domain.wire

CENTR 10 years
10 challenging years
for ccTLD operators

INSIDE

Internet Governance
Today's ccTLD landscape
Investing in the Internet
Community

Index

Welcome!

Dear Reader,

This year we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of CENTR. CENTR is an association of almost 60 Top Level Domain Registries located all over the world. For Internet industry 10 years is a very long time, with so many changes, new services, new companies and new faces. Last 10 years are marked with great technical, social, cultural and business improvements. If you are interested to see what happened especially with domain names in recent years, I would recommend you to read the first article – the retrospective story written by Sabine Dolderer from DENIC.

One of the main focuses in our Industry in the last 10 years has been Internet Governance. Internet and domain names, to the contrary to the many other areas of today's live, are generally self-governed with incredible influence of the local communities. The greatest example is the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. ICANN, the main body managing the root servers which are the hart of the Internet, has become self governed just few weeks ago. For us, used to the bottom-up approach with the local society in an oversight role, this is what we have been waiting for for many years. It's almost natural that Internet Governance is one of the main themes in our Domain Wire. I warmly recommend you to read the very interesting articles of well know experts: Roelof Meijer from the Netherlands, Leonid Todorov and Andrei Kolesnikov from the Russian Federation and Eric Iriarte Ahon representing Latin America.

CENTR, as an organization with a European focus, could not miss the opportunity to present you stories from some of our Members. Moving our fingers on the Europe's map, first we learn from Leonid Todorov about ccTLD community from Central and Eastern European (CIS) region. Than we find out, in the article from Hans Seeuws how the Belgium registry (DNS. BE) explored how and for what purposes the .be domain names are used. Moving to the west we end up in Spain with Alberto Pérez who shows some recent initiatives by the .ES domain registry. Jordi Iparraguire presents .CAT, the domain for the Catalan community. And of course, there is no Europe without .EU. Giovanni Seppia, former General Manager of CENTR and now EURid expert, presents how the Internationalized Domain Names, extremely important issue for countries with their languages not based on the Latin script, are going to be implemented under .EU.

I hope you will have a great time reading our 2009 Domain Wire. Ten articles are covering the "evolution" of domain names, Internet Governance and the local needs and expectations. This is twenty minutes of reading you will not regret.

And of course: stay with us for the next interesting 10 years!!!

Dr. Andrzej Bartosiewicz
Chairman of the Board, CENTR

10 years CENTR
10 challenging years for ccTLD operators
*By Sabine Dolderer, Director, DENIC*

10 years ago – in the last century ;-) – Internet was less common and less widespread than it is nowadays. But already in those years, it started to become much more than an academic network for the exchange of information amongst researchers. Until 1994, the "acceptable use policy" of the NSF backbone restricted the use of the Internet solely to universities, academic institutions and others with a focus on research. The administration and the DNS (Domain Name System) of the few domains present were mostly handled by universities or individuals on a voluntary basis. Between 1994 and 2000, this landscape changed in many countries in Europe. With the "invention of the world wide web" in 1991, the Internet as a public communication network was born and the domain name system as an easy-to-use vehicle for the Internet became more and more important. In Europe, local stakeholders from the Internet community started to professionalize and organize the administration of their ccTLDs, and in fact many of the now existing local ccTLD organizations were founded during those days: amongst them Nominet the registry for .uk, DENIC (.de) and SIDN (.nl) - all established in 1996. And a lot of academics sought a new challenge in developing this arena, including the author of this article.

Since the very beginning, coordination and cooperation amongst European operators was key, and ever since 1991 the DNS has been a topic on the European operators' agenda during their meetings at RIPE. In the very beginning, technical issues like access, broadband, root server access and related problems were addressed. Many of the early discussions took place within the framework of RIPE's DNS working group. Starting in 1997, new topics came up and the focus of the discussions moved to more specific ccTLD-policy-related issues. In the same year, at the RIPE Meeting in Dublin, a new working group for TLD operators was established. Two years later, in 1999, CENTR, the Council of European National Top Level Domain Registries, emerged from this working group to facilitate the dialogue and exchange of information amongst the European operators of registry services.

Growth of European ccTLDs 1998 - 2000
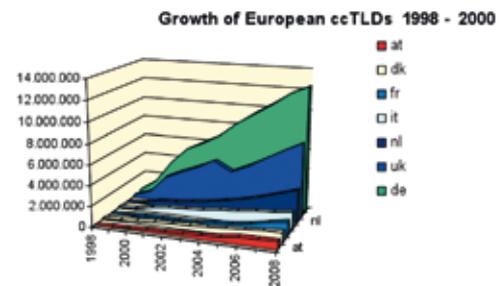
Especially at the end of the 1990s, growth was a major challenge for many of the European ccTLD operators. The number of domains registered with European ccTLDs multiplied by ten within two years. Similar growth rates were seen in the number of Internet users. This dynamic growth triggered a variety of developments which are common industry standards now. Best practices which streamlined and standardized domain registration were developed and a model providing for customer support not only at registry level but also closer to the customers, was implemented. This registry/registrar model, set up in the late 1990s, which was implemented by DENIC in 1994 and by ICANN for com/net/org in 1999, is now a common and well-established framework for domain registration. Based on this model, new improvements became possible: the development and provision of automated, standardized and highly scalable registration systems started. And although there still is a lot of diversity today, these efforts of the industry brought about a major achievement: the EPP standard, which was published in 2004 and is now widely deployed.

Another important challenge in the early 2000s was the provisioning of the name server service itself. With the rapid adoption of the Internet by end-users, DNS traffic doubled every three months. Setting up this service as redundant, reliable, scalable and as accessible worldwide as possible, combined with the aim to have 100% uptime and plenty of reserves, led to many advancements and investments in hardening the global DNS infrastructure. Information exchange, technical collaboration and cooperation amongst the European operators were key elements of a successful provisioning. The foundation of DENIC's current DNS infrastructure was laid during these days and this infrastructure has been continuously improved since then.
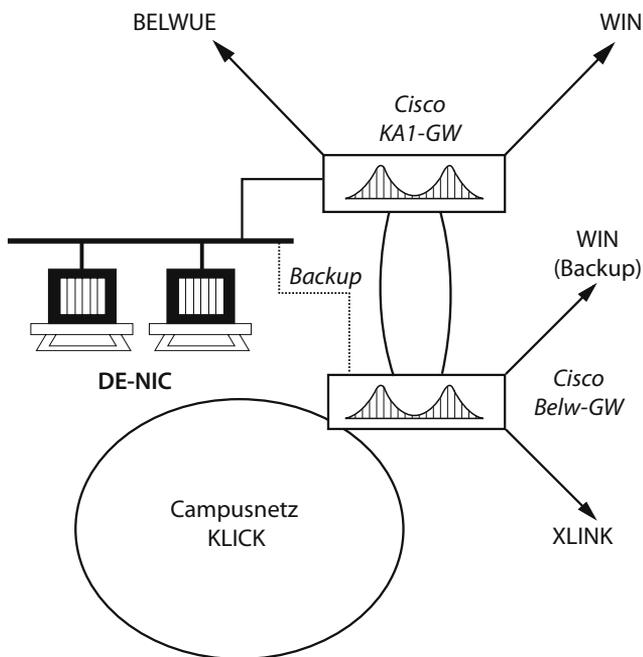
DENIC infrastructure 1994 compared with DENIC infrastructure 2009 in Frankfurt (additional equal clone in Amsterdam)

But not only have growth and new services accompanied registry operation over the years, system security, redundancy, operational stability and continuity are other key areas where development and improvement took place and still do. To maintain and develop registry infrastructure according to current and future needs remains the highest priority.

