
PRAGUE – Recent Developments in Domain Name Space

Sunday, June 24, 2012 – 15:30 to 16:00

ICANN - Prague, Czech Republic

Filiz Yilmaz:

So one last announcement before we start: on the schedule, if you are looking at the schedule and confusing yourselves, it's not you. As I mentioned in the morning, we have a colleague stranded in Frankfurt so it's taking time to get him over here. We had to change things a little. This is not the Policy Update as you may be seeing in the schedule but we will have Michele now talking about the recent developments in the DNS system. Thank you.

Michele Jourdan:

Give us just one minute.

Okay, hi. My name is Michele Jourdan and I'm the Manager for New gTLD Communications. This session used to be focused specifically on new gTLDs, the New gTLD Program, but we're kind of morphing it a little bit. So now I'm going to talk to you about the recent developments in the Domain Name Space which include new generic top-level domains but also IDNs.

So I'll give you a brief overview of domain names. Some of this might be pretty basic information for you guys, but others maybe not if you're brand new to this whole community. We'll talk about internationalized domain names, new generic top-level domains and then also where to go to get more information.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

So let's first look at the internet as an evolving ecosystem because it definitely evolves very quickly. In the beginning, in 1969 to 1972, that's when everything started with the ARPANET and email, and it used to be just a handful of computers talking to each other over a network. And what they used to communicate was IP addresses or internet protocol addresses, and that was a series of numbers like 192.0.34.163 – not that easy to remember. So as more people started to come online and to connect with each other, it was soon realized that we needed an easier way, an easier system to remember, so that's when the Domain Name System was brought into being.

So by 1991 you have the worldwide web. In the '90s, that's when wireless activity started. Search engines started coming onto the scene – I think Yahoo was founded in about 1995, Google in 1998. People start sharing music, images and video with each other – that's when social networking started coming into play; and then by the 2000's social networking is all the rage as it is now. People were starting to connect to the internet on their mobile phones and voice over IP, so voice applications like Skype where people can talk to each other over the computer started happening.

And then so now it's 2012, so what's next? Well, we think the New gTLD Program and IDNs are a really big part of what's next in that evolution of the internet. Real quick, let's look at the anatomy of a domain name. We'll break this domain name down into its parts. If you look at www.meetings.icann.org, "meetings" is the third level of a domain name. "ICANN" would be the second level and then ".org" is the first or the top level. So when we talk about the New gTLD Program

and when we talk about IDNs we're talking about the first or the top level of the domain name.

Okay, we are at ICANN and if you haven't noticed we really love acronyms. OMG, we really love acronyms. So let's just define some real quick which you may already know. gTLD stands for generic top-level domain; it's also known as an extension or a string – it's the part at the end of the domain name. ccTLD – country code top-level domains. These are always two-letter domain names. Even in the New gTLD Program no applicants are allowed to apply for a two-letter gTLD because those are always reserved for country codes. And IDN stands for internationalized domain name.

You've already seen this slide but let's look at it again really quick. The bubble on the left are all of the current TLDs. There's about 21 in the root right now. With the New gTLD Program we could see hundreds more in the future, things like .brands or .community. We posted all the applied-for strings to our website on June 13th so you can see all the possibilities that might possibly come into being, and then the other bubble are the ccTLDs. Recently with the IDN Fast Track Process we saw a change in ccTLDs where countries and territories could get their ccTLD in their local language characters, so I'll talk a little bit more about that in a minute.

And this is a very high-level timeline. So predating ICANN – ICANN was created in 1998. Predating ICANN there was already a handful of gTLDs in the domain name system, so things like .com, .gov, .edu were already in the domain name system as were most of the ccTLDs. In 2000 and 2004 we had two trial rounds to introduce additional gTLDs into the

domain name system. The Fast Track Process, which allowed countries and territories that use languages based on scripts other than the Latin-based languages to offer their users domain names in the local language characters. That started in 2009. Then by May, 2010, we see the first IDN ccTLDs going to the root.

