

ICANN

Moderator: Maryam Bakoshi
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8:00 am CT

Coordinator: Excuse me. Your recordings have now started.

Maryam Bakoshi: Thank you very much, Marlon.

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. This is the NCUC Policy Writing Course final webinar on Friday, 20th of April 2018 at 13:00 UTC.

My name is Maryam Bakoshi from ICANN staff and I'll pass the mic over to Renata, NCUC chair. Thank you very much.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: Hello everyone. Renata here and I hope you can listen to me well. If not, say so on the chat please. I'm very happy we are having this wrap up webinar for writing for public comment policy course of NCUC, Non-Commercial Users Constituency with ICANN. This was the first time experiencing ICANN 61 and I'm very thankful to all the ICANN staff who helped make this happen and our (unintelligible), thank you so much for the (unintelligible).

We had in a record time I think already great contributions from the participants of the course in public comments. At least two or three public comments, I think three that I can think of, had involvement or pen holding of participants of the course. So this is quite a (unintelligible) of how this course will continue to help us in the future.

So without further ado I'm happy to welcome you all here, and a big reminder, we have expanded this with the (unintelligible), the NCUC mentee, the petition for ICANN 62 where there will be an NCSG trainee serve as well. So please keep engaging with NCUC, keep engaging the public comment and do count on our leadership team and on ICANN staff for anything you need, and hope we can always keep on contributing to ICANN's policy. Thank you very much.

Maryam Bakoshi: Hi, Jim. Please go ahead. Thank you.

Jim Trengrove: Okay thank you and thank you, Renata. Good to hear from you and welcome to everyone who has joined the webinar this morning, this evening, and this afternoon. I wanted to, as I see some new names on the list of attendees, I see some folks who have participated in the past and they also recognize of course some of you who have participated in the face-to-face training at ICANN 61 in Puerto Rico, and so we'll talk about that in a moment.

This idea of writing for public comment, as Renata said, was the first time, sort of a pilot program and I had - it was very interesting, very enjoyable actually for me to do the research to set this up, not only arranging the curriculum but also learning and researching more about NCUC and the terrific work that you all do and how you I really think are the backbone, sort of last line of defense to keeping the Internet open and functioning as it has been.

So we're going to - for those who are joining us for the first time, we'll go through some of the best practices, some of the ideas that we've shared in the past that we took through the first webinars and then took through training at ICANN 61.

I want to begin first of all, I can do this, this is a slide that I've shared that I've used at the opening of all the sessions that we had and this is a quote from Kathy Kleiman, who as you know is one of the co-founders of NCUC, and this is a quote from many years ago. She said, "Decisions at ICANN are made by people who show up, people who scream most loudly."

Well it was nice that Kathy showed up at the end of our training session at ICANN 61 and came to greet the participants and thank them, and we thank her for all the effort she has made in not only nursing NCUC along but also in the materials that she helped create to bring in newcomers to the process.

Our first sessions were February 21 and repeated on the 23rd with a little bit of revision, Writing for Public Comment, that was our first session, the first webinar. And the idea was while we're talking about writing, we're also talking about one of the tools of communicating in general, and all three are interwoven. It's speaking, it's listening, and then it's writing, speaking of course to verbally communicate your idea, listen, comprehend, get other input, and then being able to summarize it all in writing.

The NCUC has recognized that the public comment process is the most effective way for members to participate in ICANN policy development. What it does, it prepared members to collaborate towards developing a succinct, coherent response to issues raised during a policy development process. It's the way of getting involved and there's more than just

participation. The reason you write it's to develop your own personal writing skills, which develops confidence for the NCUC as a constituency. It does broaden the pool of contributors. It brings in diversity to the process, brings in new ideas, and as a result of that it gives the NCUC a stronger voice.

It's an opportunity to build the NCUC through constituent feedback, to share diverse opinions as the first steps towards collaboration on a policy comment when - and we did a lot of that collaborating at ICANN 61, which we'll talk about shortly. And of course it's an opportunity to present yourself, to engage outside of ICANN as a member of the ICANN community.

So we - I started to look into writing for public comment, started to design the curriculum and what I did, I looked at a lot of old, I shouldn't say old, I should say archived public comments that are all available online. And if you go to the ICANN website, you're going to find a lot of valuable history that is listed there, and that's where we pulled a lot of the content for our curriculum here.

