Hacking ICANN

Putting the public into
a "public benefit" corporation

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1

Typology of ICANN Hacks

- Packet-flood: Submit hundreds of serious comments or applications
- Trojan: Infiltrate various unrepresentative ICANN bodies
- Cross-site exploits: Get existing outside groups to oppose entrenched ICANN interests
- Botnet: Enlist your friends and manipulate your foes
- Root it: Finally get direct public representation on the ICANN Board
- Script it: Help us make it simple enough for anyone to join the fun

2

What is ICANN?

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

ICANN is a nonprofit public benefit corporation, organized under the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law.

3

ICANN's Mission Statement

The mission of The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ("ICANN") is to coordinate, at the overall level, the global Internet's systems of unique identifiers, and in particular to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. In particular, ICANN:

    1. Coordinates the allocation and assignment of the three sets of unique identifiers for the Internet, which are
        a. Domain names (forming a system referred to as "DNS");
        b. Internet protocol ("IP") addresses and autonomous system ("AS") numbers; and
        c. Protocol port and parameter numbers.

    2. Coordinates the operation and evolution of the DNS root name server system.

    3. Coordinates policy development reasonably and appropriately related to these technical functions.

(Bylaws, Art. I)

4
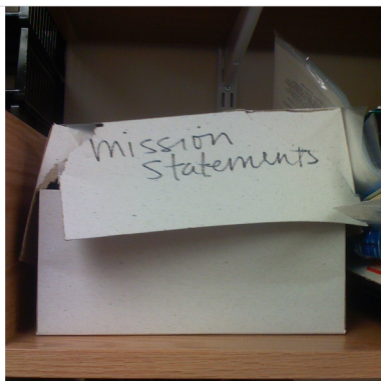
5

ICANN in Los Angeles

photo by Joi Ito

Domain Names and IP Addresses

- We don't need to explain those here.
- ICANN "coordinates [their] allocation and assignment"
  - By stalling the introduction of new top-level domains
  - By setting up trademark-happy domain name dispute-resolution processes
    - "vivendiuniversalsucks.com" is confusingly similar to "Vivendi Universal," according to a World Intellectual Property Organization panel.
  - By perpetuating Verisign's cash-cow monopoly on .com

7

- Protect your domain name registrations
  - Defend privacy against WHOIS stalkers and spammers
  - Stop monopolists' price increases
  - Squash the Registerflies
- Gain access to a broader set of new, unrestricted, internationalized top-level domains
  - Want a .blog or .berlin? What about .häcksen or .götterdämmerung?
  - Think you can do better than .coop? Compete for business opportunities and revenue streams.
- Keep the "intellectual property" lobby from stealing the show
- Protect security and stability of the DNS
  - stop Dan Kaminsky before he attacks again!
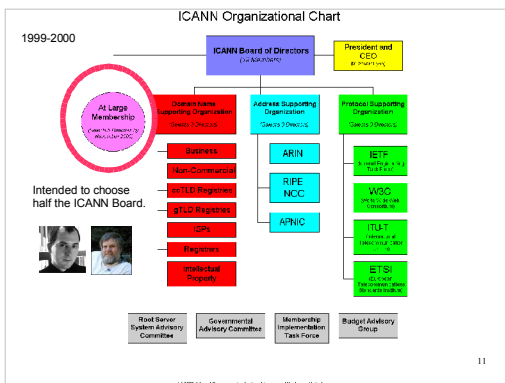- Join worldwide travel junkets

8

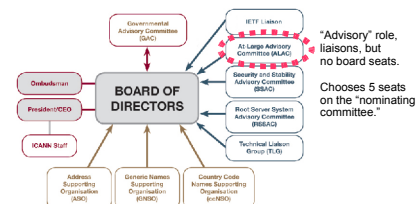
- How about a $46 Million budget?
- Last year, ICANN budgeted $500K At-Large
- Shouldn't we make sure they're doing something useful with the money?
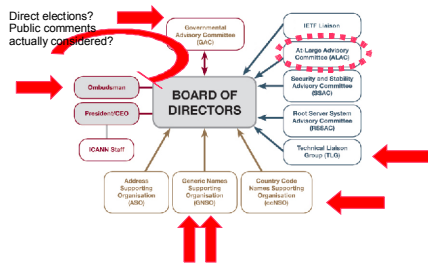

Where's the Public?

ICANN Organizational Chart
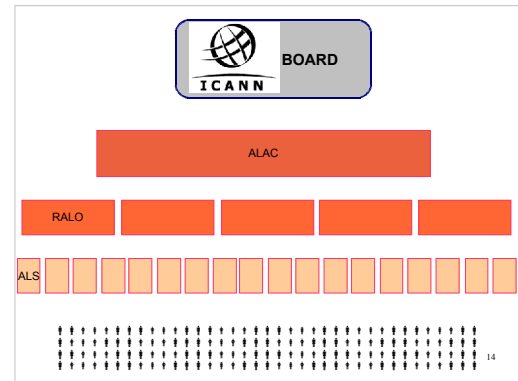

11

2007: Firewalls against the public

"Advisory" role, liaisons, but no board seats.