Now in the meantime, the Board approved the policy work for the New gTLD Program so lots of versions of the new Applicant Guidebook were being drafted. Each version of the Applicant Guidebook was being posted for public comment and we've taken into account thousands of public comments that went into each subsequent version of the Applicant Guidebook. So we had draft versions between October, 2008, all the way through May, 2011. We still update the Applicant Guidebook periodically. The last time we updated it was the 4th of June. The Applicant Guidebook was approved on June 20th and that's when a communications campaign for the New gTLD Program was launched.

The application window for new gTLDs opened on January 12 and then it closed on May 30, and then most recently on June 13th we posted all the applied for strings. People could apply in the New gTLD Program for both ASCII characters and IDN characters.

So let's look at IDNs. IDNs are domain names that represent local language characters. So really, the introduction of IDNs allowed us to go from that first URL you see there where if you notice, the TLD.cn is still in Latin characters. So if I'm typing on my Chinese keyboard and I'm typing in the first part, the third level and second level of the domain name, when I get to the top level of the domain name I would have to be able to switch my keyboard to type Latin characters. So that's kind

of a pain. What IDNs allowed us to do was to be able to type the entire URL in the local language. So that's really huge; it was a huge step towards making the internet more globally inclusive.

So as I mentioned before the Fast Track Process launched in November of 2009, and again, the Fast Track Process just allowed countries and territories the ability to offer non-Latin characters at the top level. And then May, 2010, the first IDN ccTLDs were delegated to the root, and you see four of them right there. Some quick statistics about IDNs: there are currently 31 in the root right now, and those 31 represent thirteen different scripts and fifteen different languages.

Now I'll talk about new generic top-level domains. So what is the Program? It's an initiative that's going to enable the introduction of unlimited generic top-level domains into the domain name space in both ASCII or the Latin characters and IDN characters. Why did we do this? Because ICANN was created to increase choice and competition in the domain name space. It's also to create a platform for innovation. There's going to be all sorts of business plans that will come out of the applied for strings that will allow new ways for organizations to market and brand themselves. It'll allow new ways for communities to come together - just some really cool and interesting stuff is going to come out of this; and then also to incorporate the IDN character sets at the top level to continue to make the internet more globally inclusive.

Some quick statistics about new gTLDs: we received 1930 applications. Of those applications, 1846 were considered standard applications and 84 were community applications, and 66 were geographic TLDs. 116 were IDN applications, and 230 strings had more than one applicant

which means that they will likely end up in a contention set. And the top contested strings were .app, .home, .ink and .art. The other graphic over there shows the geographic breakdown of how many applications per ICANN region, and then the Venn Diagram down in the corner is kind of cool – it shows you how many community applications and then how many community applications were also geographic applications, how many community applications were also IDNs. So you can kind of see the overlap of the applications which is just interesting.

Okay, so that was all kind of what has happened up to this point. So what's coming next? What's coming next is on reveal day, when we posted all these strings it also launched a couple different periods. One was the application comment period. This is where anybody can go to our website and comment on any application that's there. Those comments will be forwarded to the appropriate evaluation panels and they will take those into consideration as they're evaluating the applications. And it also launched the formal objection period. There are four grounds that people can object on: there's string confusion, legal rights, limited public interest and community objection. You must have standing if you're going to file a formal objection but that period started with the posting of the strings as well.

I have some information on batching in here but we just announced that we are suspending the batching process right now. So and the application comment period is open for 60 days so that ends on August 12th. There is definitely a lot more that is going to happen after August 12th that's just not on here yet.

So where to go to find more information? Go to the www.NewgTLD.icann.org website and there you can find all sorts of information. Most of what you will need at this point is under the “Program Status” tab on the website. There you can view all the applied for strings. You can comment on an application. You can provide program feedback and you can learn more about the objection process. And there’s also a section where you can view high-level program statistics. Then you can also under the “About” tab learn more about IDNs. If you are looking for an answer to a question, you were looking through the site and you just can’t find the answer, send us an email to NewgTLD@icann.org. That will go to our customer service center and they’ll get back to you, and you can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

There are several sessions going on this week that you might want to attend to learn more. On Monday, tomorrow, there’s a New gTLD Program Update and that will give you an update on everything that’s happened in the New gTLD Program since the Costa Rica meeting. We’re also starting to plan for the next new gTLD round. The Board has committed to having a second round of new gTLDs and planning for that starts now, so there’s a session on that.

