



Spring issue:
March 2018

Welcome to our Spring 2018 newsletter

As the first quarter of 2018 draws to a close, brand owners, registrars and policymakers are turning their attention to some of the key policy changes and promising innovations that are due to come into effect this year in the domain name space. From the game-changing impacts of the impending General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on WHOIS records to the opportunities offered by the new dot brand TLDs, this is promising to be a busy and exciting year for all of us.

In this edition, we examine the efforts that are currently being made by an ICANN working group to establish a way forward in the debate over rights to geographic names under the new TLDs. As the disputes over .AMAZON, .TATA and .PATAGONIA have shown, a compromise between the various contradictory positions will need to be found if the clear and predictable process that brand owners need is to be achieved.

Elsewhere, we look at the new approaches to online marketing, web security and content management being pioneered by the early dot brand adopters, and continue to update you on new releases and policy changes by ccTLD and gTLDs registries.

All this and the usual snippets and industry updates from around the world of domains.

As ever, if there are matters relating to your domains or questions about these incoming policy changes, please don't hesitate to get in touch at experts@comlaude.com.



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Comment

IN SEARCH OF A GEOGRAPHIC NAME POLICY

Jeff Neuman, Senior Vice President of Valideus USA

A new working group has been established in ICANN to debate rights to geographic names under new gTLDs. Jeff Neuman, Senior Vice President of Valideus USA, looks at the background which led to the establishment of the working group and the conflicting positions driving the issue.

Who owns the rights to a geographical name? It's a question that is currently the subject of much debate within the domain name community, following the controversy over dot Amazon, among others, in the first new gTLD round.

ICANN's Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process (PDP) is currently considering what, if any, new policy, or changes to existing policy or implementation advice, are required prior to any future application process for new gTLDs. Within Subsequent Procedures, a new working group - Work Track 5: Geographic Names at Top-Level (WT5) - has been formed to debate, and hopefully resolve, policies surrounding rights to geographic names.

So far, WT5 has attracted more than 150 participants and 65 observers, representing a variety of stakeholders and geographies. **If your brand happens to share its name with a city, town, river, mountain or other geographic feature, you may also want to consider joining the debate.**

How did we get here?

The New gTLD Applicant Guidebook (AGB) was published to set out the policies underpinning the application process for the first new gTLD round in 2012. It provided that names on certain lists were either completely prohibited (e.g. the names of countries and territories), while other geographic names could be permitted with the consent or non-objection of the relevant government (such as the names of capital cities, or other city names where the TLD was targeted at that city). The AGB also included a general provision allowing the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), exercising its right to give advice on matters of public policy, to raise objections to any applied-for string.

Despite the efforts of the ICANN community to create a streamlined and predictable process, and policies for assessing new gTLD applications within the AGB, problems still arose when brands that matched geographic features applied for a gTLD. The Tata, Amazon and Patagonia disputes are all examples of brands that have suffered from the shortcomings of the rules developed for the first round of new gTLD applications.

The application for .TATA was made by Indian company Tata Sons Ltd; a company with its foundation in the late 19th century and named after its founder. However, as Tata is coincidentally a region in Morocco which fell on one of the lists identified in the AGB, the use of .TATA by Tata Sons Ltd required permission from the Moroccan government. While permission appeared to have been initially given, it was later either withdrawn, or had not been obtained from the correct source within the Moroccan government. Consequently .TATA has not been allowed to proceed.

By comparison .AMAZON (plus two foreign script equivalents) and .PATAGONIA did not fall within the AGB-defined

categories for either complete prohibition, or requiring consent. However, Patagonia (outdoor clothing and gear retailer) chose not to pursue its application after receiving notice of objections from the Argentinian government. In contrast, Amazon received formal advice from the GAC that its applications should not proceed, resulting in the Board rejecting them. As we wrote in the last edition of this newsletter, Amazon has since gone on to successfully challenge the Board's decision through the Independent Review Process (IRP), but its applications remain in limbo while the ICANN Board deliberates.

Although some of the most high profile cases related to dot brand applications, it is worth noting that uncertainties surrounding geographic names in new gTLDs were not confined to just brands. For example the applications for .SPA, .SWISS, .BAR and .PERSIANGULF were all considered to have a geographic connotation, resulting in either formal or informal government interventions.

Previous attempts to determine a policy

Although WT5 was established only recently, it is not the only effort within the ICANN community to attempt to address the perceived problems with the geographic names policy from the first new gTLD round. The GAC working group to Examine the Protection of Geographic Names in any Future Expansion of gTLDs (GAC WG) dates back to around 2013. In 2014, it sought community input on a proposal which would essentially have seen use of all geographic names as TLDs subject to governmental consent, sometimes from multiple governments, with the onus being on the brand owner to identify whether and from whom to obtain that consent. This proposal was roundly criticised across the ICANN community, as well as by various IP, business and industry bodies.

While the range of comments received has never fully been responded-to or addressed, the GAC proposal has now been developed to incorporate a proposed repository, to enable governments to list the geographic names that they wish to be protected. Under this proposal, if a person wishes to use a name in the repository, they would be required to seek permission from the government(s) that listed that name. Although this would enable governments to identify regions, cities and cultures of significance that they consider require protection, it raises concerns both at the power this would allocate to governments over names which they do not "own" by law; and at the practical difficulties if an applicant were expected to negotiate permission with multiple governments, all with different views and priorities.

In addition to the GAC WG, a cross-community working group (CCWG) was established to attempt to develop a consensus across the ICANN community on how to protect two-character and three-character country codes and the full names of countries and territories at the top level. The CCWG only

managed to make firm recommendations on the protection of two-character country codes however, with divided views across the working group on treatment of three-character country codes and, consequently, no discussion on longform names. The CCWG also recommended that future policy development work must facilitate an all-inclusive dialogue, as the only way in which a harmonised approach to the treatment of these names might be achieved.

