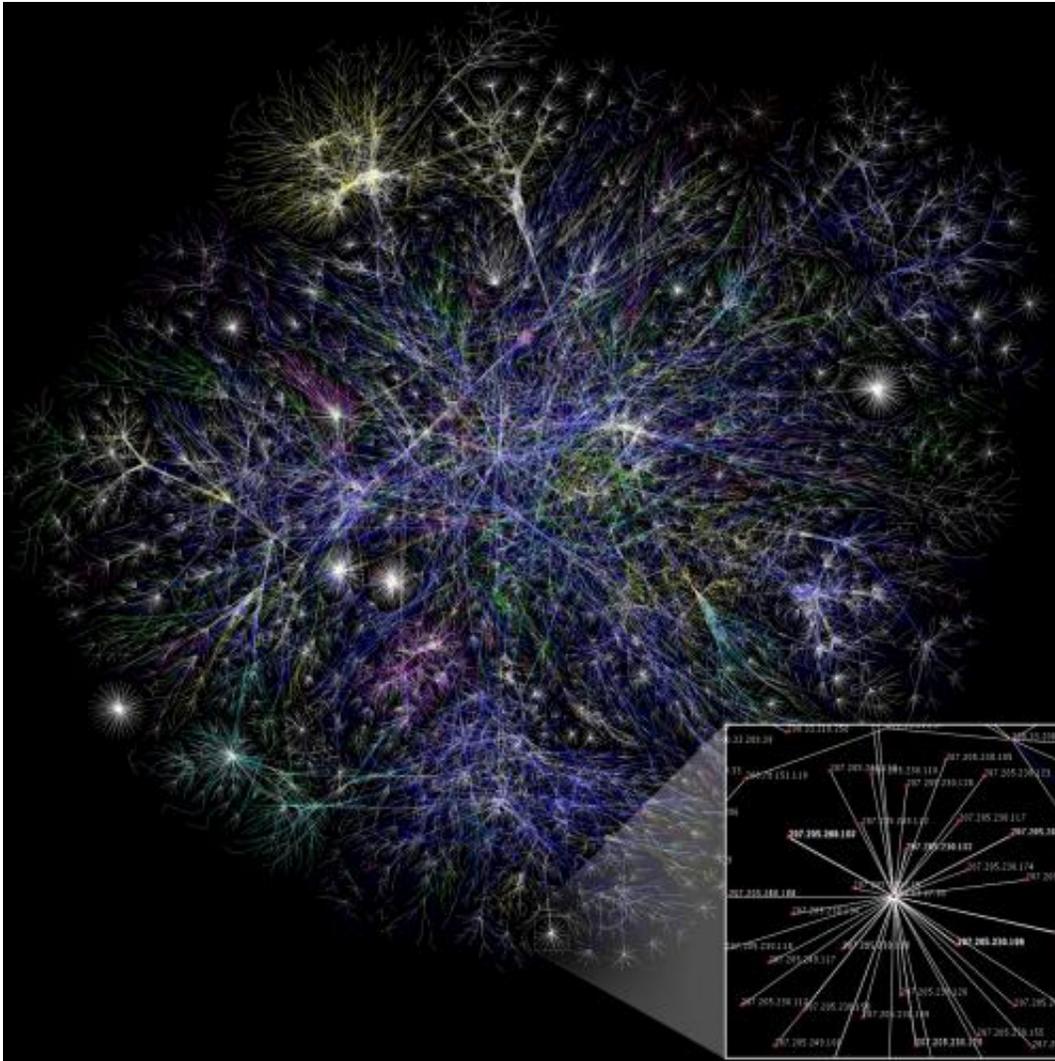


US to extend Internet oversight role

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Partial map of the Internet based on the January 15, 2005 data found on opte.org. Each line is drawn between two nodes, representing two IP addresses. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

The US is extending its oversight of a body that controls part of the Internet's structure, the Department of Commerce said, postponing a possible handover of responsibilities to a private entity.

Assistant secretary for communications Lawrence Strickling posted an update Monday on plans to hand over domain name system oversight to a private body.

A plan under consideration would see the nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) create a separate legal body that would be contracted to handle key technical functions of the online address system.

Such a system would help put to rest questions about why the US has a unique role in the functioning of the global Internet.

But Strickling said more work is needed before a handover is ready.

"It has become increasingly apparent over the last few months that the community needs time to complete its work, have the plan reviewed by the US Government and then implement it if it is approved," he wrote.

The extension allows the US to continue its current arrangement with ICANN until 2016, and extend for three more years if need be.

ICANN assigns domain names for the Internet including the ".com" or ".co" parts of addresses.

The US government in March 2014 outlined its plan to step away from its oversight role and fully privatize the functions of ICANN.

ICANN published a report on the plan earlier this month.

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