

Report of Public Comments

Title:	Consultation on the IANA Customer Service Complaint Resolution Process		
Publication Date:	25 April 2013		
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Comment Period:		Important Information Links	
Open Date:	27 Nov 2012		Announcement
Close Date:	9 Jan extended to 28 Feb 2013		Public Comment Box
Time (UTC):	23:59		View Comments Submitted
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Section I: General Overview and Next Steps			
<p>ICANN plans to introduce a methodology and systems to measure customer awareness of this process and to report of this, along with usage data, via ICANN's IANA website. ICANN also plans to make improvements to the way the process is communicated to customers on ICANN's IANA website and by e-mail. Further, ICANN plans to improve its handling of complaints made using this process to improve the likelihood of a mutually satisfactory resolution. Finally, ICANN plans to simplify the language used in the process description so that it is easier to understand.</p>			
Section II: Contributors			
<p><i>At the time this report was prepared, a total of five (5) community submissions had been posted to the Forum. The contributors, both individuals and organizations/groups, are listed below in chronological order by posting date with initials noted. To the extent that quotations are used in the foregoing narrative (Section III), such citations will reference the contributor's initials.</i></p>			
<u>Organizations and Groups:</u>			
Name	Submitted by	Initials	
ARIN	John Curran	JC	
ccNSO	Lesley Cowley OBE	LC	
<u>Individuals:</u>			
Name	Affiliation (if provided)	Initials	
Avri Doria	NCSG Discussion list	AD	
Rosh Cherian	CogniCor Technologies	RC	
Constantino	StartDomains .Com	C	
Section III: Summary of Comments			
<p><i>General Disclaimer: This section is intended to broadly and comprehensively summarize the comments submitted to this Forum, but not to address every specific position stated by each contributor. Staff recommends that readers interested in specific aspects of any of the summarized comments, or the full</i></p>			

context of others, refer directly to the specific contributions at the link referenced above (View Comments Submitted).

The comments that ICANN received are summarized below in the relevant question. One comment was a complaint about a TLD registry and ICANN staff responded directly to the author.

Who can use the process?

Several comments related to who is able to lodge a complaint. In particular, the commenters questioned whether those without an existing or intended direct customer relationship with ICANN as the IANA functions operator may use the process. They also noted that the process should not be used to resolve disputes between ICANN's IANA functions customers and the customers of those organizations.

How well known is the process?

There were multiple suggestions about customer awareness of the current process and whether ICANN staff makes efforts to communicate it to customers.

How frequently is the process used?

There were several suggestions about a quantitative measure for the number of times the process has been used, the frequency with which it has been used, and the number of times the Ombudsman has been asked to resolve complaints.

How can awareness of the process be raised?

One comment noted that the current process is only published in English and suggested making it available in other languages. It also noted that any complaint is inherently adversarial and an updated process should provide a "genuine, collaborative mechanism for resolving concerns and complaints." Similarly, another comment suggested promoting the role of the Ombudsman, who can use dispute resolution techniques to help resolve complaints.

How could the process be improved?

One comment suggested that ICANN should publish regular, anonymized statistics, including:

- The number of complaints received;
- The number of currently unresolved complaints;
- The level to which complaints are escalated; and
- Aggregate complaint figures over time.

It went on to note that re-delegations of domains "are often complex and require far greater timeframes for resolution" and that this means rigid timeframes might be impractical.

Input received at ICANN 46, after the formal consultation had closed

This consultation was discussed during the ASO Workshop session at the ICANN 46 meeting in Beijing, PRC. The key suggestion made during that discussion was to refocus the process into gathering

“customer feedback” rather than complaints.

Section IV: Analysis of Comments

General Disclaimer: This section is intended to provide an analysis and evaluation of the comments received along with explanations regarding the basis for any recommendations provided within the analysis.

Automated Decision Making

If implemented, the recommendation for a specific complaint resolution automation software system would remove ICANN staff from the process and rely on automated systems to make decisions. Such an impersonal system to resolve complaints may be appropriate for issues that are purely binary and quantifiable, and the complaints that ICANN may be asked to review are unlikely to be categorized that way. ICANN believes that the recommendation to adopt an automated decision-making software system is not the right approach for this process.

Who can use the process?

In general, this process is intended to resolve specific customer service issues relating to a registration request from an existing or potential customer and not for developing general performance standards or policy issues. ICANN has other, well-defined, processes for developing policies and agreeing performance standards.

How well known is the process?

ICANN has not previously measured the degree of customer awareness but anecdotal evidence, such as hallway chats at various meetings and representations made to senior management or ICANN Board members, suggests that it is low.

ICANN accepts the recommendation to define and implement a methodology for measuring customer awareness and plans to include suitable questions about complaint resolution in the annual customer satisfaction survey.

How frequently is the process used?

Since ICANN implemented a system for tracking escalations in 2009, the process has only been used once. As this is effectively a single data point, it is not really possible to make a meaningful estimation of frequency or how satisfied customers are with the current process.

How can awareness of the process be raised?

ICANN proposes to take several concrete steps to raise awareness of an updated process. These are:

- Make the process more prominent on ICANN’s IANA web site;
- Include information about the process in the automated message sent to customers from the ticketing system;
- Train staff to encourage customers who report complaints informally to submit complaints using the process; and
- Publish metrics on ICANN’s IANA website about numbers of complaints received and resolved.

How could the process be improved?

ICANN proposes to improve the process by engaging in discussion with the customer at each escalation level to:

- Understand the customer's issue;
- Identify any misunderstandings or mistakes by ICANN;
- Explain the process implemented by ICANN; and
- Identify a course of action.

Usage reporting

The proposed process recommended rigid timelines that apply to every type of complaint and for every type of request. Given the small sample size of complaints that have been documented, after six months, ICANN will review any complaints that have been received to see if the timelines for each step of the escalation should be revisited.

ICANN proposes to publish:

- The number of complaints received;
- The number of currently unresolved complaints;
- The level to which complaints are escalated; and
- Aggregate complaint figures over time.

Also, ICANN agrees that the process was originally designed in the context of timeliness being a key issue and that other aspects of good customer service need to be addressed in an updated process.

Input received at ICANN 46, after the formal consultation had closed

ICANN will review the development of a customer feedback mechanism focused on improving processes and collaboratively resolving customer issues.