The various issues with geographic name applications in the first new gTLD round, together with this recognised need for an all-inclusive dialogue, are arguably what triggered the movement to establish WT5. During ICANN59 in Johannesburg, two seminars were held to discuss a strawperson of perspectives and issues surrounding geographic names at the top level, as a result of which most participants agreed that there would be benefit in having a single forum for the debate, rather than continuing in silos. Subsequently, at the November 2017 meeting in Abu Dhabi, WT5 met for the first time to begin the process of establishing terms of reference for the group.

The conflicting positions

With a large number of participants in WT5 in its early days, it is unsurprising that there are a range of views and perspectives at play from governments, business and IP interests, ccTLD operators, and non-commercial interests. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Governments**

There is no single governmental position, with instead a split across somewhat cultural lines: US, Australia and Northern European governments tending to take a more relaxed approach, while Southern Europe, BRICS, LatAm and developing countries generally are more protectionist about the use of “their” names. The participants in WT5 tend to be from this latter group. The goals of these governments are not dissimilar to (albeit at odds with) business and IP interests: to protect, manage and control the public image of oneself. They consider that they have sovereign rights to the names of regions, towns and cities, places, geographic features, and that this extends also to names with cultural or historical heritage. They view these names as representing the country and consider that only they should be in the position to permit use of their “national branding”.

- **Business and IP interests**

While a number of governments are viewing this as a matter of national branding, for business and IP interests, it is a question of protecting their right to use their corporate branding. The laws on brand protection favour business and IP interests, in that international law does not grant sovereign rights in these names to governments, and many of the

objecting governments have also granted trademark registrations over the very terms they seek to control. Consequently there is little, if any, incentive for business and IP interests to compromise their position, other than the desire for greater predictability for future TLD applications. A compromise which sees some safeguards on use put in place to mitigate perceived harms is more likely to find favour. Outright prohibition and requirements for consent are much less likely to do so.

- **ccTLD operators**

A number of ccTLD operators have embraced the opportunity presented by new gTLDs by applying themselves, in particular for city TLDs, and providing back-end registry services to other applicants. In this capacity, they also have an interest in there being a clear and finite set of rules on the approvals for TLDs. However, ccTLD operators generally also wish to maintain the status quo in relation to country codes as TLDs; in particular, the majority are keen to ensure that the 3-letter country codes, which might serve as a competitor, will not be released.

- **Non-commercial interests**

Non-commercial interests in the WT5 context are varied. Generally, these stakeholders are focused on the balance of power between governments, and business and IP interests to reduce the risk of excessive content regulation by either group. However, non-commercials are also invested in ensuring that they are able to manage their own public image and communications with communities. Within these conflicting priorities, that of limiting perceived governmental overreach is currently taking primacy.

What is needed from WT5

WT5 came about because of the recognition of participants from across the ICANN multi-stakeholder community that, although the AGB rules worked relatively well for many applicants, there were also some unanticipated challenges for applicants using terms viewed by others to have geographic connotations. Ultimately, we would all like to see a system in future where the rules are sufficiently clearly-stated, so that if an applicant follows the rules they can have confidence in the outcome. The challenge will be how to achieve that clear and predictable process for all, given the deep-seated contradictory opinions and interests of those involved.

If you would like to get involved in the WT5 working group or would like any specific advice on how the current system might impact your ability to register your company or brand name as a domain name, please contact jeff.neuman@comlaude.com

Jeff Neuman is Senior Vice President of Valideus USA and one of the co-chairs of the Subsequent Procedures PDP. ■

Outdoor clothing brand Patagonia opted not to pursue its gTLD application after receiving notice of objections from Argentina over the Patagonia region (pictured).



WHOIS and GDPR

As the implementation date for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) grows ever closer, ICANN is rushing to find a solution to the manner in which WHOIS data is treated which is acceptable to the various different interests within its community and gets approval from the European Data Protection Authorities (DPAs).

Currently ICANN contracts require gTLD registries and registrars to publish up-to-date and accurate information on the ownership of a domain name without regard to whether it belongs to an individual or company; advice that ICANN has received concerning the GDPR, however, suggests that wholesale publication of personal data in the WHOIS will be unacceptable under that legislation.

When the GDPR comes into force on 25 May this year, the penalties for non-compliance are significant: fines of up to 4% of annual turnover or €20 million, whichever is the greater. Little wonder that some registries and registrars believe they are forced to risk breaching their obligations in their ICANN contracts to publish full WHOIS information, rather than risk failing to comply with the GDPR's stringent terms.

In search of a solution

At the start of March ICANN published a proposed interim WHOIS model for GDPR compliance in anticipation of further policy work to establish a more sustainable alternative model driven by the consensus policy process. ICANN proposes that Contracted Parties be required to continue to collect all Registrant, Administrative, Technical and Billing Contact information.

However, they will be permitted to mask many of the associated data fields, which might contain personal information, in the public WHOIS for gTLDs. To accompany this, the model proposes tiered/layered access to the rest of the WHOIS information, whereby accredited users, such as law enforcement officers, would be permitted access to the full (non-masked) set of WHOIS details.

Although it can be masked, the WHOIS record must include a method for a user to contact the registrant. The model permits Contracted Parties to apply the same approach across records globally and not just to the data of registrants within the EEA. The rationale for this includes that applying different rules depending on where the contracted party is located could place non-EEA parties at a competitive disadvantage and also that, practically, it may be very difficult for registries and registrars to actually identify who might be an EEA national. The proposed interim model would also permit registries and registrars to treat the registrant records of natural and legal persons in the same manner, even though the GDPR is only intended to safeguard personally identifiable information. This is due in part to the argument that you cannot assume that the records of corporate domain owners are safe, since some corporate records will include names and contact details of individual employees, and again there are also issues of practicality, since there would be millions of records to check.

