Several user members and several Registrar members would gladly take part in a working group and act as Beta testers.
- Some practical questions arise: Can you have several digital identities associated with the same domain name? Will it be possible for the solution to be labelled by ANSSI, for example? Is there a risk of loss of one's digital identity in the event of the

- non-renewal of a domain name? Afnic replied that the working group would be precisely the forum in which to raise these questions.
- Both users and registrars had questions about the business model (cost to the user? additional service to be paid for or not? end users will not be willing to pay for something that is free elsewhere). Afnic replied that nothing had been settled at this stage. Afnic wished to work on this business model in view of the value that this service contributes to the .fr TLD and to registrar and user members and to conduct this discussion within the working group.
- Afnic confirmed that the aim of its digital identity project was to provide added value to the .fr domain and to confirm the attractions of this service and the viability of its implementation by the registrars. The purpose of the POC was therefore to test the solution with Afnic members before launching it on an industrial scale.
- For more information, the website https://id4me.org/ can be consulted (in English only).

Afnic will be back in touch with its members before year-end to set up a working group.

5.2. Market trends in domain names

Loic Damilaville presented the market trends in domain names to members.