The focus of registry operation was often not just technical or operational. Policy and legal questions were similarly high on the agenda. Domain disputes and the necessity of domain arbitration were issues which received much attention over several years and led sometimes to controversial discussions. While industry best practices were relatively easy to achieve in the technical and operational fields, the variety of problems related to distinct local situations and diverse jurisdictions made clear that there could not be a one-size-fits-all solution for legal issues. But still, a lot of achievements were made. While 10 years ago "domain law" was practically unknown or just emerging, nowadays we see a stable situation in all European countries. Rights owners have well-documented and proven options for enforcing their rights. Although the solutions developed in different countries and for different ccTLD registries are not completely identical, they are derived from best practices and perfectly adapted to the different local situations. Even for gTLDs a global dispute resolution – the UDRP - was established and has proven successful.

Data protection and the access to Whois data also rank high in the list of frequently and controversially discussed issues. And as there are always two sides of a coin, there are valid arguments for providing data of domain holders via a public Whois service, as well as arguments for protecting as much of their privacy as possible. The stories of how different registries have adapted their Whois service after intensive dialogue with their respective local communities, according to their local needs and circumstances, are also prime examples of policy development in highly linked and dependent systems.

The development of such policies, especially as shown in the examples of Whois and domain arbitration, raised questions about stakeholder and user participation. In the early days, the different stakeholders knew each other and met regularly in meetings. Development took place mainly in a "friendly environment" and in a collaborative way. Due to the growing number of stakeholders and the controversial nature of some of the issues, more coordination and better organization of stakeholder involvement became necessary. Many registries sought new models of cooperation with their

Current DENIC DNS infrastructure
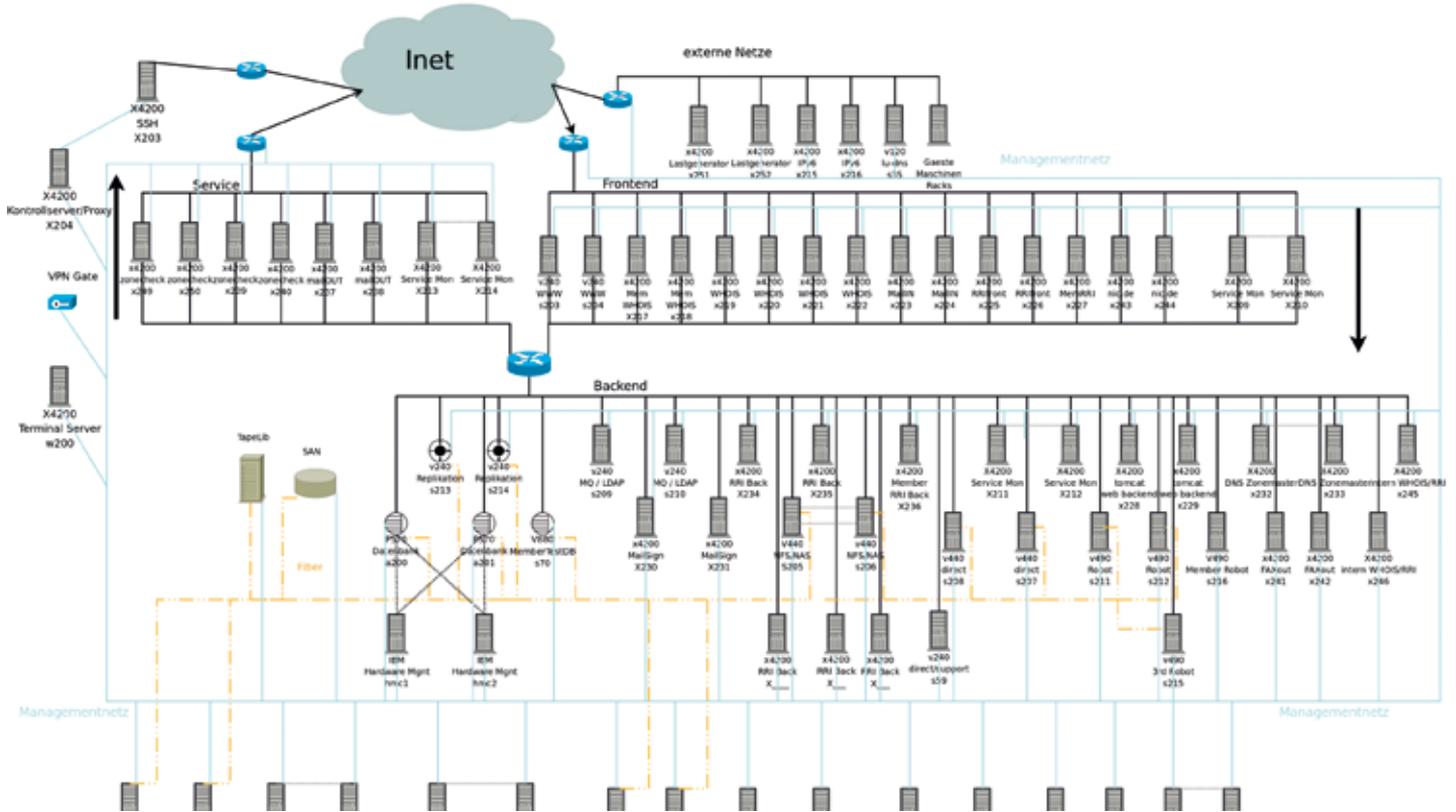
communities to facilitate the dialogue necessary to develop policies in a bottom-up and consent-driven manner. These efforts led to new participation-based models at most of the European registries, and at some of them carefully designed, organizational changes were made to address these new challenges.

As all European registries share the vision to provide the ccTLD registry service in a neutral, professional and efficient manner, based on the needs and in line with the wishes of their respective local communities, the registry business will remain fascinating in the future and we will see changes, both small and big ones. The implementation of IPv6 or DNSSEC, a protocol which will enhance the security of the DNS significantly, will not be the only challenge to all the organizations involved in DNS operation. Also the growing competition which arises from the introduction of new gTLDs and regional TLDs will certainly present big challenges to the European registries in the next years. I am confident, however, that the dynamic evolution all the European registries have experienced and the flexibility they have shown will guarantee another 10 years of successful and stable DNS service.

CENTR @ the Internet Governance Forum

By Peter Van Roste, General Manager, CENTR &
Wim Degezelle, Communication Manager, CENTR

CENTR has been participating actively in the Internet Governance debate since the early days of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the UN initiative to foster a broad debate on how the Internet should be run and managed.

The WSIS Tunis Agenda (November 2005) laid down the General Principles for Internet Governance which say that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. To give shape to such a multi-stakeholder policy dialogue the Tunis Agenda mandated the UN Secretary General to convene the Internet Governance Forum. Starting from the WSIS in Tunis in 2005, CENTR members have welcomed the opportunity to educate the various stakeholders on several matters related to the management of the domain name system within the Internet Governance Forum framework.

The three meetings of the IGF, held so far in Athens (2006), Rio de Janeiro (2007), and Hyderabad (2008), gave many communities the opportunity to participate on equal footing, to address many issues at multiple levels and to generate awareness. The IGF process contributed to expand the dialogue on internet matters and to improve the work other organizations have been doing by highlighting that only a truly open, transparent, bottom-up and structured approach is the key to the internet success.

During the IGF meetings in Rio de Janeiro and Hyderabad, CENTR organized workshops in partnership with other relevant bodies of the internet community, and participated as speaker in many seminars. The CENTR workshop in Sharm El Sheikh will illustrate the advantages of having non-ASCII top level domains and their impact and importance for non-ASCII communities.

The main objective of CENTR has been and will always be to inform any audience about the variety of the top level domain environment, about the different models of TLD management, about the best practices that are regularly shared among the members of one of the most active, collaborative and culturally valuable world community.

The current 5-year mandate of the IGF ends with the IGF meeting in Vilnius in 2010. By then the UN must decide on the continuation of the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Therefore, CENTR fully support the continuation of the IGF and would like to present some recommendations:

- To maintain the IGF as a non-negotiating, discussion forum where to embrace internet related matters in a constructive and cooperative manner;
- To strengthen the educative and informative principles;
- To enhance the follow up process after every yearly meeting so that the outcome of any dialogue is properly spread;
- To better enable remote participation and to ensure that all the various stakeholders are properly represented and their voice heard;
- To empower the Secretariat to present regular reports on the regional and national IGF initiatives and to share them via the official IGF site.