Why is this important for brand owners

Under the ICANN interim model, if adopted in its current form:

- It will no longer be possible to view email, address, and city information for each of the contacts on gTLD domains on a public WHOIS lookup unless each contact has consented to their personal data being published.

- A brand owner, or their legal representative, would need to be accredited to view full WHOIS information.
- It is not yet clear who will qualify for accreditation, or how the accreditation process will work. Although "IP owners" are one of the groups envisioned for accreditation, there is still debate about whether such accreditation could allow access to all the masked information, across all records, or whether it will be on a per-domain basis. Also unclear is the future for third party monitoring services used by both brand owners and law enforcement.
- A group of business and IP interests have prepared a draft model for an accreditation process, and called upon ICANN to expedite efforts to develop, finalise and implement this in order to ensure continued access to the masked data. ICANN's CEO and representatives from the contracted parties however, see the priority as being first to agree the rules for what information is public versus what is private.

There was much discussion of ICANN's interim model at the ICANN meeting in Puerto Rico - in summary it was liked by no-one and understood by few.

It should be noted that the meeting started with a declaration by US Assistant Secretary of Commerce David J. Redl that "The United States will not accept a situation in which WHOIS information is not available or is so difficult to gain access to that it becomes useless for the legitimate purposes that are critical to the ongoing stability and security of the Internet" and finished with GAC Consensus Advice that the WHOIS must stay as close as possible to the existing model to assist law enforcement.

What does this all mean for WHOIS when GDPR comes into play in May? Well, that's not yet clear. ICANN's CEO has sent the proposed interim model to the European DPAs and the Article 29 Group, asking for their comments and approval. He warned that if this is not received quickly then registries and registrars are likely to take whatever steps they consider appropriate for their own businesses, in view of the looming deadline, leading to a fragmented approach in the near-term. He was also unwilling to send the proposed accreditation model to the DPAs until it has had the input of the full ICANN community, something which seems unlikely within the timeframe.

Whilst we must abide by our contract with ICANN as a registrar, we are very concerned that our clients should have access to accurate, up to date information on the registrants of abusive registrations supporting counterfeiting, fraud and other crimes. At a minimum we would like to see the name of the registrants who are legal entities and the email address continue to be published and, if that is not the case, then a means to unmask that information in bulk in order to allow it to be used to track associated registrations and patterns of infringing behaviour. Whatever the longer-term interim solution is, it is looking increasingly unlikely that any formalised accredited access to private information will be in place in time; and indeed a fragmented approach to what is published, versus what is private, is now also a distinct possibility.

We'll keep watching this space and provide more updates on our website as the position clarifies. ■

IGO/INGO Protection of IGO and INGO identifiers

On 16 January, ICANN announced the implementation of a new Consensus Policy for contracted parties (registries and registrars), covering the protection of certain IGO and INGO names.

The new Policy has been created to reflect the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) recommendations, concerning protection for certain names of the Red Cross, International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). These recommendations were adopted by the ICANN Board on 30 April 2014, and also sit broadly in line with advice from the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to the ICANN Board.

The new Consensus Policy applies to all gTLDs, and requires any relevant changes to be implemented by 1 August 2018. For new gTLD registries which are already delegated, however, the steps required to be taken are minor.

Policy scope

The Policy can be divided into two distinct parts: (1) the reservation (blocking) at the second level of certain labels relating to IGOs, the IOC and the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RCRC); and (2) the implementation of a claims service for certain INGO names, similar to the existing Trademark Claims service.

1. To be in line with the first part of the Policy, all gTLD registries must block all IGO, IOC and RCRC labels on the specified list of reserved names (although note the list can be modified by ICANN with 10 calendar days' notice to Registry Operators). Due to placeholder provisions in the base new gTLD Registry Agreement (RA), all new gTLD registries

already have the majority of these names blocked, so this Policy merely makes the blocking permanent.

There are a small number of additional names to add to the blocked list, but these are the result of some typos in the original list, and some translations to other languages.

Registries must create a process for IGOs, the IOC and RCRC to register their respective blocked labels upon request, however this would be subject to any eligibility rules of the Registry in question; dot brand Registries would not be expected to allocate names to a third party, for example.

2. The INGO Claims service requires that for the INGO strings on its specified list, a Claims period must operate for the first 90 days that the domain name is available (the Policy also allows for this list to be modified by ICANN, but it does not specify a minimum notice period for informing registries).

Protected strings on this list relate to the names of International Non-Governmental Organizations, and the relevant Claims service is similar to the existing Trademark Claims service. The actual Claims notice system has not yet been designed, so this part of the Policy will not become effective until 12 months after the release of the system specification.

In addition, the INGO Claims service only applies to gTLD registries which have not yet delegated (more specifically, it only applies to those who have not delegated by 12 months after the release of the as-yet unwritten INGO Claims System Specification), so it will not apply to the vast majority of gTLDs from Round 1 or before. ■

Business Intelligence & Domain Insights

Tracking and managing a large portfolio of domain names is challenging. A comprehensive audit of your domain portfolios to assess the health of your registrations will help. Benchmark against your competitors, identify infringers at the margins, lapse unneeded domains and fill gaps in coverage.

For expert advice, contact experts@comlaude.com or visit www.comlaude.com



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Dot brand updates

Innovations in the dot brand domain name space

The latest dot brands demonstrate a diverse range of use cases. We pick some of the highlights from the latest round of launches.