But in looking through all public comments, not just from the NCUC but throughout ICANN, I saw a lot of differences in the thought process that goes into and the structure of the comments, in the clarity of the comments and the ability to deliver the message and then vast differences in the overall effectiveness. So the idea was to come up with some sort of structure that would work that would help participants in this training process, just sort of give them the basic head starts on how to join.

So the idea first is to plan your comment. Identify the issue that you want to comment on and determine specific areas of concern. Now that's, as you'll see, we'll talk about this later, if you're responding, if you're commenting on an overall change in policy or a budget or a meeting strategy or something,

there's a lot to choose from on what you're comment on. So the best is try to limit your concerns as much as possible and be specific.

Here's a quote that I like that we shared at ICANN61. Do only what is necessary to convey what is essential. Carefully eliminate elements that distract from the essential, whole elements that obstruct and obscure, clutter, bulk, (unintelligible) and confuse perception and stifle comprehension, whereas simplicity allows clear and direct attention. That's from (Richard Powell).

So the idea is to, as you're planning your comment, develop your reasoning, research, which is very important, research your support for your claims and evidence, determine how your position would make the policy better, which is the reason that you're commenting, and if you are working within the group with a pen-holder, you reach consensus on your message. And then you start to structure your comment.

You address - you want to address your comment to a specific group or individual. You want to, again, state the issue and your position on it, for or against it, and explain why your constituency is uniquely qualified to comment, what is it about NCUC that gives them expertise or interest or a reason that NCUC should be listened to, what they bring to the table as far as being able to comment, how - describe how your constituents would be affected by the policy. So you want to bring it home to the NCUC. You want to show the effectiveness on your constituents.

Suggest your alternative. Explain how your alternative, how your position actually improves the policy. And then you want to close the comment with a compelling summary and a call to action. You don't want to just sort of leave

it thank you very much, goodbye. You want to move to move the process along if you can.

So this is a slide I shared with our friends at ICANN 61. This is Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world, and I asked the - our participants, our 12 participants at ICANN 61 the face-to-face training, why was I showing this. Well it's the tallest building in the world, or one - I think it still is the tallest building in the world, which means it also has the tallest elevator in the world, the tallest aboveground elevator, I should say.

There is - I should stop for a second. There is someone with - there's some noise in the background so if someone could mute, that would be helpful. Anyway, so the Burj Khalifa - so the reason I put that up there it's because of the elevator test, and I was somewhat surprised that people weren't that familiar with the elevator test.

To those of you who are, bear with me for a second, but it's the ability - lets you say you got on the elevator on the ground floor with the CEO of ICANN, with Göran, Göran I should say, and got up there and you - and you're going to the top of the tower there. So you've got about one minute. It's a very fast elevator. You've got one minute to explain your position, and that's the elevator test.

Can you get on that elevator, and whether it's a public comment, whether it's a proposal, are you able to fashion a comment, an explanation of your position that covers all the ground so by the time you get to the top floor, Göran has a very good idea of what your concerns are and what your solutions are. So that's the elevator test. And that comes in handy not only in being able to speak and being able to organize your ideas, but the same principle, I believe, also holds for writing.

Here's a quote from the 1800s, which has been accredited to many people around the world, but this is the earliest indication I could find of it. "If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter." Now, if you think about that, it is harder to write a shorter comment, a shorter letter, because you have to be succinct, you have to be concise, you want to grab the essence of what you're talking about.

And if you look at a lot of the comments in the archives and even the comments that we used, you know, many, many pages, and again, maybe this is necessary sometimes, but the idea is to start out small, if you could do something shorter and then build out on that, just breakdown the comment to the essence to the structure of the ideas that you want to put through, and then you can build on that by adding supporting information.

So rather than just writing everything that you know and trying to scale back and trying to make things fit in a shorter - in a shorter package, do the opposite. Write it short and then leave yourself the ability to build out. Let me go up here. So again, write your comment, and this is something we talked a lot about at ICANN 61, writing your comment, be respectful, be direct, be convincing, and be brief if you can.

So we worked on a template, and this is something that I've shared, that we shared at the webinar and it seemed to go over well at ICANN 61. In the first - and this is a template for writing a public comment. If you use this basic structure, we believe that this is just going to help you identify the information you want to put across.