Preparing for the 4th IGF meeting in Sharm El Sheikh

Dutch IGF, The Hague, 21 September 2009

By Roelof Meijer, CEO, SIDN

The Netherlands is one of the leading internet nations in the world. It is important that the voice of such an active Internet community is heard in the global debate on Internet Governance. Therefore SIDN, the .nl domain registry, organised a national IGF with participants from the different relevant stakeholders.

Because the internet is a global medium, the issues that shape it can be influenced effectively only by international stakeholder collaboration. This was the central point made by Roelof Meijer, CEO of SIDN (the .nl registry), in his introductory address. SIDN had accordingly organised this meeting ahead of the fourth Internet Governance Forum (IGF) with the aim of promoting participation in the IGF process by politicians, the business community and the wider community in the Netherlands.

Much economic and social activity is now heavily dependent on the internet. Issues that affect the internet therefore affect the lives and livelihoods of millions. Meijer stressed that the IGF was not remote or 'geeky', but highly relevant to everyone. Against this background, he called for general debate on topics such as critical internet resources, access, diversity, openness and security ahead of November's IGF, where these issues would be addressed.

Norbert van den Hove (member of the Telecom Directorate management team at the Ministry of Economic Affairs)

Norbert van den Hove pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of the IGF. He sees the IGF as a unique, broad and open forum. These characteristics could nevertheless lead to lack of focus, inability to achieve results and a tendency to duplicate the activities of other platforms. The IGF is special because it brings together influential stakeholders, such as governments, community organisations, commercial enterprises, independent non-profit bodies and scientists. Because the forum has no decision-making authority, it is an excellent vehicle for debate and agenda-setting. The downside is that progress is sometimes elusive.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs invited input for the IGF.

Markus Kummer (Executive Coordinator of the Secretariat of the Working Group on Internet Governance)

Markus Kummer explained the IGF process: its history and objectives, its achievements, the goals that have yet to be secured and how one can contribute. The IGF is a multi-stakeholder, non-decision-making platform. It identifies significant issues and stimulates international interaction between business, government, technical specialists, scientists and community organisations. The internet transcends international borders, so internet issues require a global approach.

Increasingly, the IGF recognises that issues are interconnected. So, for example, security has to be considered alongside openness and privacy. However, discussion and progress on such international issues are hampered by interrelationships with local matters. The IGF therefore aims to propagate best practice and promote interaction and collaboration.

Alun Michael (Labour and Co-operative Party Member of Parliament)

Alun Michael explained why he, as a UK politician, is involved in the IGF and what the UK is doing nationally and internationally. The IGF is not an event but a process that involves all actors: industry, government, parliament and civil society, to address issues that should not and cannot be solved with legislation. Govern cooperatively, instead of being governed. He drew a comparison between the spectrum of violent crime and the spectrum of online crime; the key to success lies in partnership and cooperative structures rather than in legislation, regulation and governmental structures.

Arco Groothedde (CIO on the Management Board at Kadaster).

Arco Groothedde identified five subjects that bothered him as a CIO and an internet user.

Problem 1: new technology offers opportunities, but many are missed due to lack of interconnection. Recommendation: create a task force to promote interconnection and data pooling.

Problem 2: technology is seen as the preserve of experts. Recommendation: give technological development a commercial focus and encourage the business community to use technology as a commercial driver.

Problem 3: businesses are vulnerable because of interdependency and uncertainty regarding the nature of that interdependency. Recommendation: all organisations should perform vulnerability audits.

Problem 4: even in developed countries, not everybody has (or utilises) internet access; the elderly, for example, tend to be put off by the perceived complexity. Recommendation: everyone should take responsibility for increasing access and simplicity.

Problem 5: the openness of the internet is at odds with the desire to maintain control. Recommendation: the government must recognise and accept the downsides of technology.

Debate and conclusions

Asked for input for the IGF, participants suggested:
- Increasing awareness of the IGF among stakeholders (politicians, officials, private sector) to encourage participation and input
- Communicating the Dutch position, especially abroad
- Identifying shared interests; creating 'regions'; not waiting for global consensus before acting
- Showcasing Dutch best practices (e.g. Notice and Takedown Code)
- Agreeing definitions (e.g. model for privacy) before trying to resolve issues
- Acknowledging and addressing statutory conflicts (e.g. freedom of information versus cybercrime)

Roelof Meijer concluded the meeting by saying that the Netherlands was one of the world's leading internet nations; it was now time for the country to take on a corresponding role in international internet governance debate.

Seeking Checks and Balances in Internet Governance

By Andrey Kolesnikov, Director, Coordination center for top level domain RU &
Leonid Todorov, Director of Government relations, Coordination Center for top level domain RU

A hot potato

With a heated debate on the urgency of the ICANN reform, one cannot help growing sympathetic with the Corporation. Indeed, one can question the credibility of some major international organizations, for all their internal problems and – sometimes - slow reactions to global challenges. Meanwhile, an organization that has already been operating flawlessly over a good decade has not received a due credit.

What's worse, each and every stakeholder – the US policy makers, national governments, the international business community, the global Internet community, academics – throw criticisms at ICANN for alleged malpractices, such as lack of transparency in decision making and of accountability, distance from the public and nepotism, abandonment of the 'bottom-up' policy development principle, to name a few. Moreover, each stakeholder pursues his own interests and interprets the substance of the invectives accordingly. In the light of a possible termination of JPA, the debate has become increasingly politicized.[1]

So, the situation is embarrassing for ICANN. It is really hard to play servant of more than two masters and, being a simply technical entity, to find itself in the eye of the political storm.

Talking business.

In the light of the above, let's try to focus on approaches that might help remedy the situation from the corporate governance perspective. To this end it is appropriate to revisit the original institutional roots of ICANN and imagine its current challenges as merely corporate issues. While at the present juncture the classical concept of good corporate governance has been seriously compromised, there is still every reason to believe in its viability, and if applied properly, good corporate governance practices should help the Corporation improve its performance. In assuming so, it

would be appropriate to narrow the focus by examining the potential of the ICANN's system of checks and balances as a cornerstone of good corporate governance.

Building checks....

As a unique entity with a global mission, ICANN is accountable primarily to its three major stakeholders, that is, the government, the business community, and the Internet community.

By government we do not mean just the US Administration (which should receive recognition for seeding billions of dollars into the Internet infrastructure over several decades), as per the JPA, but also other national governments that regard the Internet as a common public asset and are keen to keep a close eye on its performance and security. In view of this one might consider transformation of the GAC from an advisory body under ICANN's auspices into a truly international intergovernmental board tasked to oversee the Corporation's strategic planning and operations.

For businesses, the major concern is to have the Corporation (that is, the Internet addressing system) up and running and to keep its sustainability and connectivity for the sake of complex global business operations. So, it would be correct to assume that the business community is the least concerned to change the status quo. However, their natural desire to manage unnecessary risks may make them favor a sound change, providing reform proposals that not hamper their interests, including, but not limited to IPR, trademarks protection, and competition, among others.

Meanwhile, some analysts assert that to make sure the Internet community has its say in ICANN, its major constituencies - namely, the gTLD community, the ccTLD community, and the 'community at large' - should also remain entitled to and solidify the right to exercise control over the Corporation's operations. For both communities the most viable option for exerting their influence on ICANN is the forming of an effective constituency with an adequate representation and decision making powers.

...and Securing Balances

In a classical corporation, equilibrium should be sought between the authority and the powers exercised by all the parties involved, and ICANN is no exception in this regard.

More specifically, to solidify its 'supremacy', the reformed GAC might be granted the right to veto

decisions by the ICANN executives. This Sword of Damocles will force the Corporation management to abide by proper standards of corporate governance, while in view of the 'double-edginess' of this instrument of control, it would, at the same time, make public servants exercise caution for their own sake.

Meanwhile, to secure the ICANN Board's reasonable degree of independence of governmental control, why not consider giving the Internet community the right to elect the ICANN Board by popular vote through the Internet (in a way the general shareholder meeting does in a normal corporation)? This may result in a real competition for the seats and enhance fairness and transparency of the nomination/electoral process.