The new dot brand domain space offers companies the opportunity to reshape their entire online ecosystem, to find new ways of marketing their businesses online, and to develop new ways to improve customer engagement, data management and security.

Figures from Dot Brand Observatory February 2018 research reveal:

- 544 Live dot brands
- 147 active dot brands
- 9,952 second-level domains registered
- 1,645 active websites

Top ten active dot brand TLDs

Brand	Domain Names	Active Websites
mma	1,695	9
dvag	1,173	5
audi	645	418
neustar	618	16
seat	573	364
aco	281	19
xn--fiq64b .中信 Chinese for "citic"	194	10
citic	146	25
nra	143	2
abbott	135	50

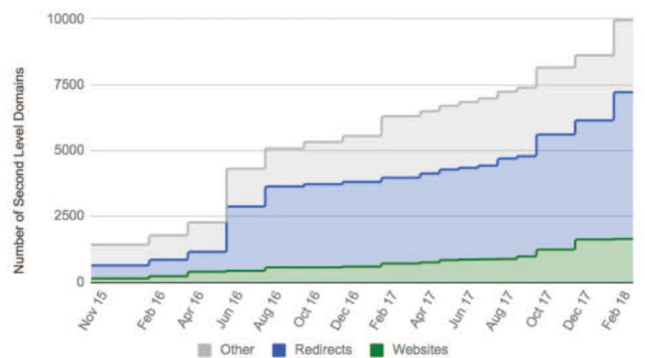
Most active countries are Germany, France, Spain and USA.

The early adopters are pioneering three key areas: full migrations, microsites and social media.

• Full migrations

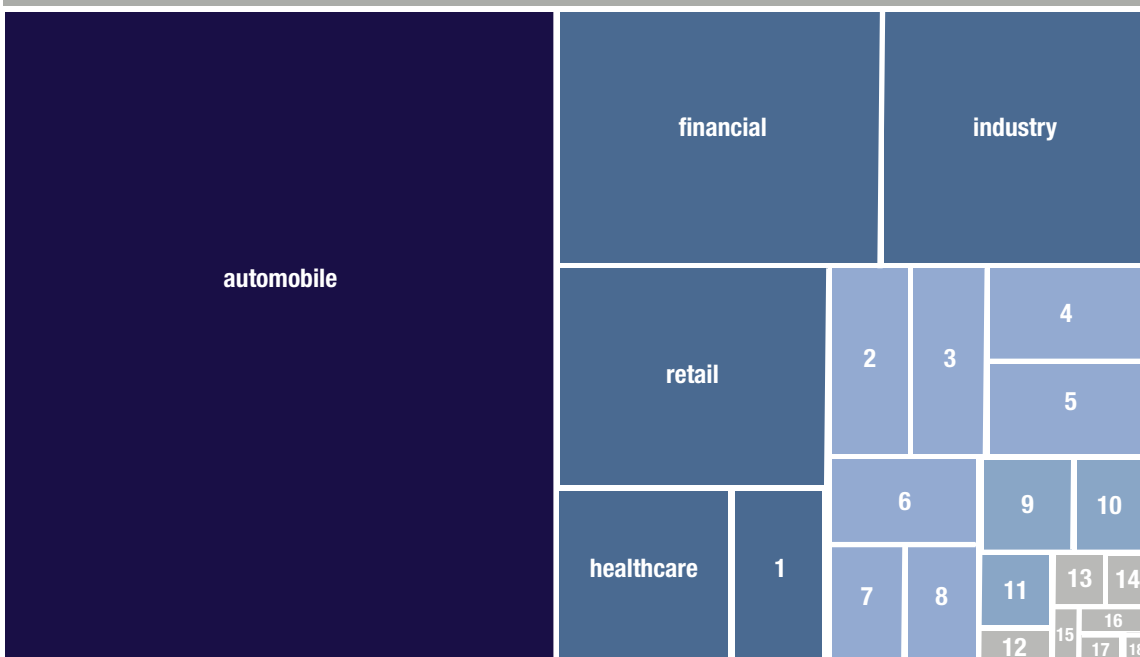
Many dot brand owners have chosen to migrate their core websites over to their new TLDs. Good examples here include the global homepage of Japanese pharmaceutical company Hisamitsu (global.hisamitsu), the dedicated French-language website of industrial mortar manufacturer Weber (Fr.weber) and the homepage of Canon subsidiary, Canon Machinery (machinery.canon). The Japanese multinational Pioneer has also launched a global corporate landing page (global.pioneer), which allows users to select their home region. The State Bank of India (bank.sbi) is one of many

Dot Brand Second Level Evolution



Source: <https://dotbrandobservatory.com>

Active second level domains per vertical



- 1= internet
- 2= consumer goods
- 3= telecom
- 4= electronics
- 5= consulting
- 6= insurance
- 7= association
- 8= media
- 9= others
- 10= education
- 11= service
- 12= real estate
- 13= travel
- 14= software
- 15= apparel
- 16= luxury
- 17= gaming
- 18= beauty

Source: <https://dotbrandobservatory.com>



Hisamitsu
(global.hisamitsu)

Weber
(Fr.weber)

Canon Machinery
(machinery.canon)

Pioneer
(global.pioneer)

The State Bank
of India
(bank.sbi)

banks to have embraced the full migration of their homepage approach as an opportunity to cut down on phishing and identity theft.

