Response by the Internet Society to the CA/Browser Forum announcement regarding the formation of an Organizational Reform Working Group (http://cabforum.org/org_announcement.html)

The Internet Society thanks the CA/Browser Forum for the opportunity to provide input on the discussion of organizational reform. The Internet Society also commends the CA/Browser Forum for its outreach to the broader Internet community.

The Internet has grown and evolved through the efforts of a broad community based on basic principles of openness, transparency, and multi-stakeholder participation. A key to this continued growth and evolution is the confidence that all parties in an Internet based interaction can trust the communications related to that interaction. The constituency currently represented by the CA/Browser Forum includes key pieces of the Internet infrastructure that contribute to overall confidence in this infrastructure. Trust in this infrastructure has been eroded over the course of the last year as reports of multiple breakdowns have come to light. This erosion of trust has the potential to curb the growth and evolution of the Internet and to invite additional scrutiny and regulation from governing bodies.

The Internet Society believes that the CA/Browser Forum potentially has a significant role to play in helping to rebuild and advance the confidence lost over the last year. A first step in assuming this role would be the revision of the CA/Browser Forum charter and bylaws allowing for open and transparent governance and processes. Such an effort to build a broad multi-stakeholder consensus based governance structure and processes for the CA/Browser Forum will ultimately lead to broader faith in the Internet trust infrastructure. In particular, membership in the organization should be opened up to other players in the ecosystem including relying parties, civil society, and users, and the governance of the organization should be formalized in a manner that is open and transparent. The community will have more faith in an organization when they can participate and understand how it is established and operated.

Once the CA/Browser Forum has revised its organizational structure, we would further encourage the development of open transparent processes related to the operation of this Internet infrastructure. This would include community sharing of best practices, self reporting and neighbor reporting for timely response to issues, and close coordination amongst the open standards bodies and other segments of the trust enabling community (including the IETF, ICANN, IANA, RIRs, W3C, application developers, the mobile community, and others).
Finally, in the experience of the Internet Society, while open consensus-based processes may take longer to develop initially, they ultimately lead to a more robust and widely supported outcome. Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input, and we are interested in and look forward to the outcome of the working group. If the Internet Society can be of further support in this activity, please feel free to contact us.

For further discussions related to this matter, please contact:

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