Internet body meets on domain names, IP addresses

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A man uses a laptop computer at a wireless cafe. ICANN, the international regulatory body for Web architecture, met here Monday to discuss expanding the list of top level domain names and a new generation of Internet protocol addresses.

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"We are a thousand individuals from all over the world convening in Cartagena to adopt fundamental decisions on the biggest issues facing the Internet industry on a global scale," said ICAAN chairman Peter Thrush.

A California-based non-profit corporation, the Internet Corporation for

[Assigned Names and Numbers](link) manages the Domain Name System and Internet Protocol addresses that form the technical backbone of the Web.

Every device connecting to the Internet needs an IP address and Thrush said ICANN's board meeting was to help prepare the transition from IPv4 (Internet [Protocol](link) version 4) to IPv6, which already exists but is rarely used.

Less than 150 million IPv4 addresses are still available, and "[will come to an end by mid-2011](link), which necessitates an urgent adoption of a new generation of the respective protocols," he said.

During its meeting here, ICANN is also expected to discuss expanding the list of what are known as generic top level domains such as .com, .net and .org.

Thrush said an expansion of [domain names](link) would herald "the beginning of a new era of change for completion of the map of the Internet."

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