• Microsites

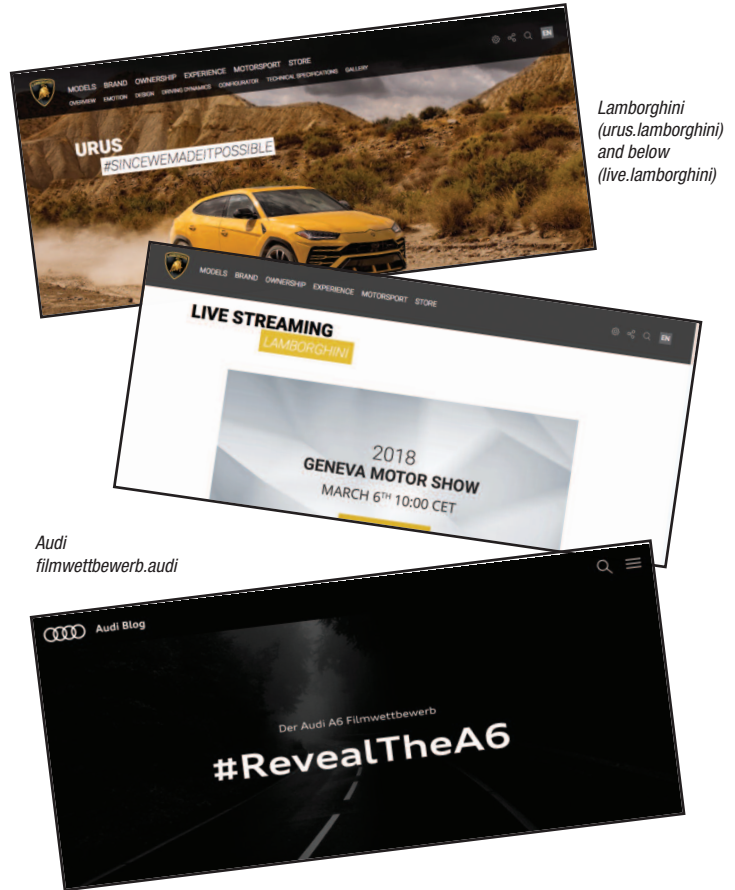
Good microsite (or 'single use' site) examples include: globaltrade.dhl, a dedicated page on logistics from DHL; brandwrapped.auspost, a new promotional site for a customised packaging product; and data.total, a simple site for external data sharing. Google is also a key innovator in

DHL (globaltrade.dhl)

this space with the launch of cloudconnect.goog, 'The official community for Google Cloud System Administrators and Partners', and grow.google, a great microsite, offering free training, tools and career-building events.

• Social media

The new dot brands also function well as domain name shorteners for use on social media and in advertising. Good examples here include: urus.lamborghini and live.lamborghini, which redirect to pages on Lamborghini's new SUV 'Urus' model; and filmwettbewerb.audi, a redirect to a short film competition site from Audi launched with the #RevealtheA6 hashtag.



Lamborghini
(urus.lamborghini)
and below
(live.lamborghini)

Audi
filmwettbewerb.audi

You can see additional examples of brand owner approaches in these categories on our website www.valideus.com/news or on the Dot Brand Observatory at <https://dotbrandobservatory.com/>.

Brandwrapped
(brandwrapped.auspost)



Total (data.total)

Australia – Registry adds hundreds of terms to its list of banned terms

auDA, the Australian Registry responsible for .com.au, .net.au and .org.au, has updated its list of reserved strings, banning hundreds of terms which were previously acceptable. The schedule of restricted phrases has gone from just under 40 to more than 300.

The list of strings now banned includes brand names protected under Australian legislation, such as Formula 1 and Credit Union, as well as recognised organisations such as European Economic Community, Red Cross, The Scout Association, and even descriptive words such as 'bank' and 'university'. The new policy, together with full list of banned terms, can be accessed on auDA's website.

Holders of existing domain names which contain a phrase or string exactly matching one of the newly banned terms will no longer be able to renew those domains. Any holder who believes they are entitled to renew the domain because, for example, they are the brand owner, will need to demonstrate that they have consent under the relevant Australian legislation to use the domain name.

Unfortunately, it is not only the holders of domains containing the exact string who will be affected by this latest policy; auDA has also placed a block on those domains which contain part of a banned term or string to prevent transfer of the domain to a third party. For example, the acronym RAN is now a banned term, so a domain name containing the word BRAND or GRAND would be caught. A holder caught by this restriction will need to prove either that they have the required consent to use the term, or demonstrate that the use of their domain name should not attract the restriction.

auDA is encouraging registrants to check whether their domain name/s contain any words, abbreviations, acronyms or phrases appearing on the list and, if they do, to seek independent legal advice on the matter.

Bulgaria – Two-character domain names are released for .BG domains



Registry.BG is now allowing applicants to register two-character domain names, consisting of a digit and a letter from the Latin alphabet; a letter from the Latin alphabet and a digit; or two digits. Domain registration will take place after a sealed-bid auction.

Denmark – New identification process for .DK owners based outside of Denmark



The Danish Registry has introduced stricter identity requirements for those domain holders living outside of Denmark. It says that the purpose of the increased controls is to ensure that the .dk domain names are as free from abuse as possible. The Registry will assess the domains and then

determine the type of documentation required from an overseas registrant.

Ireland – Policy liberalisation in March 2018

The IE Domain Registry, Ireland Registry, is to relax the rules for registering .IE domains from March 2018 when the need to show a claim to the name will be removed. Registrants will still need to provide a connection with Ireland and prove their identity to be able to register a .ie domain.

Norway – Introduction of a new data model for .NO domains

Norid, the Registry for Norway, is making some changes to the current system data model. Under the new data model, all technical contacts for delegations and name servers will be role contacts. The project will be implemented before the new GDPR legislation comes into force in May 2018.