As well, it is of common knowledge that ICANN trades recognition of ccTLDs for their voluntary contributions to the Corporation's budget, which results in a lax, informal relationship between them. The Russian community believes a viable alternative to this arrangement might be a formal contract between ICANN and the national ccTLD. Given the background of similar contractual relations between the Corporation and the generic TLDs, the model has long proved its robustness. Indeed, once their rights and obligations under such contracts have been strictly defined, including certain safeguards against any moves which may cause significant addressing failures, the parties would enhance their mutual accountability and add to ICANN's overall operational transparency. It should be particularly emphasized that national country code domain operators should have the right to embark on either option on the voluntary basis.

At the same time, to counterbalance the (inter) governmental influence, one may contemplate a possibility for granting the combined gTLD and ccTLD constituencies with the right to overcome the aforementioned GAC veto by a certain margin, which is critical for striking a right balance of forces between the key actors.

As for the multibillion dollar-worth businesses, they might opt to use either leverage to lobby and safeguard their interests.

So, to align the forces and their respective powers, a possible option might be making the ICANN accountable to a kind of Board of Directors, represented by the national governments, and a general shareholder meeting formed by the global Internet community. This will ensure the much-needed up-bottom and bottom-up oversight over the ICANN's performance and, accordingly, seriously improve its accountability standards.

From romanticism to practice
This said, the matter is too complex to be fixed overnight. As well, the cluster of ICANN and its related institutions, and, accordingly, the modifications

required are too immense to be addressed all at once, taking into account that the Internet community is too huge and diverse to easily build consensus over critical issues; and, last but not least, that the US administration still has the casting vote when it comes to the Internet and the ICANN in particular.

However, at the present stage it is possible to outline a possible reform framework, even though a debatable one. In our view, major reform avenues thus should be as follows:

• Termination of JPA and completion of privatization of the ICANN;
• Transformation of the GAC into a real watchdog overseeing the ICANN's corporate governance practices;
• Transformation of the ICANN into a supranational corporation governed by a special international treaty and run by Internet pros or, at least, its relocation to a neutral country, to ease possible political transatlantic and transpacific tensions;
• Making sure the good corporate governance practices are observed with and serve as an antidote to potential controversies within and around the ICANN and an instrument of keeping the whole organism intact.

All this should help ICANN begin to tackle a huge challenge of launching the next generation domains, including IDNs.

Looking further, the difference between generic TLDs and the ccTLDs should dissipate over time, and new kinds of domains could emerge, for instance, municipal root domains that would not fall under either category, or a very peculiar group of quasi-gTLD domains, which will differ from the 'national' TLDs. That will require yet a greater degree of consensus between the key stakeholders and ICANN and, accordingly, would trigger further modifications of their interaction models, as well as of the Corporation's principal mission and corporate governance procedures.

In other words, the latter should be improved to meet an objective demand fueled by evolution of the Internet address space and the persistent need for diversity. As well, a continuous rise of new root domains will push national governments to loosen their grip on the domain space area. So, should the Corporation be able to overhaul its corporate governance mechanisms in time, it would find itself far better prepared to successfully run a greater number of root domains.

The transformational process is going to be quite a painful and slow one, nonetheless, and decision makers should exercise patience and caution in reforming the ICANN's current modus operandi – the Internet is too valuable a global corporate asset to let it fritz out and investments into its development are too huge to afford a fiasco.

C *entr*

COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL TOP LEVEL DOMAIN REGISTRIES
WWW.CENTR.ORG

INTERNET COUNTRY CODE TOP-LEVEL DOMAINS

THE CENTR MEMBERS
THE CENTR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

.ac	Ascension Island	.be	Belgium	.cn	China	.fr	France	.ie	Ireland
.ad	Andorra	.bf	Burkina Faso	.co	Colombia	.ga	Gabon	.il	Israel
.ae	United Arab Emirates	.bg	Bulgaria	.cr	Costa Rica	.gb	United Kingdom (Great Britain)	.im	Isle of Man
.af	Afghanistan	.bh	Bahrain	.cu	Cuba	.gd	Grenada	.in	India
.ag	Antigua and Barbuda	.bi	Burundi	.cv	Cape Verde	.ge	Georgia	.io	British Indian Ocean Territory
.ai	Anguilla	.bj	Benin	.cx	Christmas Island	.gf	French Guiana	.iq	Iraq
.al	Albania	.bl	Saint Barthelemy	.cy	Cyprus	.gg	Guernsey	.ir	Iran
.am	Armenia	.bm	Bermuda	.cz	Czech Republic	.gh	Ghana	.is	Iceland
.an	Netherlands Antilles	.bn	Brunei Darussalam	.de	Germany	.gi	Gibraltar	.it	Italy
.ao	Angola	.bo	Bolivia	.dj	Djibouti	.gl	Greenland	.je	Jersey
.aq	Antarctica	.br	Brazil	.dk	Denmark	.gm	Gambia	.jm	Jamaica
.ar	Argentina	.bs	Bahamas	.dm	Dominica	.gn	Guinea	.jo	Jordan
.as	American Samoa	.bt	Bhutan	.do	Dominican Republic	.gp	Guadeloupe	.jp	Japan
.at	Austria	.bv	Bouvet Island	.dz	Algeria	.gq	Equatorial Guinea	.ke	Kenya
.au	Australia	.bw	Botswana	.ec	Ecuador	.gr	Greece	.kg	Kyrgyzstan
.aw	Aruba	.by	Belarus	.ee	Estonia	.gs	South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands	.kh	Cambodia
.ax	Åland Islands	.bz	Belize	.eg	Egypt	.gt	Guatemala	.ki	Kiribati
.az	Azerbaijan	.ca	Canada	.eh	Western Sahara	.gu	Guam	.km	Comoros
.ba	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.cc	Cocos (Keeling) Islands	.er	Eritrea	.gw	Guinea-Bissau	.kn	Saint Kitts and Nevis
.bb	Barbados	.cd	Congo, The Democratic Republic of the	.es	Spain	.gy	Guyana	.kp	Korea, Democratic People's Republic
.bd	Bangladesh	.cf	Central African Republic	.et	Ethiopia	.hk	Hong Kong	.kr	Korea, Republic of
		.cg	Congo, Republic of	.eu	European Union	.hm	Heard and McDonald Islands	.kw	Kuwait
		.ch	Switzerland	.fi	Finland	.hn	Honduras	.ky	Cayman Islands
		.ci	Cote d'Ivoire	.fj	Fiji	.hr	Croatia	.kz	Kazakhstan
		.ck	Cook Islands	.fk	Falkland Islands (Malvinas)	.ht	Haiti	.la	Laos
		.cl	Chile	.fm	Micronesia, Federated States of	.hu	Hungary	.lb	Lebanon
		.cm	Cameroon	.fo	Faroe Islands	.id	Indonesia	.lc	Saint Lucia

The TLD registries for .biz, .cat, .com, .info, .mobi, .net & .org are CENTR Associated Members

Information Source:
IANA TLD Database

December 2009

You can't ignore a ccTLD

By Hans Seeuws, Communication Manager, DNS.be

The statistics featured on the homepages of the various registries tell us in real-time how many domain names are registered there. But what's the story behind those domain names? Is there a website linked to them, for instance? And if so, what's on it?

DNS BE is the first registry having scanned all registered .be domain names to see whether they have a website linked to them. In total, there are 605,067 Belgian websites on the Net. This means that 7 out of every 10 domain name holders are now making effective use of their .be. It also shows that having your own domain name has ceased to be merely an 'accessory' and instead has become an important communication channel both for private individuals and businesses.

Conclusion 1: 43% of all websites consist of just 1 page, while 27% have more than 1 page
That doesn't say very much about the content of the website, of course. To be able to check on the content of a website, you actually have to visit it. And so the DNS BE team examines 1400 websites closely every year.

