



officials involved in the process.

Officials say the US government supervision is symbolic and dates back to the creation of the Internet. Yet ICANN officials maintain the new governance model will instill confidence around the world in the Internet's independence.

If the US government formally approves the plan, then a contract between ICANN and the US government will be allowed to naturally expire on September 30.

ICANN board chairman Stephen Crocker told AFP in an earlier interview that he did not expect Internet users to notice any change.

But some US lawmakers have been less than enthusiastic about the plan.

Last year, Republican Senator John Thune warned at a hearing that a privatized ICANN could become "accountable to no one."

Strickling said his agency is prepared for discussions with lawmakers to get them comfortable with the plan.

"To the extent that people think the US has been the guardian of the free and open Internet, I think, overall, we have relied on the community," Strickling said.

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