Philippines – price increase for .PH domains



The Domain Registry of the Philippines, dot PH, has announced a price increase that will take place over the course of the next three years and will affect all foreign registrars. The price increase will apply to all domain levels: .PH, COM.PH, NET.PH and ORG.PH.

The first increase will happen on 2 April 2018, at which point registration and renewals will be US\$40 per year. The next increase will happen on 1 January 2019, when registration and renewals will be US\$50 per year; and the final increase will happen a year later, on 1 January 2020, from which date registration and renewals will be US\$60 a year.

Romania – annual maintenance fee for .RO domains



As announced in our last newsletter, the .RO Registry in Romania, ICI Bucharest will introduce an annual maintenance fee for .RO domains (in all existing extensions).

The fee will be introduced from 01 March 2018 and domain owners will be able to renew domains from one to 10 years. The expiry date of existing domains will be calculated taking into account the principle that the old registration fee should cover at least five years of maintenance from the date of registration or trade. This means that a domain registered in 2016 will not be due for its first renewal until 2021. Those domains registered before March 2013 will be given a renewal date of June 2018.

.APP – launch schedule

Google, the Registry operator for .APP, has announced the launch schedule for its latest gTLDs as shown on the next page.

LAUNCH PHASE	OPENS	CLOSES
TMCH Sunrise Type: End Date Sunrise - not first-come, first-served	29 March 2018	30 April 2018
Early Access Programme Type: First-come, first-served	1 May 2018	7 May 2018
General Availability Type: First-come, first-served	8 May 2018	N/A

Furthermore, while fTLD is currently only taking this step with Chrome, it is expected that other browsers will follow Google's lead at some point.

.BOATS – unrestricted

Registry operator Dominion Registries has announced that registration of .BOATS domains has become unrestricted effective from 16 February 2018. It will not apply to applications already in progress awaiting validation by way of proof of the connection.

.CORSICA – New pricing and policy update

The registry operator for .CORSICA, Collectivité Territoriale de Corse, has announced that from 1 January 2018 (00:00 UTC) it will be possible for companies that are not established in Corsica to defensively register non-activated domain names under .CORSICA in order for them to protect their trademarks. A registered trademark or trademark application is not required, however you can link it to your registration when you have it.

At the same time, the registry will reduce its domain registration, renewal and transfer fee from €27 per year to €15 per year.*

.LTDA and .SRL – Pricing promotion extended to 31 July 2018

The registry operator for .LTDA and .SRL, InterNetX Corp., has decided to extend its pricing promotion from the end of December 2017 until 31 July 2018 (00:00 UTC).

As a reminder, new domain registrations may be registered at the price of US\$2 for an initial one-year domain registration, with subsequent domain registration years, as well as renewals and transfers, charged as regular registration fees. Premium domains are excluded from this pricing reduction.*

.SHOP – Pricing promotion and premium domain release

Registry operator GMO Registry, Inc has announced that it is running a registration pricing promotion on .SHOP domains from 1 January 2018 (00:00 UTC) to 30 June 2018 (23:59 UTC), with new registrations offered at the reduced fee of US\$6 for the first year of registration (multiple years will incur standard renewal fees of US\$24). The discount does not apply to premium names.

The registry has also released 12 further new .SHOP premium domains for registration, including number names and Chinese pinyin names. Please see table on the next page.

Renewals for these domains will be at the standard rate. Please note that Trademark Claims will apply to all names released from reserve for the first 90 days after release.*

.APP is a secure namespaces, meaning that HTTPS is required for all .APP websites. You can purchase your .APP domain names during the appropriate launch phases but in order for them to work properly in all major browsers you must first configure HTTPS serving with an SSL Certificate.

.BASKETBALL – launch schedule

Registry operator Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA) has announced an update on the launch schedule for its new gTLD .BASKETBALL, as follows:

Basketball Community Priority Registration Period: (i) Invitation Only Period	Basketball Community Priority Registration Period: (ii) Landrush	Basketball Community Priority Registration Period: (iii) General CPP	General Availability
22 August 2017 - 08 March 2018	23 October 2017 - 08 June 2018	11 June 2018 - 14 June 2019	18 June 2019

The first seven days of General Availability will consist of an Early Access Program. Under General Availability, domains will be available to all on a first-come, first-served basis.

.BANK and .INSURANCE – New security policy

Registry operator fTLD will be implementing a new security policy for its .BANK and .INSURANCE TLDs, called HTTP Strict Transport Security or HSTS. In coordination with Google, .BANK and .INSURANCE will be added to the HSTS preload list for its Chrome browser on 18 January 2018 and HSTS will be in full effect by 5 March 2018. HSTS at the top level provides a technical control to ensure that domain names under .BANK/.INSURANCE that resolve on the internet always use a secure connection, that is, HTTPS.

Please note that after .BANK and .INSURANCE are pre-loaded to the HSTS list and the policy is in effect, domain names not secure with HTTPS (that is, with a digital identity certificate or SSL Certificate) will not be reachable on the internet.

