

Candidate Statement - Board Seat 13 of the ICANN Board of Directors

29 October 2024

Candidate: Gregory DiBiase (Registrar Stakeholder Group, North America)

Citizenship/ Residence: USA

First, I would like to thank Meghan Boyce (Newfold Digital) for nominating me as a candidate for Board Seat 13 of the ICANN Board. I believe I can excel in this role. Over the last year as GNSO Council Chair, I have worked directly and constructively with the Board to finalize policy recommendations and address Community concerns. This experience has given me a clear sense of what works and what can be improved. I also have a deep understanding of the Contacted Party (CP) perspective. If chosen for Board Seat 13, I will focus on improving communication, enhancing process, and, when appropriate, challenging current Board thinking, to ensure that ICANN and the Community continue to fulfil the Mission of secure, stable and resilient identifier systems.

Understanding the CP Perspective:

Over the last eight years as its primary counsel, I've helped grow Amazon Registrar from its infancy into a mature medium-sized registrar. Beyond my legal duties, I have assumed operational and strategic roles, including developing budgets and managing vendor relationships, while working closely with customer service, trust and safety, marketing, and product development teams. Prior to Amazon, I managed compliance for Endurance's family of registrars (now part of Newfold Digital), and worked with a diverse array of business models (retail, wholesale, and hosted registrar). In both of these roles I was responsible for managing relationships with registries and working towards shared business and strategic goals. My understanding of the registry business is supplemented by my work with my Amazon colleagues that manage Amazon's portfolio of TLDs.

While I represent Amazon Registrar in the RrSG, I also represent Amazon Web Services (AWS) in the broader ICANN Community. AWS' mission is to help any organization and any individual build solutions to transform industries, communities, and lives for the better. AWS has a vested interest in ensuring all registrars and registries are afforded the opportunity to thrive, in a manner that is not biased toward a particular business model or geographic region. This customer-centric and global approach empowers me to consider the perspective of all CPs no matter their structure.

Improving Communication:

I have served as RrSG Councilor on the GNSO Council for the last four years. In this role, I synthesize the concerns of the registrars and advocate for their interests at the GNSO Council. In my more recent role as GNSO Council Chair, I've excelled at summarizing complex issues and communicating them effectively to my fellow GNSO Councilors and other Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees.

Using these skills, I will build upon two things outgoing Board Member Becky Burr did very well. First, she increased the frequency of informal communications with CPs, and second, she took the lead in summarizing issues for the rest of the Board (e.g., she successfully explained why one-day deadlines for Urgent Requests are not feasible). I would further increase the frequency of informal communication,

focusing on simplifying language to ensure issues can be understood by non-lawyers. For communication with other Community groups, I would lean on the strong working relationships I have built across the ICANN community, while continuing to build new relationships. I will also engage in a positive and inclusive manner, ensuring that I do not burn bridges even when the issues at hand are contentious. Finally, I will remain accessible. I'm not going anywhere. Find me at industry events, in Skype channels, or walking the hallways of ICANN meetings, and I will answer any questions CPs may have in a simple, easy-to-understand manner.

Enhancing Board Decision-Making Processes:

As GNSO Chair, I've evolved processes to meet the needs of an ever-changing domain name industry. When the Board adopted most, but not all, of the SubPro Recommendations, Council created a Small Team to develop Supplemental Recommendations that stayed true to the underlying Recommendations while addressing the Board's concerns. By staying nimble and staying in constant communication with the Board, the majority of these Supplemental Recommendations were adopted and this work did not result in delays to the Next Round.

I will take this proactive approach when addressing known gaps in the current policy development process. For example, it is unclear whether the Board can adopt a recommendation, then subsequently "un-adopt" it, if they determine it is no longer in the public interest. This ambiguity creates delays when these situations arise (time that should be spent making policy is spent speculating on how to update a recommendation). As a Board Member I would work with the GNSO, along with the rest of the Community, to find ways to plug these sorts of gaps.

Challenging Current Board Thinking

Board Members are tasked with ensuring decisions are in "the best of interest of ICANN". This means they have a responsibility to continually think about what that means. I suggest two places where current Board thinking should evolve:

1. **Risk Tolerance:** Many in the ICANN Community view ICANN Org as extremely risk-averse and willing to reject community-made policy recommendations if they increase the probability of ICANN being sued. Whether true or not, I believe ICANN should focus on bigger-picture risks, like harm to their credibility (which may result from the rejection of Community recommendations), and not just specific risks like lawsuits or IRPs.
2. **Accountability.** Similarly, there is a perception that ICANN sometimes avoids addressing the substance of complaints made by the Community by dismissing them on more technical grounds such as lack of standing. This may be appropriate in some circumstances, but the Board should think about how to substantively engage the Community whenever issues are raised through ICANN's accountability mechanisms rather than seeking a procedural way out.

Deliver Results:

Anyone who has observed GNSO Council meetings – either at ICANN meetings or on a monthly basis, will see that I have a strong track record of getting work done, including:

- Guidance on how ICANN can best support new gTLD applicants from underserved regions.

- Resolution of the remaining policy recommendations re: the next round of gTLDs that were outstanding after the initial Board vote.
- Pioneering the use of Small Teams to allow Council to work more efficiently while establishing Small Teams Guidelines that ensure the transparency of their work.
- Kicking off the work to stand up the Standing Predictability Implementation Review Team (SPIRT) for the next round of gTLDs.
- Clarifying and deepening the role of the GNSO Council liaison to the GAC (as well as liaisons in other roles), which has resulted in improved communication.
- Facilitating community dialogue around the Board's actions related to the CCWG on auction proceeds.
- Guiding the community's work on next steps for Latin script diacritics.
- Carefully pacing work on outstanding policy issues to reduce volunteer burnout. For example, taking a considered view that immediately commencing a review of the UDRP is not the highest priority and should wait until Staff and community members have advanced the implementation of the Phase 1 RPMs recommendations.

With a demonstrated record of delivering ICANN policy results, earning trust with the Board and Community, and accruing deep knowledge of the business and policy interests of the CPH, I'm confident I am the best candidate to fill Board Seat 13. Thank you for considering my candidacy.