It allows you to - it gives you an idea that you've completed your mission here and that when you walk into doing a public comment, you're not looking at

where do I begin, where do I end, how do I put these things in. If you follow this template and put in the information and, again, you can build out on these paragraphs, but, again, I think this covers all the bases when you're writing.

So the first paragraph of a public comment you want to identify yourself, you want to state the issue and your objection, you want to recognize and thank the work of the volunteers at ICANN and the community groups that have put these policies together.

The second paragraph, support your objection if you are objecting to a policy or an issue, support your objection with reason and evidence, and that's what you came up with during your planning and the structuring. Again, explain why your constituency is uniquely qualified to comment on this issue. You want to, again, connect to the people you represent, the end users around the world. How will they be affected? And again, you want to distinguish your comment from others if you can. I mean if you - if NCUC has a unique perspective, that's got to be put across.

Paragraph four, again, propose your alternative solution with a plan of action. And if you can, list key indicators of success along the way, that milestone that people will be able to look at to show your alternative could work. Give them a roadmap there, along with presenting a timeline to monitor the success.

And then, number five, be compelling in your summation. This is your last chance to grab the reader. Express appreciation to the policymakers again, but finish with a call to action on your alternative solution. You want to be able to move this process along.

So that's what we've been sharing. And then when we got to our face-to-face meeting at ICANN 61, we went more in depth and we did a lot of writing

exercises. I should say that we had six and a half hours of training on the first day and one and a half the second day, and I just wanted to take this moment again to thank the participants in the room who were being pulled in many different directions during ICANN 61, other commitments, but they always came back, they jumped in, they participated, and they participated with a lot of interest, with a lot of passion. And I think because of that it worked well.

The first thing we did after we went through the best practices, which we just did, we had small group collaboration. So we broke down, and you'll see one of the groups there breaking down, and we took some archived comments and then when we broke them down, we read them, we analyzed them, and then we deconstructed the comments. We took the comments apart.

And one example here was the - was a letter from Ron Wickersham, who was a member of NCUC for quite a while, and this is a pretty fascinating letter that I found from the 2009 that I think we have shared it online as one of the two documents that I sent out to be presented. It's nothing that you need to look at right now but you should look at it as far as the use of it in the curriculum because it is filled with information, it is filled with passion, it is a long letter, and it gave us a lot to talk about.

So what we did is we read the letter. This was a letter to the ICANN board of directors and to the CEO and overall to correct the problems with the new NCSG charter and representing 150 NCUC individuals and organizational members. And so as we went through it, we gave everybody about 20 minutes or so, 15, 20 minutes to form comments and here's some of the comments we got out of the participants.

One was very struck by how emotionally charged the letter was. Some said it was very long to convey the message. Some found the language a bit too

offensive. Some found it direct but still respectful and balanced. And this was interesting. So we discussed it for a while. We talked about being respectful but also talked about being direct. We talked about being brief. Again, if you look at this letter, it's got a lot of information in it.

So what we did was I said, "All right, let's go back now and rewrite these and let's see if we can be succinct, if we can be concise, consolidate the message, adjust the tone, and expedite the delivery of the message." So that's what we do and we spent, oh, probably an hour, two hours off in little groups writing. You'll see - you see Khalid and Claudio there, who were collaborating on their response.

This way the idea to do this was instead of just jumping in and asking people to start writing, give them something to edit first. I think it's always easier to edit somebody else's work than sitting down and writing your own from - on a blank piece of paper here. So that got them sort of involved in the idea of how to look at a comment, what's important, what's not important, what can be left out.

So that filled up a good part of our first day in the late morning, early afternoon. Then we did another one called narrowing the focus. And this we used Rafik Dammak's comment from January on the proposed FY '19 operating plan and budget and the five-year plan that goes along and represented the NCUC, and of course when you have the budget, as I said, you have a lot of information to choose from. And Rafik and the - and his folks went right after it.

And you can see the list of issues that were listed - commented on in that document: constituency travel, the CROPP program, next gen, GDRP, language services, global stakeholders, reserve fund and staff allocations. So

there's a lot there, and if you look at that document that's the second document that is available.

