

The Sleeping Patterns of a ccTLD Manager – APTLD’s Work toward a Peaceful Night’s Sleep

*Don Hollander
For the ICANN Regional Meeting, Dubai
April 1, 2008*

I would like to this opportunity to take an anthropological look at the sleeping patterns of ccTLD managers.

I would like to start by trying to identify the characteristics of a ccTLD manager, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region.

The difficulty of this exercise is that we cannot characterise them by Gender – They are both Men and Women. We cannot characterise them by ethnicity, for they represent all the diversity that is characteristics of this extensive region. We cannot characterise them by mother tongue – ccTLD managers speak many different languages, though most of them also speak English.

The countries that ccTLD managers in the Asia Pacific region range from the most populous (China and India, each with more than 1 Billion) to the least populous – Tokelau and Niue, each with about 1,500 – and Pitcairn Island with just under five dozen. Equally, they are physically very large and very small.

Nor can we categorise them into a single financial situation – some ccTLDs are doing very well financially, and others are truly struggling. Nor size – they range from part of one person’s job to a staff measured in many dozens.

Organisationally there is no unifying factor either. Some are private, for profit organisations, others are parts of academia; others part of Government Departments and still others independent not-for-profit operations.

So, these ccTLDs and their managers and the countries which their ccTLD covers are singularly diverse.

But, there is one characteristic that can apply to the managers - they are people who are passionate about serving their communities. Men, women, young, old, rich, not-so-rich, mono-lingual, multi-lingual – they are a diverse group who have a common goal.

APTLD is the organisation that brings ccTLDs from the Asia-Pacific together to achieve a common purpose – being the best that they can be.

APTLD is the Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association. We are effectively a trade association of ccTLD operators in the Asia Pacific Region.

We provide our members a number of services:

- We hold three full meetings each year where members can share information and ask questions and hear from global and regional experts in the issues important to the ccTLDs.
- This year we will hold two regional meetings - one in the Pacific and one in the Middle East, so that members don’t have to travel quite so far and issues local to the region, such as poor communications infrastructure in the Pacific and language and character set challenges in the Middle East – can be discussed.

- We run a number of surveys to help members understand how their peers are operating.
- And we run training workshops to improve members' individual and collective skills.

Which brings us to the question of the sleeping patterns of ccTLD managers.

At an APTLD members meeting in Bangkok in October 2007, we talked about what kept the ccTLD Managers awake at night.

Was it how to sell more domain names? Was it whether or not to open the ccTLD to second level names? Was it to impose or remove local residency requirements?

The answer was clearly, "Ensuring the stability and security of their operations."

What If something happened to their infrastructure? What if there was a flood? A fire? A broken cable? What if there was a malicious random attack? What if the attack wasn't so random? - It is these questions that interrupt the sleep of ccTLD managers.

Which brings us to the topic of ADRP – Attack & Disaster Response Planning – a program of training being undertaken by APTLD with support from others, including our friends at ICANN.

The ADRP is a program of work designed to help our members sleep a little easier at night.

It has four component parts.

1. The first is a training session in the development and review of Response Plans that ccTLDs have, or should have, in the event of a disaster or an attack. This is similar to the plans that most businesses and government departments will have to deal with a disaster – such as a fire or a flood. But, the ADRP is enhanced to deal with the unique characteristics of a ccTLD – and particularly what to do in the event of an attack on the organisation or its infrastructure.
2. The second is a training session that looks at the technical characteristics of an attack, including simulation in a closed lab, and ways that attacks can be mitigated and the impacts of different responses by the ccTLD. This provides a ccTLDs technical team with hands-on experience so that they are better positioned to deal with the real world when it happens.
3. The third component is the facilitation of engagements between Anycast service providers and the ccTLDs. Anycast is an interesting technical solution that isolates the impact of localised attacks by providing DNS services in many, many locations.
4. The fourth component is regular reviews of trends and activities in the attack environment. This is a topic that is covered at all of our meetings.

The ADRP program is now underway.

With the support of ICANN, we'll run our first ADRP Management Training workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on the 18th & 19th of May. This is a two day workshop and the details of the syllabus are available on the www.aptd.org web site. The day AFTER the ADRP Training workshop is a seminar on Cyber security being organised by MYNIC, Malaysia's ccTLD – and this is in conjunction with the World Congress of IT also being held in KL during this week.



Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association

On the 23rd of May, that same week, as part of APTLD's members meeting, we'll have presentations from a number of the leading Anycast Solution providers so that ccTLD managers can see the solutions being offered – and so that the Anycast Solution providers can get an easy opportunity to meet a goodly number of ccTLDs.

On the 11th of August, APNIC will be running a three day DNS Security Workshop that will provide a hands-on technical training opportunity to see the impacts of attacks and the impacts of various mitigation techniques.

Besides having a Passion for their Purpose, the ccTLD managers are a very diverse group. They are large and small, young and old, able and struggling.

The ADRP program, run by APTLD in partnership with ICANN, APNIC and Others, should allow members to sleep a bit easier at night, knowing that their infrastructure and resources are as safe and secure as their resources allow.

That is the purpose of APTLD – to make each of our members be the best that they can be.

Thank you.