Type of website
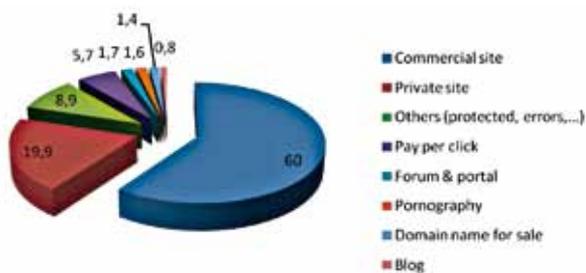
60% of .be sites are commercial in nature. This is a figure that has barely changed over the years. The number of personal sites has barely changed either and is stranded on a tick under 20%. There is one trend, though, that is coming clearly to the fore: open, personal communication via blogs, forums and portal sites are all growing in popularity. In fact, this category is up 1.6% compared with last year's analysis. Pay-per-click dropped off in 2008, as did the number of pornography sites. This may have something to do with the worldwide trend that is seeing the volume of online advertising dwindle.

Two observations come to mind with this visual analysis: the sample itself is limited and there is a 2 to

3% margin of error. Also, a large percentage of websites fall into the 'other' category. This means we are unable to establish their exact purpose, because they display errors or are password-protected.

Conclusion 2: 14% of domain names redirect visitors to another domain name
These names include companies that trade internationally and which redirect all traffic to their main website, usually in another country. But more than one-third of these redirections simply go to another .be site.

When redirected, a .be points to
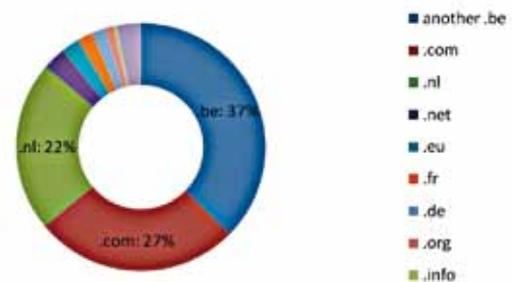
Conclusion 3: Belgian webmasters are on the ball
DNS BE also took a more in-depth look at each website's technical elements. Research shows that Belgian webmasters are clearly up to date with more recent technology and tend to apply it en masse. Of all the 605,067 homepages:
- 57% contain JavaScript, used mainly for interactive applications at the site
- 56% use CSS to streamline the design for all pages at the website
- 11% have Flash, enabling animations and web videos to be displayed
- 27% feature keywords that tell search engines what the site is about

And, finally, for SEO devotees – at least those who believe in the importance that search engines still attach to keywords – there is one striking observation: the Top 20 keywords only feature words related to webhosting. For Belgians, the word 'sex' is ranked down in 87th place, well after 'sport' and 'restaurant'.

Most frequently used keywords in metatags:

1 webhosting	6 linux hosting
2 hosting	7 dedicated server
3 webhost	8 email
4 dedicated hosting	9 domeinnaam
5 belgique	10 website

A TLD overview

VeriSign Domain Name Industry Brief, second quarter of 2009

By Sarah Langstone, Director of Product Management, VeriSign

At the midpoint of 2009, there was a base of 184 million domain name registrations across all of the Top Level Domain Names (TLDs). This represents a one percent growth over the first quarter of 2009 and a nine percent growth over the same quarter of last year. The base of Country Code Top Level Domain Names (ccTLDs) rose to 74.4 million domain names, a 14 percent increase year over year and a one percent increase quarter over quarter. In terms of total registrations, .com continues to have the highest base followed by .cn (China), .de (Germany) and .net.[1]

Total Domain Name Registrations
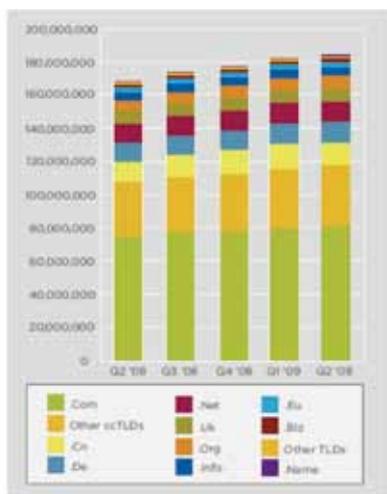
Source: Zooknic, July 2009; VeriSign, July 2009

Industry Growth and Composition

Around nine million new domain names were registered across all of the TLDs in the second quarter of 2009. This reflects a reduction in new registrations with a 14 percent decline from the first quarter 2009 and a 15 percent decline from the same quarter in the previous year. As seen in past years, there is seasonality in domain name registrations with the second quarter of the year dropping from the first quarter.

In second quarter 2009, the impact of seasonality as well as the overall weak economic conditions impacted the number of new registrations for both gTLD and ccTLD registrations, though the ccTLD decline was much larger.

The composition of the domain name industry and rank order in terms of base size remained consistent with that of first quarter 2009. The largest TLDs in terms of base size were .com, .cn, .de, .net, .org, .uk, .info, .nl (Netherlands), .eu (European Union), and .biz. The size of the base for .cn and .de were nearly equal at the end of the second quarter with .cn just edging out .de.

ccTLD Breakdown

The second quarter of 2009 ended with 74.4 million ccTLD registrations across all of the ccTLDs, representing a 14 percent increase over the same quarter of 2008 and a one percent increase from the previous quarter. There are more than 240 ccTLD extensions globally, but the top 10 ccTLDs comprise 66 percent of the total number of registrations.

Among the top 25 largest ccTLDs, there was notable growth quarter over quarter among several ccTLDs. Registrations for .ar (Argentina) domain names grew the fastest with an eight percent growth quarter over quarter, which may be related to the opening of IDN registrations at the end of March.

Russian Federation (.ru) domain name registrations grew by seven percent, a slightly slower trend than previous quarters but still the second fastest growing among the largest ccTLDs.

The Brazilian ccTLD, .br, also saw domain name registrations grow by seven percent over the quarter which was likely due to liberalization of registration requirements for .net.br in April 2009 and .com.br in May 2008. The Chinese ccTLD, .cn, which had been experiencing notable growth, saw the overall base of registrations decline eight percent quarter over quarter.[2]

---

1 The gTLD and ccTLD data cited in this report are estimates as of the time of this report and subject to change as more complete data is received.

2 The .cn Registry (CNNIC) had been running a price promotion with a 1 RMB Yuan (US$0.14) fee for a one-year .cn domain name registration. The fees changed on March 1, 2009 to 18 RMB Yuan (US$2.64).

ccTLD Breakdown
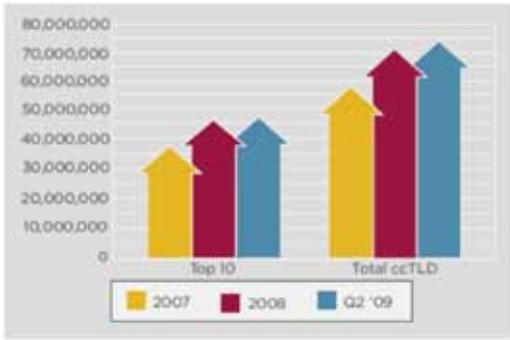
Source: Zooknic, July 2009

Only four, .ar, .au (Australia), .br (Brazil), .pl (Poland) of the top 25 largest ccTLDs experienced quarterly growth rates in the second quarter of 2009 that were higher than the growth rates in the first quarter of 2009. Four of the top 25 largest ccTLDs, .ru, .pl, .br, and .fr (France), experienced growth rates year over year in excess of 25 percent.

In terms of the total base of domain name registrations, .cn, .de and .uk were the largest ccTLDs. Year over year, .cn's growth rate was nine percent. Rounding out the top three ccTLDs were .de and .uk, at six percent and 11 percent growth year over year, respectively. Together, the bases of domain name registrations for these three ccTLDs represented 45 percent of all ccTLD domain name registrations.