You'll see how everything is laid out but we discuss is there - are there priorities here, are there issues of more importance, more priorities that you may want to focus on more than others. If you look at the document, everything is pretty - is set up pretty nicely, very evenly. For me it was a little difficult to get a sense of what's important, what's not important but - unless you read the whole thing. Again, I think it was about 14 pages.

So that's what we did. We went through this, we discussed it, and I said choose one of those issues from the document. I asked the groups, so again we broke down into small writing groups. I asked each group choose one issue from the document as your focus. Use any of the research that's contained within the document, and Rafik had a lot of information in there, but pull something out that you want to focus on and write a public comment about that.

And so that's we did and I think it was a good experience. Let me go back here. So that's - again, that's what we did and we had - they came back with a lot of good information about the travel, about the CROP program. These were nice, concise, again, succinct - in most cases, and this is what I asked them to do, and this goes back to the elevator test, and this goes back to what we talked about of if I had more time I would have written a shorter letter, everybody came back with basically a one-page comment which was very good and I was very happy to see that.

They followed the template. They pulled up the essence of the arguments. They focused narrowly, and they produced a nice one-page comment. Again, this is just a - the one-page comment is just an idea to get you started. Of

course you're going to build out, of course it's going to be - it may be necessary to do several pages, but it's a way of organizing your thoughts, limiting your thoughts and, again, build out from that rather than go big and come back and try to eliminate issues.

And then the one other writing exercise that we had were individual comments, and this was the chance for each of the participants - and let me also say when I say participants we had several people online throughout the two-day training, which I appreciate very much, and they participated as well and submitted their writings.

So I asked each person choose one issue that you as a member of ICANN, as a member of NCUC that interests you that you want to write about. Whether it's a topical issue now or not, you know, bring your knowledge, bring your research, bring your passion, and see what you can produce.

And you can see the diversity in subjects here: .amazon, name collision, meeting strategy, ICANN jurisdictional immunity in light of the IANA transition, GDPR effect on Asia, and statistical analysis of DNS abuse in new gTLDs. So there was a lot of - and I think that reflects the NCUC in a lot of ways as well, a lot of interests, a lot of diverse opinions on those interests.

And everyone came back with a nice one-page comment. I have taken them and some of you I have sent - I've edited and reviewed and sent my thoughts back to you. Some of you who have not received them yet, you will be receiving them. I think I've got several of them. I've got a few more to send out.

So anyway, so that - it was - appreciated and the participants appreciated having the time to sit to reflect, to get together and being able to write these

comments in different ways, beginning by editing and then really getting down to writing individually and taking on that challenge.

So at the end, you know, what did we learn? What have we learned through all of this? And that's sort of the room at the end - almost at the end of the two days. It was quite a work environment and we had a lot fun doing it. What did we learn? We talked a lot about language and translation, and there's Elsa and Bruna and they both talked about language and the problems of writing in the English language if it's not your first language and the problem of translation.

And here was one comment. Lack of vocabulary comes across as a problem for me but also I tend to structure all my positions in English just so I don't get lost in the translation. So instead of thinking in your native language and translating it into English, you need to, you know, there was suggestions that you really need to structure your comments in English and so as -- and this is Bruna's comment -- so that you don't get lost in the translation.

Elsa wrote, you know, it's easy to write - she finds it easy to write both in English and Arabic but for me it's more about being able to translate whatever I write and read in English here to Arabic, to the people back home for instance with all those technical terms that are there. So that is a problem that's just sort of inherent in working within the ICANN community, certainly with all the acronyms.

And one other comment on language and translation from (Claudio), again about structure. The way you structure the sentence in your language or in other languages you work is different from the way you structure them in English. And he said this is something I have just started to pay attention to a couple of years ago but it's a game changer because then you see that your texts start to be a little bit more clear. So we talked about language.

What else did we learn? The five paragraph template that seemed to resonate with a lot of folks. The idea that you have a basic structure that you can take the information that you want to get across that you insert it in that template and you're checking all the boxes, you're getting done what you need to accomplish.

And there was comments that this really helps people coming into NCUC for the first time who want to get involved in policy but really have no idea what the style is, what the structure is of having to do a public comment. This, at least, gives you a head start, it gives you a basis from where to start your work, and sort of guidelines, guideposts on either side of you, guiderails, that helps you get through at least the basics of public comment.

