**CROP Proposal**

**Applicant:** Michael Karanicolas – [mkaranicolas@gmail.com](mailto:mkaranicolas@gmail.com)

**Location of Applicant:** Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

**Event:** RightsCon

**Event Location:** Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**ICANN Geographic Region:** North America

**Dates:** May 15-18, 2018

**Support Requested:** Economy class airfare from YHZ-YYZ, lodging for 4 days/3 nights, per diem, conference registration fees.

**Why you think your application should be considered?**

RightsCon is among the world’s leading digital rights summits, which brings together over 2000 participants from over 100 countries. It is an excellent opportunity for outreach, particularly insofar as AccessNow is increasingly marketing the event in cross-disciplinary terms, bringing in not only digital rights activists but also advocates from the environmental, gender justice, labour, healthcare, and media sectors, all of whom share an interest in a free and open Internet. There is, as a result, an excellent opportunity to expand outreach to advocates beyond those who might normally get involved with ICANN, branching out past the usual digital rights suspects.

**How you plan to outreach for NCUC at the event?**

This year, the NCUC submitted a proposed session on Internet governance challenges, which I led on drafting. It was developed with the support of ICANN staff, and will provide an excellent opportunity not only to discuss the NCUC’s role in the ICANN ecosystem, but to advance important conversations about balance in the multistakeholder process. In addition to this session, I have submitted a proposal for an NCUC booth at the RightsCon Community Village, a dynamic, mixed-use space where organizations, companies, and institutions show off projects, initiatives, tools, and research.

Both of the proposals are attached. Although there are no guarantees, I believe we have a very highly likelihood of securing the booth, even if the session is not accepted, since NCUC is a grassroots organization with a global reach and an important mission. However, in the unlikely event that both of these applications are denied, I will seek to speak in other sessions on behalf of the NCUC and will organize informal sessions on the sidelines to recruit new members to the NCUC. It is worth noting that I have submitted two additional session proposals to RightsCon, so if these are picked up but our NCUC session is not I can use these as an opportunity to plug the NCUC as well.

Please find the proposals for the session and the booth attached. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**RightsCon Session Proposal:**

All Stakeholders are Equal... but some are more equal than others?

**Session Format**

Roundtable

**What theme does this session fall under? \***

Internet Governance, Institutions and Jurisdictions

**Please list any keywords for your proposed session \***

ICANN, multistakeholderism, Internet governance, human rights,

**Please describe what you want to do in your session**

What is the session about? What activities or discussions do you have planned? How will your time be structured? How will you promote interactivity? What is the session's agenda and how will it be facilitated? Please be as detailed as possible! Your answer

ICANN’s model of Internet governance is built on the idea of multistakeholderism: that voices from the commercial, non-commercial and technical communities all have a seat at the table and share an equal role in policymaking. But systems that are designed to be egalitarian can nonetheless manifest biases in practice. In ICANN’s case, although the IANA transition has already taken place, uncertainty persists over where governments’ role in the process ends and ICANN’s begins, allowing the former to wield a powerful stick over the process. Meanwhile, human rights advocates and other non-commercial interests, who in theory engage on an equal footing with their counterparts from the business community, can be placed at a natural disadvantage by the fact that they generally have fewer resources to work with. In working groups that operate on consensus, it is not unusual to see one or two part-time activists struggling to hold the line against a dozen or more full-time lobbyists.

What does this mean for the multistakeholder process going forward, and are there better ways for ICANN to hold the ring between these different interest groups? This session will involve a roundtable discussion between individuals from ICANN’s different communities to explore their thoughts on the current balance, and discuss how the playing field should be organized to ensure that all voices have a say.

The session will begin with a brief introduction by Theresa Swinehart, ICANN’s Senior Vice President, Multistakeholder Strategy And Strategic Initiatives, who will share her thoughts on the challenges in establishing the current model, its strengths and weaknesses. From there, Jeremy Malcolm of the Electronic Frontiers Foundation, Collin Kurre of Article 19, and Anriette Esterhuysen will share their experiences and thoughts about the multistakeholder model, in particular through their engagement with working groups on ICANN’s rights protection mechanisms, on promoting human rights at ICANN, and on ICANN nominations, respectively. The session will then hear brief responses from representatives from the business constituency and the government constituency, before moving into a more free-flowing discussion among first the participants, and then among the participants and the audience. The session will be moderated by Michael Karanicolas, of ICANN’s Non-Commercial Users’ Constituency.

**Who will be joining you in this session? Have you confirmed their participation? Who will be moderating this session? \***

Jeremy Malcolm (Australian, M), Senior Global Policy Analyst at Electronic Frontier Foundation (confirmed)

Collin Kurre (American, F), Digital Programme, Article 19 (confirmed)

Michael Karanicolas, (Canadian, M), Non-commercial Stakeholders’ Group, ICANN, President, Right to Know Coalition (confirmed)

Theresa Swinehart (American, F), Senior Vice President, Multistakeholder Strategy And Strategic Initiatives, ICANN

Anriette Esterhuysen (South African, F), Nominations Committee, ICANN, formerly Executive Director of the Association for Progressive Communications (confirmed)

Susan Kawaguchi (American, F), Facebook representative to ICANN (TBC)

Benedicto Fonseca (Brazilian, F), Brazilian government representative to ICANN (TBC)

**What outcomes would you like to achieve with your session, and how will you transition these activities into post-conference action? \***

We want to make sure that the work happening at RightsCon continues. Tell us what you think your session would accomplish, and any initial ideas to further your work after the session concludes.

Fundamentally, ICANN’s structure means that the organization and processes are far more susceptible to impact than, say, a governmental regulatory strategy. This type of session, involving senior ICANN staff as well as representatives from different stakeholder groups, can have a real and direct impact on policy, particularly if it taps into ongoing questions that the organization faces.

More broadly, we want to bring this discussion to RightsCon in order to engage with members of the digital rights community who have not, thus far, been directly involved with ICANN. Non-commercial voices at ICANN, and in particular those who work to promote digital rights, are dependent on a broad base of community support to share the workload and spread the word about the importance of decisions taking place in ICANN. As a consequence, we see this very much as an outreach session, in addition to being a forum for substantive debate on stakeholder representation and balancing out views from a very diverse and multicultural community.

**How long would you like this session to last? \***

60 minutes

**RightsCon Booth Proposal: NCUC**

**Tell us what you want to show off.**

As one of the world’s key Internet governance organizations, ICANN operates according to a unique multistakeholder model of bottom-up policymaking. Within this ecosystem, non-commercial users, including civil society organizations and individuals, are represented by the Non-commercial Users Constituency (NCUC). With real voting power in ICANN’s policy making and Board selection, the NCUC develops and supports positions that favour non-commercial communication and activity on the Internet.

However, although ICANN is designed as a relatively egalitarian multistakeholder process, non-commercial interests are at a natural disadvantage in terms of resources as compared to constituencies representing business and commercial interests. Instead, we rely on people power, and the support of the broader Internet community, whose interests we seek to promote.

Outreach is key to carrying out this mission effectively, and we want to have a booth in order to try and engage with RightsCon attendees to expand NCUC membership, and bring more civil society voices into the ICANN ecosystem. The NCUC is the conscience of ICANN, a voice for freedom of expression, privacy, and egalitarianism on the Internet. Our message is fundamentally the message of the global digital rights community – join us in advocating for an Internet governance structure that suits the needs of everyone.