- -

TOP CCTLD REGISTRIES BY DOMAIN NAME BASE, SECOND QUARTER 2009

1. .cn (China)	6. .ru (Russian Federation)
2. .de (Germany)	7. .ar (Argentina)
3. .uk (United Kingdom)	8. .br (Brazil)
4. .nl (Netherlands)	9. .it (Italy)
5. .eu (European Union)	10. .us (United States)

Source: Zooknic, July 2009

- -

.Com/.Net Dynamics

VeriSign's average daily Domain Name System (DNS) query load during the second quarter increased from 38 billion to 49 billion per day, resulting in hundreds of millions of Internet users accessing Web sites or sending email. This is a 29 percent increase from the 38 billion queries in first quarter 2009. Managing the increasing traffic on the Internet reflects VeriSign's continued investment in the DNS. VeriSign's continued commitment to its infrastructure has enabled them to maintain a record of 100 percent uptime over the past 11 years, earning VeriSign the reputation of being one of the most reliable and trusted networks in the world.

The .Com and .Net Base and New Registrations

The overall base of .com and .net domain names grew to 93.5 million domain names during the second quarter of 2009. This represents a one percent increase over the first quarter of 2009, a seven percent increase over the same quarter of the previous year, and a 28 percent increase over the second quarter of 2007.[3] New .com and .net registrations were added at an average of approximately 2.3 million per month in the second quarter of 2009 for a total of seven million new registrations in the quarter. This four percent decline from the previous quarter is in line with normal seasonal fluctuations.

Renewals

The renewal rate for the second quarter of 2009 was 70 percent which was a slight decrease from the renewal rate in the first quarter of 2009 which was 71 percent. Quarterly renewal rates may deviate a few percentage points in either direction each quarter based upon the composition of the expiring base and the contribution of specific registrars.

.Com/.Net Registry Renewal Rates
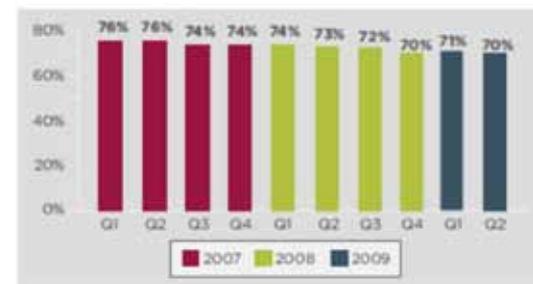
Source: VeriSign, August 2009

LEARN MORE
To subscribe or to access the archives for the Domain Name Industry Briefs,
please go to www.verisign.com/domainbrief. Email your comments or questions
to domainbrief@verisign.com.

---

3   For .com and .net domain name registrations, VeriSign reports an adjusted base of active domain name registrations, which reflects deletions that occur within the five-day Add Grace Period beyond the quarter end.
     This figure may differ from other non-authoritative publicly available sources which do not adjust the base.

ccTLDs in LAC

By Erick Iriarte Ahon, General Manager, LACTLD

I would like to thank CENTR for inviting LACTLD, the Latin American and Caribbean ccTLDs organisation, to write an article for Domain Wire. The cooperation between Regional Organizations is important and necessary as much as the cooperation between the ccTLDs in our regions.

The Latin American and Caribbean ccTLDs have different backgrounds, which reflect the initial moments of the Internet in their countries. Civil society organizations, public universities, private universities, governmental entities or mixed entities took the lead in their country and formed diverse ways to develop registration policies, establish relationships with users of domain names, carry out business strategies and connect with their respective governments.

This diversity based on the local needs and requirements, mixed with our cultural diversity, has allowed us to collectively face our growth. We established LACTLD as a union that brings together ccTLDs from Latin America and the Caribbean region around the following priorities:

a. To coordinate policies, such as strategies to develop the domain names in a regional level

b. To represent the interests of its members before the relevant organizations

c. To promote the developments of the ccTLDs in the region

d. To encourage the cooperation and the exchange of expertise among its members, in every aspect of the proper operation of the ccTLDs

e. To establish cooperation bonds with similar organisations from other regions of the world

In the region different languages (Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch and our native dialects) are spoken, so the need to provide information in different languages is essential to enable appropriate endorsement of the regional entity.

Part of our effort has been focused on the development of workshops for training, especially for the small ccTLDs with less than 5000 registered domains. These small ccTLDs represent 60% of the region's ccTLDs, but only 0,42% of the total domain delegates in the region. We have implemented financial leverages to guarantee the continued participation in the workshops that we have developed. To boost research, we have proposed a project fund that we hope to implement by 2010.

Our goal is to generate skills and encourage participation in the dialogue on an international level for example at ICANN, Commission Interamericana de Telecomunicaciones (CITEL - Interamerican Telecommunication Commission), IGF, eLAC 2010, etc. Furthermore, we see it as our duty to support each member on their political, commercial, technical, legal and other requirements.

To be able to face the challenge of continued growth, we are increasing the cooperation among the ccTLDs in our region. LACTLD supports the global activities with AfTLD, APTLD and CENTR to exchange experiences, because we believe that strength comes by sharing information and learning from the experience of others.

.cat, making 10 million Catalan speakers visible

By Jordi Iparraguire, CEO, PuntCAT

.cat involvement in the community is quite unique amongst TLDs. ccTLDs have a political border that somehow limits and defines their scope. .cat, the sponsored gTLD for the Catalan speaking community has, even if open to worldwide registrants, a rather geographically defined scope, quite the contrary to the rest of gTLDs.

The eligibility criteria for .cat domains welcome everybody from all around the world. The only requisite is that the Catalan language must be significantly present in the .cat web sites, that is, to offer value to the community. No wonder then that multinationals do see a value in using .cat web sites to address a 10 million speakers' market segment, one that was invisible and inaccessible before the existence of .cat and is comparable in size to many other European markets defined by borders.

To put you in the picture, Catalan is a Romance language, like Castilian (aka Spanish), French or Italian just to name a few, spoken by 10 million people mainly located in the eastern part of the Iberian peninsula, north east of the Pyrenees mountain range and Balearic islands. The language can be traced back to the 9th century and cruises history with golden ages but also prohibitions imposed whenever Catalan self rule and political institutions were abolished at different reprises from the 18th to the 20th century. Nowadays 90% of Catalan speakers are under Spain's rule so 20% of Spain's citizens are Catalan speakers. Having survived pretty well but against all odds several prohibitions, Catalan faces again a brilliant future thanks to democracy, the push of its speakers and the Internet.

So after this introduction it is easy to understand why the Catalan Wikipedia was the 2nd one to be created and has nowadays more than 200.000 articles, why one could find Catalans amongst the first ICANN and ISOC boards, the success of groups that translate and localize free software <www.softcatala.cat>, research groups working in free software advanced translators <www.apertium.org>, mobile phone companies offering Catalan in their devices, or a group that has translated iPhone into Catalan since the producer itself failed to do so. Then, in that environment, the early existence and success of .cat as well as its community involvement are self explanatory.

So in terms of community involvement, .cat has 2 main axis: promote the presence of the Catalan community on the Internet and encourage people (individuals, small businesses, etc) to become active agents in what we call the "advanced use of the net", which is to become proficient in using tools, services and processes that are not yet mainstream for the average citizen or company. In that sense in the 3.5 years since .cat was created puntCAT has taken several initiatives to serve its community amongst which:

> puntCAT is sponsoring bloggers' meetings and the Catalan Blogs prize <www.premisblocs.cat>

> The sole existence of .cat has pushed many individuals and small companies to get their own domain name for the very first time.

> puntCAT collaborates with the Catalan National Library on the Catalan Digital Heritage program <www.padicat.cat> which, aware of the volatility of the Internet content, aims to capture and archive the most relevant .cat web sites for future study.

> puntCAT is co-editor of the online thematic dictionaries (some of them multilingual) that the Catalan Academy of Sciences, Language and Humanities is putting online at <http://cit.iec.cat/>. We are also working with the Academy to get the words of the latest dictionary so to build a free multi platform spell checker.