The one-page comment we talked about. Again, this is just an organizational tool, a structure. Do it in one page if you can. Try to accomplish what you want to say in one page, and then if you need to build out you do that as well. But the one-page comment I think offers you discipline to try to get it done in one page and, again, you work from there.

And finally, face-to-face collaboration. Again, we talked about the importance of being able to sit down as we did at ICANN 61, using flipcharts, being able to discuss back and forth what needs to be in a comment, what should be taken out. We took turns, or the participants took turns being the pen holders. Some people had never done it before. Some people from the more technical side really weren't - hadn't done as much writing in this style as some others, but everyone it seemed got a chance to sit down and be a pen holder to some extent.

And - but I certainly understand also that much of this work is done online. So when we talked about face-to-face collaboration, we talked about how else can we collaborate at NCUC rather than just online, what would help to get public comments across. Certainly by sending emails, there's a lag time in response and if you're a pen holder you want to get the comments back quickly.

So it's good to think of things that you can do to speed the process along. Set deadlines for getting comments in. As much as you can try to do face to face at meeting to explore comments that way, but also using the technology if you're able to, if you've got the bandwidth to do what we call like Zoom calls where everybody is on or in a chat room where you can actually organize, where you can schedule a collaboration session where everybody gets together and talks out. So deadlines, face-to-face, real time, real-time conversations, real-time collaboration, that all I think is very helpful.

So that is it for now and I want to leave - we got about 25 minutes left and I want to open it up for some comments here. There were two - there are two research books - reference books that I introduced at ICANN 61. You'll see them there.

One is Presentation Zen, and that is really fascinating and that is not only about - it's helpful in public comment but it's about PowerPoint displays, it's about digital communications, it's about having fun and taking chances with what you're doing. And if you can get that book or I'm not sure if it's available as an online copy but I had a copy at ICANN 61. I think I left it there so I hope somebody has it and is taking advantage of it. But I found it very helpful.

Then If You Want to Write, Brenda Ueland. This book was actually published in 1938 and it is still referenced as a great tool for writing. It not only shows you structuring writing but also the confidence and sort of the attitude that you need to take to be able write.

So I just want to say thank you. That's our - most of our group from ICANN 61. Again, I want to thank Renata and I want to thank the staff, Liana and Maryam, Ozan, Andrea, everyone who helped out at ICANN 61 and, again, especially the participants who jumped into this training session with a lot of enthusiasm and made my job a lot easier and I really learned a lot from it.

So I'll leave it there. I see here there is a question and I'll start to go through them. Just a quick question I see. This is a policy course wrap up. All the other sessions are - oh okay. So that's - yes. Yes, the other sessions are online because they're online and available through the NCUC. I saw not only are the webinars, the presentations but also the transcripts from the past sessions are there as well.

So here is - yes?

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: Sorry, we've got Rafik's hand is up in the room.

Jim Trengrove: Okay is Rafik there?

Rafik Dammak: Yes, Jim.

Jim Trengrove: Hey, Rafik, how are you?

Rafik Dammak: Thanks for the presentation. So yes, thanks for holding this kind of suggestion and I would say advices on how to write a public comment. So I just maybe

want to kind of I'd say comment regarding the template. I understand it's really helpful to give kind of an outline and to give guidance because structure can help I mean give what we should put as information. But just I'm not sure I think maybe if you can elaborate more. It should not be I think the metric is how long the comment is because the I would say it - by what I saw it's really related to what we are commenting.

So if it's just like four or five-page report, it's clear we should not write more than one page but for example like in the next month or after, we will get a huge report of 200 pages with probably a lot of recommendation that we should comment on. So I just - I mean I think we cannot really summarize the concerns or issues as to one or two page.

So I think maybe if you can clarify to everyone if that's not - I mean it's more kind of guidelines but it's not something that a kind of rule that we have to follow every time. Because I'm getting people now when we draft comment they are just like we say - we were taught that it should not be too long, so this is maybe something if it's possible to clarify and maybe give some guidance if there is any I would say way to know what's kind of the balance between how - what the content we should put and how long is the...

Jim Trengrove: Sure, sure. And well thank you, Rafik, and I'm glad you brought that up. And that's - and something that I wanted to stress through our training was that this is a guideline. This is a structure that you use and it's - the one page is more of the idea of can you do it in one page and if you can capture of the essence of what you want to say in one page then you can build out from that rather than writing everything you know about an issue and then saying oh my God look how long this is, I need to scale back so I'll cut this out, I'll shorten that out.