Chooses 5 seats on the "nominating committee."

12

Slide 13

Target Vectors for the Future

Direct elections?
Public comments actually considered?

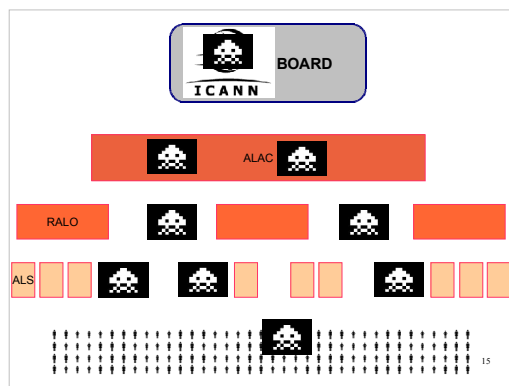## Slide 14

BOARD
ICANN
ALAC
RALO
ALS

Slide 15

BOARD
ICANN
ALAC
RALO
ALS

Slide 16

Launch Some Hacks

- Create or assimilate a GNSO constituency
  - Join the Intellectual Property and Business Constituencies, or create your own
- Spawn some At-Large Structures
- Go to the Feds: Comment on ICANN's performance under its contract with the U.S. Government
- Invoke their biggest fear: Lobby your own governments, too
- Comment, Comment, Comment.

Slide 17

GNSO

- The Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) is the bottleneck on new domain name policies
- Controlled by "constituencies" -- most of which are registration, business, and intellectual property
- Find a hole here to bring the public into the mix.

Slide 18

Join or Create a Constituency

- Currently, the GNSO has 5 constituencies:
  - gTLD Registries
  - Registrars
  - Internet Service and Connectivity Providers
  - Commercial and Business Users
  - Non-Commercial Users
  - Intellectual Property Interests
- only Non-Commercial has a public interest
- but it could have more

Join and Influence a Constituency

- Commercial and Business Users (BC)
  - Run a business? Only ~30 businesses set the agenda for the entire "Business Constituency."
  - Why not join and change its direction?
- Balance the Intellectual Property Interests (IPC)
  - If you write (copyright) or sell branded products or services (trademark), you probably have "intellectual property interests relating to the DNS"
- If they won't take you, perhaps someone needs a reminder that a "Constituency ... shall maintain its recognition, only so long as it in fact represents the interests globally of the stakeholder communities it purports to represent." (Bylaws X.5.3)

19

Create a Constituency or Two

- 4. Any group of individuals or entities may petition the Board for recognition as a new or separate Constituency. Any such petition shall contain a detailed explanation of:
  - a. Why the addition of such a Constituency will improve the ability of the GNSO to carry out its policy-development responsibilities; and
  - b. Why the proposed new Constituency would adequately represent, on a global basis, the stakeholders it seeks to represent.
  - Any petition for the recognition of a new Constituency shall be posted for public comment.
- 5. The Board may create new Constituencies in response to such a petition, or on its own motion, if it determines that such action would serve the purposes of ICANN. (Bylaws Art. X)

20

Create a Constituency

- Think of all the fun new constituencies that could exist:
  - individual domain holders
  - domain users
  - ...
- Propose it
- Submit it
- Fight for it

21

Make an At-Large Structure

- Put your organization into language ICANN understands: apply to be an "At-Large Structure"
- Speak up when ICANN's policies affect you, because the squeaky wheel gets the grease
- Send people: ALSs get travel funding* to speak up at ICANN meetings
- Links: ALS application
- *funding applies to meetings in their local region, at ICANN's discretion

22

Join (and Protest) the At-Large

- Current German ALSs include:
  - FIfF (Forum InformatikerInnen für Frieden und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung); Medienstadt Leipzig, TERRE DES FEMMES e.V.; Deutsche Vereinigung für Datenschutz (DVD) e.V.; FoeBuD e.V.; Humanistische Union e.V. (The Humanist Union); netzwerk neue medien (nnm); Förderverein Informationstechnik und Gesellschaft (FITUG) e.V

23

How to form an ALS

- Link to ALS application

http://www.alac.icann.org/correspondence/structures-app.htm

- Link to discussion lists

http://atlarge-lists.icann.org/mailman/listinfo

  - ALAC http://atlarge-lists.icann.org/mailman/listinfo/alac_atlarge-lists.icann.org
  - EURO-discuss http://atlarge-lists.icann.org/mailman/listinfo/euro-discuss_atlarge-lists.icann.org

24

Be an Independent Auditor

- Do "penetration tests" to warn ICANN when its decisions harm the rights and interests of individual Internet users.

25

Crash the Paris Party

- Summer in Paris?
- Join us at the June ICANN meeting
  - speak at the open microphone
  - buttonhole board and staff
  - join email lists
  - submit public comments to the forums

photo by elrichal
26

Full Steam Ahead

- Links:

http://www.icann.org

http://www.alac.icann.org/correspondence/structures-app.htm

http://www.icann.org/public_comment/

See you there

27

28