> We provide the Internet infrastructure for a hip-hop song contest managed by a musical magazine that involves language and music teachers to coach schoolchildren compose, sing and upload the songs to the Internet. A professional jury will award different prices.

puntCAT is also moving in the academic arena by offering small research projects for university students, and a couple of bigger challenges for PhD candidates. In parallel, we offer a grant to attend the South Summer School on Internet Governance. The community benefits from the grant via a report and a public conference explaining what is and what's on stake regarding Internet Governance.

To sum up, puntCAT reinvests in a community that is betting high on the use of digital tools to become a key player in the digital age. Would you do it differently for your language?

National Domains in the CIS: Common Challenges and Country-Specific Peculiarities

By Leonid Todorov, Director of Government relations, Coordination center for top level domain RU

Whilst national TLDs in the CIS countries advance in different ways and at a different pace, their administrators and registrars often face common challenges.

Some of these challenges are associated with the development of the information and telecommunication technologies in each individual country, while others concern universal rules of the global net's functioning. Tackling such problems requires action both by the global Internet community and individual states.

These issues formed the *Schwerpunkt* of the 2nd International Conference for ccTLD Registries and Registrars of the CIS, Central and Eastern Europe. The event was co-sponsored by the Russian ccTLD, ARNES, and ISOC-SI.

It should be emphasized that all the conference participants were on equal terms – the fundamentals of the Internet functioning enable administrators of even small-sized national domains with a mere dozen of thousands of domain names to employ the cutting-edge technologies of automatic registration on the basis of EPP, introduce IDNs on national languages, and contribute with much brio to activities of the international Internet entities.

The Russian national domain .ru has now expanded fairly rapidly, with the annual growth of 64% in 2008 alone (the 2nd fast-growing TLD worldwide). In March 2009, the 2-millionth second-level domain was registered in the .ru zone, while in September 2009 there were over 2.3m domains there (what made .ru the 5th largest ccTLD worldwide). The Russian Coordination Center's agenda is topped by the launch of the Cyrillic top level domain .РФ. It is envisaged that at the upcoming ICANN conference in Seoul the Corporation's Board should endorse the Fast-Track process for pioneer IDNs, including Russia's .РФ. Mr. Andrey Kolesnikov, Director of the Coordination Center, hopes that granting the .РФ domain will have happened by February 1, 2010. He confirms that the technological platform for the new domain has already been completed, and that the establishment of a Technical Center, which will be providing the functioning of the register and the EPP-based registration system, is underway. The Technical Center's hardware platform will be located on two sites, that is, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, with additional DNS sites being deployed in Hong Kong and New York City. Uniform domain registration procedures for .РФ, .ru and .su should be designed by the end of the year. Between October and November 2009 it is planned to conclude additional agreements with 21 accredited registrars currently operating under domain .RU to operate with the new domain .РФ. It is planned to reserve second-level domain names for the government and conduct the priority registration of domains for trademarks owners between November 2009 and March 2010. Consequently, the sunrise registration period will start in April 2010. The general registration of domains in the .РФ zone is scheduled for July-August 2010. While introducing the Cyrillic domain .РФ, new challenges, particularly technical ones, will surely arise – suffice it to mention the inevitable conflict between the Cyrillic and Latin keyboards.

The Ukrainian national domain is second to Russia's in the CIS. The structure of .UA with a relatively small number of second-level domains (some 7,000) and 450,000-plus third-level ones differs from that of .RU. In 2008 the .UA zone grew around 22%. The second-level domain is split into public (7 generic domains, such as com.ua, net.ua; gov.ua, etc., and 46 geographic domains) and private ones, which are reserved for trademark holders. The Ukrainian configuration dominated by the third-level domains appears to be unique in the region, while access to the second-level domains in the other CIS countries is free. It should be noted that in .UA, there are far more registrars (some 170) than in .RU. "Hostmaster", the administrator of .UA, currently considers the possibility to create a TLD in the local language; however, unlike Russia, they are not going to speed up the process. Rather, they plan to await the outcome of the analogous Russian project.

Kazakhstan, the third largest national domain in the CIS (some 38,500 domains), does not have any trouble with the name of its future IDN .РФ. According to Mr. Pavel Gusev, Director of KazNIC that runs .KZ, local users are interested in a Kazakh Cyrillic domain .РФ. That is why when ICANN endorses the Fast-Track process, they are going to apply for the creation of .РФ. In the nearest future, Kazakhstan plans to launch

a few Beta Cyrillic domains to identify potential errors and flaws, to have the system up and running by the moment .РФ is delegated.

Belarus, too, has pondered the concept of a national Cyrillic domain, but emphasizes that it is not clear yet whether new IDNs are going to enjoy demand, because, due to certain technical constraints, the local users will not be able to use new domains as easy as traditional ASCII domains. Belarus is concerned that a mass registration in IDNs may entail self-isolation of local Internet-communities. That is why Belarus is going to keep a close eye on Russia's performance in the area.

Azerbaijan finds itself in a slightly different situation. The national alphabet is Latin-based, and thus allows the nation to keep the current national domain name -.AZ. Technically, the Azeri are ready to introduce the IDN technology, but the local community should make up their mind as to whether it is worth launching a new national domain and realize how this should be done and what procedures should be designed to this effect. In any event, they will monitor Russia and other pioneers' success records.

Armenia has held two surveys on the appropriateness of introducing a local IDN. The country's Internet community mostly believes this is not a top priority, nor the issue should be pushed. Uzbekistan holds a similar stance, plus, the local alphabet comprises both Latin and Cyrillic letters. Finally, the younger generation is of a good command of English and has no trouble with using Latin. As youngsters form a predominant group among the local Internet users, there is no urgent need of a local IDN.

Practically all the national domain administrators in the CIS focus on boosting the number of domain names in their zones. To this effect they employ marketing instruments, such as lowering registration fees, encouraging the registration of new domains in provinces rather than in capital cities, and focus on "repatriation" of domains earlier registered overseas. They team up with their governments, too, by contributing to public information programs and educational/ promotional campaigns that focus on the benefits of the Internet, as well as on the concept of domain names, and registration of new domains in national zones.

Belarus constitutes a special case in this respect, as the local registry has not insomuch vehemently marketed the registration of new domain names, as they claim there exists a stable demand for this kind of service. But they believe the time will come they will be able to capitalize on other countries' experiences.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Armenians take the issue of fostering Internet very seriously. Suffice it to note that unlike some other CIS countries, including Russia, Armenia has already joined GAC.

Red.es: Promotion of Information Society & ".es" domain names

By Arantza Martinez marketing manager of Dominios,es, red.es & Alberto Pérez Gómez, Deputy Director for International Relations, red.es

Red.es: Promotion of Information Society & ".es" domain names

Red.es is a public entity which belongs to the State Secretariat for Telecommunications and Information Society (SETSI) of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade (MITyC). Its main mission is to promote the Information Society in Spain, in cooperation with other Ministries, Regional and Local Governments and the private sector. Red.es has, among several functions, the management the .ES Registry, a duty which has been legally entrusted to this entity since its creation in 2000.

Red.es encourages the digital presence of citizens and companies, for who domain names are an entrance gate to the Internet. Red.es promotes .ES domain names for their high-quality, security, accessibility, and because they are closely identified with Spain and the Spanish language.

It is clear that Red.es' task is not limited to managing the .ES Registry., In the recent years Red.es has gone a step further, and used the .ES domain name to promote the digital presence of companies and citizens via webs, blogs, social networks, e-mail… In order to achieve this goal, Red.es has launched a series of initiatives, and campaings such as Jóvenes en Red (Young People on the Internet), Ninguna Empresa sin Web (No Company without a Website) or Universitarios en red (University students on the Internet).

Jóvenes en Red únete al plan **The Jóvenes en Red programme**

Young People on the Internet (www.jovenesenred.es) is a government initiative to encourage young Internet users to have presence on the Internet.

During the first phase of this campaign, which lasted from January to July 2008, all young people up to the age of 30 could register a .ES domain name for free, and received on top of that a free .es e-mail account and the tools to build their own website. Red.es collaborated with 4 accredited registrars which offered the .ES domain and the associated web services package. The programme was promoted via different online and off-line media, and Red.es supported the programme by issuing press releases and by participating in different events. Over 40,000 domains were registered.