So, you know, it's a structure but it's very flexible, and I think that I said this concerning your January report on the budget. There are so many issues that you have to tackle there that of course it's impossible to do one page or two pages on the FY '19 budget.

But if you have to write a multiple - a multipage document or several pages, I think, again, you may have written 14 or if you look at Ron Wickersham's letter from 2009, which I think our groups did a nice job scaling down and got to the essence of what his concerns are, if you can do, you know, use the one page as a guideline to gather your information to get your essential points across and then expand.

Also you may think about if you have to issue a report that's 15, 20 pages or whatever, maybe an executive summary that tops the report, that sort of captures, you know, here's a 20-page review of the FY budget, here's what you're going to see, here are my overall concerns about it. Please take the time to read this. So.

Because after all, you want people to sit and read this. Now again, I talked to (Xavier) at the - at our budget - the ICANN budget director at ICANN 61 and he said we read all the comments. We are obliged to read all the comments and we do read all the comments. So that is good. But again, if you can do a one-page even summary executive summary on something like the budget, at least it gives the reader a guidepost to where they're going in the next 15 pages ahead.

So I, you know, I hope that helps. Again, this is a very flexible template but not only the, you know, the five paragraph template, which of course can be expanded to the Nth degree but also the one-page to be able to help you

organize your thoughts and build out from there. I hope that was helpful.
Anyone else?

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: Jim, Renata here. I raised my hand.

Jim Trengrove: Oh I'm sorry. You know what, this is WebEx. I'm new to the WebEx here so I'm seeing all the hands. Okay.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: It's quite a small hand in WebEx.

Jim Trengrove: Oh I see, all right. Sure.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: But. Well really happy with all those hints and the explanation. So we had a few comments on chat. I think one of them I even also asked Rafik and he's also addressing here on the chat. It's like how do we know which are the main policy development processes with important points to address to start writing. So I guess you can comment on the general idea on how to prepare one's self for writing content-wise.

And an idea here of the size of comments. Claudio Lucena discusses how a scalable model would be interesting. So you can also comment on that. And we just had here a request for any other specific guidelines for those who have just started. What would be like the first thing? So thank you very much, Jim, for your comments.

Jim Trengrove: Okay thank you, Renata. Well let's go back to, you know, how do you start. Well you start by sitting down and planning your comments and if you are working, if you have a pen holder who wants to get input from different members, you know, the pen holder, he or she, will send out a request to get information but, again, if you could do it in a chat room or you can do it on a

Zoom and if you can have an open discussion about what's important, what's not important, where do we give our priority, how do we weigh certain issues and priority against others.

One interesting part of that book that I showed, Presentation Zen, said before you ever sit down in front of your laptop, as you're presenting this or as you're organizing your thoughts, sit down just with a pencil or a pen and a notepad and just start sketching out visually what the issues are and how your comment will look and what issues you're going to concentrate on and maybe lay it out that way.

Maybe lay out all - lay out your structure on a pad of paper first. It might help you visualize, again, what you want to write about and then you can sit down. So the planning and the research and the collaboration on what's important, what's not important I think is crucial so that by the time pen holder, or if you're writing an individual comment, by the time that you sit down to write this, most of the work is done for you. I hope that's helpful.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: All right, Jim. We have Rafik back in the queue again. Thank you.

Jim Trengrove: Okay. Can you (unintelligible) that would be helpful to me.

Coordinator: Your call has been placed on hold. Please wait.

Rafik Dammak: Can I speak or I'm not sure?

Jim Trengrove: Yes please.

Rafik Dammak: Sorry, adjusting my microphone. I think you made one point and I want to stress it. It's about I think it's hard for anyone to draft the first comment. It's

challenging. It's - that's my observation to any who want to volunteer. But I think you made a good point that it's good to edit and because what we are doing in terms of our processes we encourage pen holder to draft at least whatever comment, you know. We have something that then we share it to the whole members for consultation.

And I think what you said it's important that people can edit something existing. It's much more easier than starting from scratch. And I hope that many will do that in the future so when we have a draft, it's always kind of a finished product but it's I think it's much more easier to edit to comment that kind of work than trying by yourself to draft something.