Domain name	Registration fee (US\$)
NNYF.SHOP	600
NNXN.SHOP	600
1225.SHOP	1,000
1231.SHOP	1,000
SDJ.SHOP	2,000
XDX.SHOP	2,000
XLN.SHOP	2,000
LENGDONG.SHOP	3,000
HUAXUE.SHOP	3,000
DAXUE.SHOP	3,000
DONG.SHOP	3,000
017.SHOP	6,000

.VOTING – Significant pricing increase and e-voting solution

The registry operator for the .VOTING TLD, Valuetainment Corp, has announced a significant increase to its domain registration, renewal and transfer pricing from 1 June 2018, from the current €33 per year to €681.25 per year. As this will apply to all existing domain renewals, as well as new registrations, you may wish to consider renewing your existing domain name(s) before this increase takes effect.*

In addition, from 1 June 2018, the registry will offer a special e-voting solution in the form of a software-as-a-service where votes are anchored in the blockchain with each registered .VOTING domain, which will be available without any additional fees. ■

**Com Laude fees and the ICANN US\$0.18 per domain year levy are additional and VAT will be added where applicable.*

Chinese for .TRADEMARK (.商标 - .xn--c2r694b) – Complimentary registration years

The Dot Trademark registry has announced the launch of a Brand Enhancement Promotion, in which applicants who successfully register or renew a domain under .商标 (.xn--c2r694b - Chinese for “trademark”) will gain the same number of Complimentary Registration Years (CRYs) as the registration/renewal application(s) as shown below.

CRYs can be used for the new registration of one or more applicable .TRADEMARK domains as set out in the table below.

They must be submitted together with the new/renewal. In addition, .TRADEMARK domain(s), are non-transferrable, must have the same registrant as the new/renewal .TRADEMARK domain(s) and be hosted by the same website held by this registrant.

As for the protection of designated goods/services of complementary registrations, registrants may choose goods/services of different classifications.

New registrations of .TRADEMARK domains with CRYs are subject to the usual .TRADEMARK registration rules. The promotion will run until 31 March 2018.

New/Renewal .TRADEMARK domain	CRYs	Applicable .TRADEMARK categories of CRYs
Category A (Trademark name) .商标	Same number of CRYs as the registration/renewal application(s)	Category B/C .商标 of the same brand name
Category B (Trademark name + goods/services name) .商标		Category D .商标 of the same brand name
Category C (Designated place + trademark name) .商标		
Category D (Designated place + trademark name + goods/services name) .商标	N/A	N/A

332.4 million domains close Quarter 4, 2017

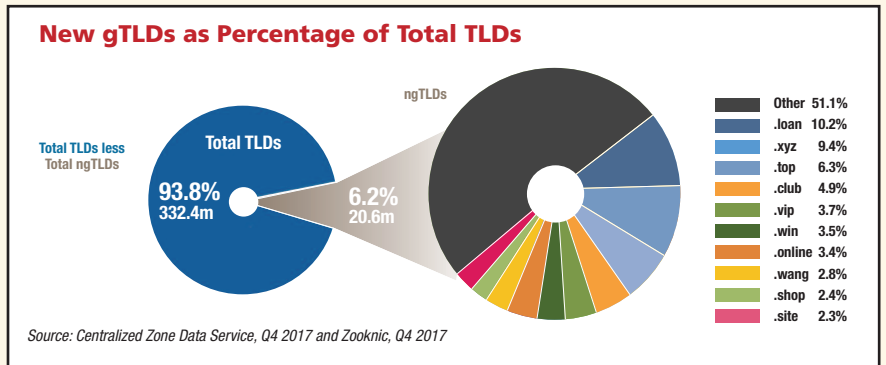
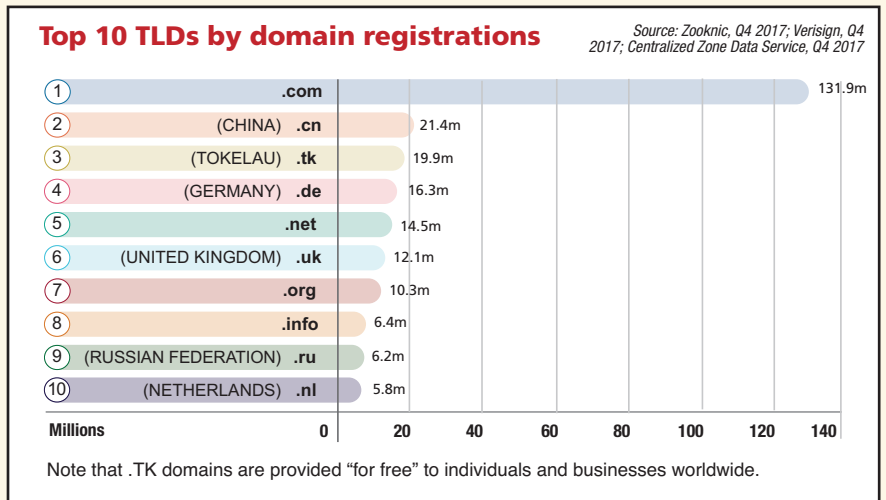
According to Verisign's latest Domain Name Industry Brief, the number of domains registered under all cc/gTLDs at the end of quarter four, 2017, stands at around 332.4 million (m), an increase of approximately 1.7m domain name registrations, or 0.5% from the third quarter of 2017. The report also shows that domain name registrations have grown by 3.1m, or 0.9%, year on year.

Total ccTLDs now amount to 146.1m, an annual increase of 2.4%. There was a growth of 2.9% in annual registrations of .COM and .NET, with a combined 146.4m domains as of the close of quarter four, 2017. The total number of .COM domains now stands at 131.9m.

The full report can be found at www.verisign.com.