On Wednesday there is an Objection and Dispute Resolution Session. So this is a great, great session for you to attend if you have any questions about the objections process. The dispute resolution service providers will be there so they can answer your questions as well. Then we have a couple sessions on the rights protection mechanisms and mitigating malicious conduct, so we have the Trademark Clearinghouse Session and then a Uniform Rapid Suspension Session that are going on.

And then also there's an IDN session on Thursday – IDN Variant TLDs Program Update – if you're interested in learning more about that.

And that is all I have so now questions?

Filiz Yilmaz:

Right. We already have one from the previous round.

Male:

I am [Ricard], ICANN Fellow. I have two questions. My first question is can ICAN direct the registries and registrars who keep the price minimum for its services? And my second question is what is meant by "community applications?"

Filiz Yilmaz:

Can you repeat the question so we can double check?

Karla Valente:

So if I understand the question correctly you're talking about price controls, right, on the registrar and the registry level? So we have some caps on the registry but on the registrar we don't, and sometimes registries introduce TLDs through auction or through different kinds of forums that have their own sets of pricing.

Male:

On the registrar level it is not relevant to put a price control, first of all because the different registrars have different business models. For example, some registrars, they just sell domain names with nothing

else. Other registrars, you automatically have certain numbers of kilobytes to put your websites up. So the price wouldn't be the same in that situation. And another point is also that the purpose of implementing a system with registrars is to enhance the competition, so it's the free competition between the different registrars that will push these registrars to offer the best prices to their customers.

Michele Jourdan:

And I think the other question had to do with "What is meant by community TLDs?" So community TLDs are... Applicants could apply for a community-based TLD. So if someone is part of a specific community and they have support from that particular community they can apply for a community-based TLD. So applying for a community-based [TLD carries] additional restrictions because they have to say exactly what community they're for, who they're representing and what they're doing with that TLD. But also applying for a community-based TLD allows you what's called community priority if you end up in a contention set.

So say two or more people applied for .michele, and one of them applied as a community TLD, that community-based TLD would get community priority in that contention set. So if they met the criteria that they are indeed a community TLD then that one would win the contention set. Does that help? Okay.

Filiz Yilmaz:

Any other questions? No? Well, we had one from the previous round as well, the applicant support – if you can address that?

Michele Jourdan: Sure. So we have a program, it's the Applicant Support Program that is designed to help the developing economies and developing countries take advantage of the New gTLD Program. On our website there's a couple components to the program. One, there's a pro bono section where you can send in your... If you're either an applicant seeking support or you're an organization who wants to offer support you send in your information and we'll post it on our website, and we have two different matrices of people who want support and people who want to offer support. So people can try and hook up that way so people can get what they need.

Another part is people can apply through the application process. People can apply for financial assistance, and that will be in effect for the subsequent rounds as well; and what that does is it reduces the application fee from \$185,000 to \$47,000.

Filiz Yilmaz: Okay, anything else? Yes, sir.

Male: The duplication on the internationalized, so let's say Michele.cn and Michele.cn in Chinese characters. How is that handled? How is it separated?

Michele Jourdan: How is it separated? I'm not sure I completely understand. I mean Michele.cn, Michele would be the second level and .cn would be the top level, and then Michele.cn in the internationalized characters is...

Karla Valente: It is totally separate. Just so we make the assumption that .cn and .cn in whatever characters are [flowing] from different registries. There's some registries that talk about grandfathering, so maybe if they have for example, they nowadays own say .Karla and they would also have applied in the future for .Karla in let's say Chinese or Korean, etc., maybe if a registry grandfathered those different variations of my name I'd do some grandfathering, saying "If you had john. Karla now you can register as john. Karla in the different characters."

So that's something that could happen, that registries find a way to grandfather, but as we see it now everything is separate.

Male: Well more practically, Microsoft.cn and Microsoft.cn with the Chinese letters. Microsoft in Chinese letters .cn; Microsoft in Chinese letters .cn in Chinese letters.

Michele Jourdan: I guess I'm not sure what you mean. What do you do with it? So if I'm Microsoft then I could register that domain name in .cn or I could register that domain name in the IDN. Yeah, okay. They don't have to of course but it's their choice.