So thanks again for that comment. It's something we should encourage everyone because this is kind of practice to get more users to rewriting and editing and also learning about (unintelligible). So maybe even if you can give some hints or advice on that area it would also be helpful.

Jim Trengrove: Well, Rafik, thank you and thanks for reminding me because I actually took that part out of the slide deck in the presentation. But the, again, where I started was I the archived public comments and anyone who is joining the NCUC and want to get involved in the policy development and policy writing, I would urge them to go there because it serves two purposes.

Number one, it gives the new member an idea where the policies have been before, what the history is, how they've developed over a period of months or a period of years. But also it shows the range and, as I said, the diversity in the structure of comments.

So I would encourage anybody who is joining and wants to know how to start, go into the archives comments and pick one out and challenge yourself to say

look here's a five-page comment, let's see if I can rewrite this, if I can edit this and narrow it down within that five paragraph template or, you know, expanding from that, or one page and the ability to expand on that. And that's what we did at the face-to-face meeting.

Instead of just jumping into the writing first of all, we took somebody else's work. We took your work and we took Ron Wickersham's work and we, as I said, we deconstructed it and pulled out the essence and tried to rework them as kind of a first step in being able to write. And then as we finished up, everyone took the opportunity to write their own individual comment.

And let me quickly say a quick thing also. I'm talking about how important the research is. Who was it here who wanted to comment here about Rafik's work? Okay well anyway, we talked about how much information there was there, quotes, statistics, numbers, and again, that's something that you have to make a decision on how much information, how much of the evidence, how much of the statistical information is worth putting in the public comment, how much is too much.

And again, if that's where the real challenge is, try to limit it to drive your point across without getting bogged down in too many numbers. And what was available from Rafik's budget review was that it provided a lot of information so that the other groups if they pulled out something about meeting strategies or if they pulled out something about the CROPP program or travel services or staff, the information was there for them to work with to help, you know, to restructure it and to do a specific comment on that issue.

So again, the research is important, the planning, the structuring, but again, use, you know, use the template and see if it works for you and see if you're getting the information across and, again, expand on that if you need to.

Maryam, I'm looking to see if there are any other questions. If there are, if you could just read them to me or if somebody wants to jump in and ask a question, that would be great as well.

Maryam Bakoshi: So there's a question from Thato. Are there any sessions where background is provided on different PD issues as listed on the link shared by Rafik as this helps speed up engagement of members?

Jim Trengrove: Okay. Could you repeat that one more time, Maryam?

Maryam Bakoshi: Sure. This is question is from Thato Mfikwe. Are there any sessions where background is provided on different PD issues as listed on the link shared by Rafik as this help speed up engagement of members?

Jim Trengrove: That I can't - I don't know if there are sessions like that. I know that there's going to be - Renata has set up more policy development sessions and I think she mentioned one for ICANN 62. I don't know, Renata, if you want to jump in and comment on that.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: Thanks, Jim. Yes, Rafik is also wanting to take that. Rafik?

Rafik Dammak: Thanks. Yes so (unintelligible) usually before ICANN meetings there is - will be one about policy and for the next one in Panama there will be a specific one about GNSO policy development process and we will try to go through all the working group to give an update in the background and so on. So I mean when we say it's organized by the GNSO and usually also there is a policy background brief that is prepared by GNSO staff before ICANN meetings.

And also there are the monthly newsletter from working groups. So I think there are a lot of materials and we share them in the mailing list. So just, you know, maybe it's how we can maybe package them or (unintelligible) for more easier access but there is usually a briefing and update before every ICANN meeting regarding policy.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: Thanks. I - Renata here. If I may just jump in as well. So we have a good archive of sessions and meetings at our Newcomers Corner in NCUC but I would - I will just refer to some of the very interesting discussion on the chat to - for Jim to comment, which is the pen holding and the offering. So (Ben) made a question how do we deal with when we are self-critical and that also came with other comments Rafik made, a document will have multiple interactions.

So, Jim, what would you say to our members who are starting on policy, how do they deal with criticism to the writings and reconstructions? What is the best way to move forward considering you are working in a collective? Thank you.

Jim Trengrove: Well and this is something that I've mentioned before but I left out because it really isn't about the writing but it is something that we discussed certainly in our face-to-face training. And that was about when to write an individual comment and when to join in and collaborate and reach consensus in the comment.

