

## Change of Internet regulator must happen before US 2016 polls, CEO says

February 9 2015

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Fadi Chehade, pictured in Singapore last week, says the future of Internet overseer ICANN should be decided before the next US election

Plans to transfer control of Internet overseer ICANN from US hands to a globally representative body could be jeopardised unless a deal is reached before the 2016 US elections, the group's chief warned Monday.

Fadi Chehade, [chief executive](#) of the Internet Corporation for Assigned

Names and Numbers, said opponents of the new oversight system may be deliberately trying to delay the transition set for September 30.

"ICANN has been waiting for this political window to open for 16 years," Chehade told AFP as the group began a four-day meeting in Singapore.

"We don't know what factors could affect the political window," he said, adding however that "we do know that in 2016 there is a heavy political process in the United States".

"Therefore the oxygen that is available to certain items may be very easily consumed by the electoral process."

The next US presidential election and related polls for Congress and state governors will be held on November 8, 2016.

ICANN is in charge of assigning Internet domain names and the numbering codes that lie behind online addresses. It has been overseen by the US government since its inception in 1998, under a contract that expires by end-September this year.

Some countries like China and Russia have called for a solely inter-governmental body to oversee ICANN in the future. Critics say such a model would provide a powerful tool to repressive regimes.

Within the United States, some lawmakers have also criticised the move to cede control of the group, citing the possibility that it could be detrimental to the national interest.

Washington has insisted that it would only hand over the reins to a globally representative group of governments, civil society and businesses.



have to extend its control beyond September amid continued bickering among stakeholders, including governments, over the replacement regulatory regime.

Steve Crocker, the chairman of ICANN's board of directors, said on Monday in Singapore "there is no precise, absolute stroke of midnight deadline".

"But there is a general sense of haste and to some degree, some urgency."

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Citation: Change of Internet regulator must happen before US 2016 polls, CEO says (2015, February 9) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-02-internet-polls-ceo.html>

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