Male: I have to go back to ccTLDs for a little. We were discussing, the previous panelists, stability, technical ability, robust. And if it happens that a registry fails you are preparing some regulatory body to hold the light. What happens if a ccTLD registry fails?

Karla Valente: So you're talking really today as a program is there anything that is equivalent in the ccTLD world to what we say is the program in the gTLD world? Not that I'm aware of. I think the different ccTLDs might have different arrangements to deal with continuity issues, but not that I'm aware of. ICANN doesn't have a role or cannot really impose on them to have something else structured for instance in the (inaudible) that I talked about. Is there also a (inaudible) decision on.

Male: I really just need the basic understanding of what is the connection or the interconnection between what we are now discussing and the ccTLD world of domain names, because they are part of the entire network also.

Karla Valente: They are part of ICANN – yeah, yeah, that's correct. I think that maybe we didn't make that distinction clear in the beginning. So the generic top-level domains have a very specific contractual relationship with ICANN. So you have ICANN, the generic top-level domain registries with this contract with ICANN, and then you know, you have ICANN with the registrars that have a contract and the registries with the gTLD registrars that have a contract. So this is a very set world in terms of policy and contractual relationships.

Now, when it comes to ccTLDs, for historical reasons what happened in the past was that ccTLDs were assigned to some countries – the two-character domain names – and ICANN sometimes has a memorandum of understanding or something with that country; however not a formal

contract with rules and responsibilities like a gTLD has. So ccTLDs have full sovereignty over how they manage their registry, how they set the rules and what they do with it now and in the future, and we do not really interfere with that.

Male: They can have a huge impact to the entire community (inaudible).

Karla Valente: Yeah, so I'm repeating that for the remote participants. So the comment was that this could have a huge impact on the security and stability that we are discussing, and I'm assuming that by that comment you mean that if you are a registrant or a company that has a domain name under a ccTLD and that security happens to fail you don't have the same kind of guarantee of continuity of service depending on what ccTLD you're dealing with that you might have if you're registering a gTLD. And that is probably true, although most of the ccTLDs are very nicely structured and you know, have excellent services. It is not homogenous around the world, it is no standard way. There's no entity like ICANN or others that could step in and do the continuity of services for the ccTLDs.

Filiz Yilmaz: Thank you, Karla. Thank you, Michele. Oh, we have one more question and then after that we will go for a break.

Female: (Inaudible) from .on ccTLD. I have one question about how you treat the new gTLD in terms of the new gTLD and the IDN. If for example there is an application for [.tong] and the equivalent IDN of [.tong], is it two separate applications or you give the same whoever applied for [.tong] you will give it the IDN? Or what is... Thank you.

Karla Valente: I'm going to repeat it just to make sure that I understood what you said. So I think that what you ask is that if there is a registry applying for a new gTLD, for example .home in ASCII characters and there's another registry applying for the same TLD in Chinese or Arabic or whatever other IDN characters – if there is any kind of rule that unifies them in some way? Is that what you're asking?

Female: Yes.

Karla Valente: And the answer is no – those are independent applications.

Female: Two different applications.

Karla Valente: They are independent applications that are going to be evaluated independently and could coexist independently.

Female: Okay, thank you.

Filiz Yilmaz: Is that a related question? Okay.

Female: During your presentation I saw that there was a little mention of gIDNs. What is the real meaning of that relating to the question that was posted before?

Michele Jourdan: So gIDNs are basically generic IDNs, which means before with the Fast Track there was just ccTLD IDNs, so IDNs were only available for countries and territories. With the New gTLD Program we say that now generic IDNs are available because applicants can apply for .glass in IDN characters, so that would be like a generic IDN, not country.

Filiz Yilmaz: Great, thank you. This was really interactive, so somehow coffee after lunch worked obviously. Hopefully we will have some more now but we are running a little out of time, so if we can limit our coffee strictly to 15 minutes and be back here at 25 past 3:00, I know it's an odd time, that would be great so we can have more to discuss and to learn. Thank you.

Karla Valente: So Filiz, I thought it was our charming selves that kept people awake.
[laughter] [End of Transcript]