Top 20 new gTLDs at November 2017		
	new gTLD	Domains
1.	.loan	2,263,946
2.	.xyz	2,228,953
3.	.top	1,901,082
4.	.club	1,274,259
5.	.vip	900,432
6.	.online	755,907
7.	.win	749,906
8.	.wang	619,660
9.	.shop	533,488
10.	.site	528,765
11.	.men	505,418
12.	.bid	395,691
13.	.xin	361,539
14.	.ltd	348,977
15.	.space	273,296
16.	.website	255,404
17.	.tech	245,558
18.	.网址 (xn--ses554g)	232,387
19.	.review	222,345
20.	.work	211,071

Source: <https://ntldstats.com>



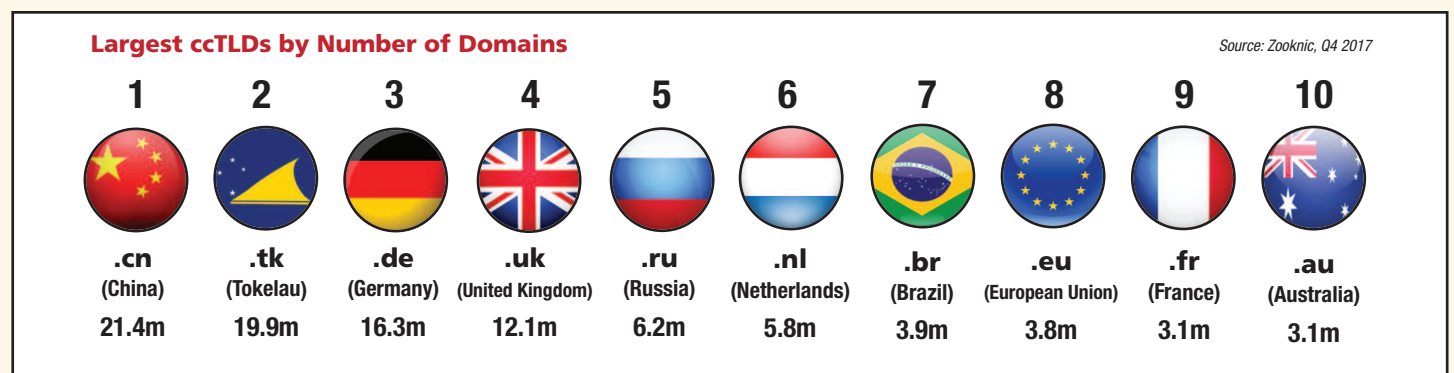
302 ccTLDs including Internationalised Domain Names, were delegated in the root as of 31 December.

The top 10 ccTLDs make up **65.5%** of all ccTLD domain registrations.

22,765,798 new gTLD domains registered across

1,228 new gTLDs at the beginning of February 2018

Source: <https://ntldstats.com>



HSTS New approaches to security

The new gTLDs provide the opportunity to address many areas ripe for innovation in the domain name space, including that of security. Google is pioneering one approach with its plans to secure entire TLDs at the top-level with HTTPS.

Current practice requires domain name owners to apply SSL certificates to each individual domain name registered under the TLD, in order to encrypt their sites with HTTPS protection, and prevent web traffic from being intercepted, altered, or misdirected in transit. Google's proposed approach could change the entire nature of domain name security moving forward, by applying that certificate and encryption at the highest level, so that it automatically applies to all registered domain names.

It plans to do this by extending its HTTPS Strict Transport Security (HSTS) preload list, which is already built in to all major browsers, and which pre-specifies a list of hostnames for which browsers automatically enforce the HTTPS-secured connection. Gmail.com is one example of a domain name on this list: If the user types in <http://gmail.com>, the browser will automatically change this to [https](https://gmail.com) site, before sending the request. This is different to an [http](http://)-to-[https](https://) redirect page, which is at risk of interception.

Applying this to the top-level domain

In its blog notice, 'Broadening HSTS to secure more of the Web', published on 27 September last year, Google explains that the

HSTS list can contain top-level domains (TLDs), as well as individual domains or subdomains. Google operates many TLDs, including .GOOGLE, .HOW and .SOY. The first of these was already added to the HSTS preload list in 2015, and the company now intends to roll out the solution for its other TLDs, starting with .FOO and .DEV.

Google is also pushing for TLD-wide HSTS to become the security standard for new TLDs moving forward, so that future namespaces will become secure by default. ■

ICANN61 Puerto Rico

We took a team of eight to ICANN61 in Puerto Rico, covering Com Laude, Valideus and the interests of our clients in Europe, USA and Japan. With Jeff Neuman co-Chair of Subsequent Procedures and Susan Payne leading a special interest group of brand owners for the Rights Protection Review, we counted 19 meetings where we were on the platform as speakers or debating a point of practice or policy. Of course, our work would have been easier if "a potentially serious security issue" had not forced ICANN to take down on the third day of the meeting the Adobe Connect service that usually carries transcripts of the sessions, a video stream and an entertaining private chat function. Generally, Adobe Connect is used by about 5,000 people per meeting, half at the meeting and half participating remotely. We wonder whether the security breach related to the closed sessions, for example held by the Board, which one cannot generally log into. ■

WEB antitrust investigation

The .WEB Antitrust Investigation has been completed, with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) finding that Verisign will be able to run the new gTLD .WEB despite the competition concerns which had been raised.

Verisign lodged an 8-K Regulation Fair Disclosure (FD) on 9 January 2018 announcing it had been notified by the US DOJ that the investigation by the Antitrust Division was completed. That investigation had been prompted by potential competition issues over the .COM and .NET

operator also running .WEB. There were also concerns over the high price (US\$135 million) paid for the TLD, with some competitors arguing that Verisign had really bid for .WEB as it represented one of the few names that could compete with .COM, and had used its dominant market position to pay several times the commercial value of .WEB in order to stem competition.

Now that the investigation has been closed, apparently in its favour, Verisign has also announced that its proxy from the 2016 auction for .WEB, Nu Dot Co, will now seek to execute the .WEB registry agreement (RA) with ICANN. The RA will then be assigned to Verisign after receiving consent from ICANN. ■

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Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been compiled from research at the domain name registries, directly from sources and over the Internet. We advise you to contact Com Laude at info@comlaude.com before taking any action in case there are errors due to matters beyond our control.