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**This Blog**

About

Email

Jan	February 2006					Mar
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11

**Search**
 **Go**
**Archives**

February 2006 (23)

January 2006 (26)

December 2005 (26)

November 2005 (8)

October 2005 (6)

September 2005 (2)

August 2005 (7)

**News**

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» Blogs that link here

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**Warning: Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) New Policies**

Thomas is one of those rare individuals who contributes so much and in a multitude of ways. I had a chance to [interview](#) Thomas which was picked up worldwide due to his strong and extensive background. Moreover, his best selling books are must read for serious developers and architects. I asked him to share his thoughts with you about a business / IT challenge about which you must take note. He shared this about the CIRA and it's recent policy changes. What do you think about these changes?

From Thomas, (MCSE, MCSA, MCDBA, MCSA, MCT, CTT+, Net+, CSE):

The Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) <http://www.cira.ca> is altering a few policies that closely define the goals, governing and membership of the organization. In a lengthy meeting that was originally slated to take one hour according to the agenda, two articles were up for discussion and membership approval. The articles; 1) CIRA ByLaw #1 and 2) Letters Patent; took a full 3 hours to discuss. The meeting took place on February 1<sup>st</sup> at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

The CIRA was originally incorporated in 1998 with the mandate set by the government of Canada to set policy for and operate the dot-ca domain. Previously dot-ca domain names had been registered on a volunteer basis by the registrar at the University of British Columbia. It was at that time through usage and rapid commercialization of the Internet, that the Internet community agreed that the rules and mode of operation had to be changed. This was the founding of CIRA, a not for profit Canadian corporation that is responsible for operating the dot-ca Internet country code Top Level Domain. The mandate was to protect and support a key public resource for all Canadians in an innovative, open, and efficient manner. The original scope of the CIRA was to carry out other Internet related **registration activities** for the Canadian community.

The intent behind the two motions being put to the membership was to broaden the scope of CIRA operations to allow for participation in emerging Canadian Internet-related activities and issues that are aligned with its original mandate, and provide more diverse representation on the Board of Directors and more accountable governance.

In the end both measures were passed, but this member and others present found the entire proceedings and in fact portions of the motions themselves inappropriately handled. First off the articles being voted on will affect the entire membership. As well as the membership anyone currently holding a .ca domain or applying for one in the future will also be affected. More so upon being passed the motions will allow the body to investigate many areas surrounding the Internet and its use in Canada.

The first motion was particularly disturbing where some 1120 changes (some minor but most of them quite major) were being lumped together into a single vote. Details can be found here <http://www.cira.ca/en/special-meeting/doc/CIRA-revised-by-laws.pdf>. Even though this measure was passed I would hazard a guess that no one present agreed with the entire body of changes being proposed. Something of this size should have been broken down into smaller logical elements to be voted on separately. The end result was that 30 percent of the content being passed was not agreed upon. Most of the debate during the three hours of discussion centered around the proposed makeup of the board and the election committee with an attempt to arrive at a formula where the board and committee could not be "captured" by any singular interest group.

Other discussions around wording were somewhat distracting from the proceedings as some members seemed to have their own agenda's centered on freedom of speech and gay rights. These topics although very important, really should have been addressed in either another forum or at another time in a separate meeting.

The second motion, which can be found here, being was a proposed alteration to the corporation's Letter's Patent. A Letters patent document is a legal document which when implemented grants rights, and / or status to a corporation. The previous document had the following objects for the corporation:

- to act as the registry for the .CA Internet Domain;
- to provide professional registry services comparable to other major national and international Internet registries;
- to develop and carry out any other Internet relate registration activities in Canada;
- to do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.

The proposed changes were to remove registration from the text and allow the body to participate in essentially anything loosely connected to the Internet in Canada, whether or not it was in the best interest of the membership.

Although the CIRA board has traditionally been a very strong body of individuals which has always acted in a very appropriate manner, with the drafting of these two documents the door is open for this organization to go anywhere in the future. This one member believes the move to be a dangerous one. The current board has not built in any safe guards into these adjustments. It is my experience that such changes and official documents stay around much longer than the people who put them in place and the original intent could be lost in the future leaving openings for them to be taken into any direction deemed appropriate by a new regime.

Thomas, thank you for providing this heads-up to IT Managers and Pros.

Navigation

- Home
- Photos

Post Categories

- CC Blogged Down (3)
- Events (3)
- Guest Bloggers (4)
- Industry Perspectives (8)
- Interviews (4)
- MS News (7)
- Partners (1)
- Stephen Ibaraki (13)
- Training (1)
- Val Matison (1)

What are your views and how do you think they will affect the future landscape of the internet? Share your comments here or send an e-mail to [sibaraki@cips.ca](mailto:sibaraki@cips.ca).

Thank you,  
Stephen Ibaraki

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