And that is up to the individual but I think certainly the strength of the NCUC will be tested but I think the strength of the NCUC will be borne out by the collaboration and the consensus. If people from diverse backgrounds with diverse interests and, again, the NCUC I think probably has more diversity than all the other groups within ICANN, that at some point, you know, you

have a - you sit down and as you're planning your comment and you're discussing the issues and you're discussing the priorities and you're criticizing some issues and others are not criticizing, you know, it's a give and take.

It is like making legislation. There's got to be compromise. And I was a journalist and I covered the US Congress for more than 20 years and I saw a lot of this and people had to make choices. So people have to make choices but at some point you have to say all right we've had our say, it's time for the pen holder to take the information and, you know, put it to paper and get the comment produced.

So, you know, there's - in the whole process of developing a comment, there's time for research, there's time for planning, there's time for structuring, but then ultimately there's a time to sit down and write it. So I don't think there's any rules on when you do that. I think you just have to go with your gut feeling and go with what's most important to you, standing up for a position that you believe in or being able to sacrifice some of that in order to do consensus.

And let me say one other thing, and I'm just looking at some of the comments. The idea of reaching consensus, again, that sort of give and take is, you know, it works I think much better certainly if you can do it face to face or in a Zoom room where you can see each other online or certainly in a live chat situation during a scheduled meeting.

So it's easier to do that than sending an email and finding out 48 hours later getting a response and (unintelligible) that. That's - I know that's a difficult way to get things done but, you know, sometimes you have to do it that way. But the more live direct contact and collaboration you can do I think the better.

I see how about through a doodle poll to reach consensus. You know, that's a possibility too and - but I'm just wondering in the pen holder, and I know that the NCUC came out with guidelines for public comment in its operational guidelines that was I think they were issued back in September, there was a distinct process on how the policy public comment process should take place with deadlines, with the instructions to the pen holder to go out and solicit comments.

So, you know, a doodle poll that would be helpful, I think. That's something that should be tried out. I wonder if people can be as expressive in their opinions because there's for an issue there might be some gray area. It could be a yes answer or a no answer or yes but. So, you know, if the doodle poll could be constructed that way, that would be helpful. I think that's certainly worth trying.

I see that we have reached past the hour here and if anyone has another question or a chat, they can just jump in right now. I know a few people have had to leave. Let me just say then you see the thank you slide and here's my email at the bottom. So if any of you have a question, a comment, you want to share something with me, I'd be more than happy to hear from you. I look forward to that opportunity.

And I should also say that it looks like I will be at ICANN 62 in Panama so if any of you are going to be there and want to connect, send me an email and we can arrange some time to meet. Again, this experience has been very pleasurable for me. I really enjoyed the challenge of working with all of you, learning about the NCUC and the tasks that you have ahead of you. I know it's - it has to do a lot with budget, it has a lot to do with raising your profile, of attracting support, and I know you're competing for the eyes and ears of the

decision-makers at ICANN. So again, I really respect the work that you're doing.

Renata, I will turn it over to you if that - if there's nothing more to be asked or talked about.

Renata Aquino Ribeiro: Hello. Renata here, finally unmuted. Thank you, Jim. This - these were great, enhancing an amazing conversation with our members as well. Thank you, Rafik, RPC and NCSG chair. Thank you, Kathy Kleiman, one of our NCUC founders for being here with us to show support and encouragement for our new members, our EC as well and our participants of course, who have been here with us.

We have a members call on the 27th so next week, where we will discuss future paths for NCUC and certainly there were already requests in this chat that we continue to revisit this work and move forward with it. Jim, it's great to know that we can find you at ICANN 62 and have a chat, and we'll certainly keep in touch. We'll send you a new book since you lost yours in the meeting.

And again, it has been incredibly productive in such a record amount of time. I don't think we every envisaged the investment on the course to bear fruit so quickly and so broadly in our constituency. So thank you again and talk to you all soon.

Jim Trengrove: Okay thank you, Renata, and thank you everyone. Look forward to keeping in touch with all of you. Bye-bye.

Maryam Bakoshi: Thank you very much everyone for attending the call. Marlon, you may stop the recording and disconnect all lines. Thank you very much. Bye-bye.

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