In a second phase (planned for November – December 2009) the campaign will focus on young people who have their own business project and who want to professionalise their presence on the Internet. Accredited .ES registrars will offer the .ES domain and the associated Internet services package at a competitive price.

NEW **Ninguna Empresa sin Web**
No Company without Website (www.programa-new.es) wants to stimulate the Internet presence of Spanish SMEs. The programme makes SMEs familiar with different solutions so that they can choose the one that best fits the needs of each company: from a basic solution ensuring presence on the Internet in a fast and simple manner, until having an online shop, and also including advertising products and services via the Internet, advice on positioning in search engines… It has been carried out in two phases, with the collaboration or registrars, and has resulted in the creation of more than 60,000 new websites.

UR **Universitarios en red**
University students on the Internet (www.universitariosenred.es) is an initiative of red.es to make Internet connection, mobility and the use of ICT and .ES domains easier for university students. This campaign is being carried out from October 2009 until 31 January 2010. The offer consists of a laptop computer or netbook with internet connection and a personalised .ES domain, offered at an exceptional price, which can be financed through the Avanza Loans for Young People and University Students.

Other actions
Red.es has also launched specific campaigns to promote .ES domain names among SOHOs and companies, as well as among local governments (red.es subsidised the registration of domain names under ".es" over two years and added-value internet services over one year – uptake: 70% of towns). Red.es has also collaborated, through some accredited registrars, on a project by the Spanish Government to promote the use of the Internet by newly created companies. At the end of the administrative process, the new company is offered the possibility to register a .ES domain name, and get value-added services. Red.es has now launched a contest to choose the best .ES websites in different categories.

.ES dissemination campaigns

In recent years, different communication campaigns have been carried out to promote .ES as a quality domain, and to encourage the use of the domain as an element of digital presence on the Internet, through e-mail, blogs, etc. (www.mimailalosreyesmagos.es, www.tusvacacion.es…)

All these activities show that Red.es considers .ES not only a necessary resource for the good functioning of the Internet in Spain, but also an element it can rely on to promote the use of the Internet.

The .eu domain, multilingualism and IDNs

By Giovanni Seppia, External Relations Manager, EURid

With 27 countries and 23 languages, the European Union is a true melting pot of cultural diversity. When Member States join the European Union, they stipulate which language or languages they would like to have declared official. The EU is founded on the principle of diversity of cultures, customs and beliefs, safeguarded by the Treaty of Lisbon, signed by the Head of State or Government of all the EU Member States in December 2007.

As an expression of all that cultural diversity joined together in a common goal, the .eu domain has become an icon of European identity. In only a few years, .eu has around three million registered domains. It helps European citizens express themselves on the net with a tailored and trustworthy extension. EURid, the registry manager, has proven itself able to run customer service in 23 languages, to be one of the top leaders in the field of business continuity, to look for innovative solutions both at the technical and customer support levels and to regularly seek out opportunities to excel in the registry business.

The aspect of cultural and language diversity under .eu is taken into account by the European Commission regulation, (EC) 874-2004, which states that "The Registry shall perform the registration of domain names in all the alphabetic characters of the official languages when adequate international standards become available." This has been recently amended by (EC) 560-2009, which made the necessary regulatory changes to launch IDNs under .eu.

Commenting on the adoption of the new regulation, Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Information Society and Media, said "Three years after its launch, .eu has become the valued option for an increasing number of businesses and citizens who want to choose a European Internet identity. Opting for .eu is a very simple way for businesses to show that they are established in one of the 27 EU countries and subject to the high standards of EU legislation, particularly when it comes to data protection, consumer rules or the EU's financial market

regulation. It is only natural then that the domain names chosen by Europeans be permitted to be as diverse as Europe itself. This is why we have decided that .eu should become available in all alphabets used in the Member States and allow for all characters used in the 23 official languages of the European Union."

The process for introducing IDNs under .eu started two years ago with several consultation mechanisms, including an IDNs Advisory Board, a survey at CENTR members' level and a public survey, which was available in 20 languages and saw the participation of 430 stakeholders. It was essential for EURid to try to accommodate as much stakeholder input as possible.

The countdown to IDNs under .eu has started with the official launch date set for 10 December 2009. The list of the supported scripts was published on the www.eurid.eu site on 10 September, together with a set of rules and procedures which will provide the framework to this new development. The data that EURid collected show that IDN registrations should have a limited impact on the registration volume in the long-term, as the percentage of IDNs registrations in most of the registries that are offering them is less than 5% of the total number of registered domains. However, the impact IDNs will have on the development of a multilingual Internet remains an open question.

ICANN recently released the final implementation plan for the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process, another important step at making the Internet equally accessible for everyone. Users will be able to obtain a domain name with the entire string in characters from their native language. Exactly how major the impact of this feature will be is still unknown, but it is likely that this will be a hit in several countries, leading to direct benefits for their communities.

In the meanwhile, we do believe that IDNs under .eu represent a significant milestone in the process towards an enlarged, multilingual, online European community and to achieving the goals of multiculturalism and diversity which were behind the European Union's decision to create the .eu domain.

About CENTR

CENTR is an association of Internet Country Code Top Level Domain Registries such as .uk in the United Kingdom and .es in Spain. Full Membership is open to organisations managing an ISO 3166-1 country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registry.
CENTR has over 50 members which account for over 85% of the country code domain registrations world wide.

CENTR secretariat

The CENTR secretariat is based in Brussels and consists of Eveline De Waele (Office Manager), Wim Degezelle (Communications Manager) and Peter Van Roste (General Manager). For further information on CENTR's mission or membership, you can visit our website www.centr.org or contact us at secretariat@centr.org

Peter Van Roste
(General Manager)

Eveline De Waele
(Office Manager)

Wim Degezelle
(Communications Manager)

CENTR VZW/ASBL

Belliardstraat 20

1040 Brussels

Belgium

Tel : + 32 2 627 55 50

Fax : + 32 2 627 55 59

Email: secretariat@centr.org

www.centr.org

This publication is produced by CENTR, the Council of European National Top-Level-Domain Registries.
CENTR is a peak organization of registries that manage domains such as .de for Germany, and .no for Norway.
It meets regularly, providing a forum for knowledge sharing, as well as for developing common positions amongst its members. It is operated by a small secretariat, which works on CENTR's projects, as well as attending international forums on behalf of its members. Membership in CENTR is open to any operators of a top level domains, ccTLDs. CENTR counts amongst its members registries from around the world, together responsible for over 85% of the world's domains.

Forthcoming Meetings

15-18 November 2009	4th IGF meeting, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt
2 December 2009	**CENTR 10th anniversary, Brussels, Belgium**

2010

21-22 January 2010	10th ICANN Studienkreis, Barcelona, Spain
1-2 February 2010	Domain Pulse 2010, Luzern, Switzerland
3 February 2010	**31st CENTR Legal and Regulatory Workshop, Luzern, Switzerland**
3 February 2010	**19th CENTR Administrative Workshop, Luzern, Switzerland**
25-26 February 2010	**41st CENTR General Assembly / 2010 AGM, Warsaw, Poland**
07-12 March 2010	ICANN meeting, Nairobi, Kenya
21-26 March 2010	77th IETF Meeting, Anaheim, USA
May 2010	**32nd CENTR Legal and Regulatory Workshop, Washington DC, USA**
02 May 2010	**22nd CENTR Technical Workshop, Prague, Czech Republic**
3-7 May 2010	RIPE 60, Prague, Czech Republic
19-20 May 2010	**32nd CENTR Legal and Regulatory Workshop, Washington DC, USA**
2 June 2010	**20th CENTR Administrative Workshop, Dublin, Ireland**
3-4 June 2010	**42nd CENTR General Assembly, Dublin, Ireland**
20-26 June 2010	ICANN Meeting, Brussels, Belgium
25-30 July 2010	78th IETF Meeting, Maastricht, Netherlands
September/October	**33rd CENTR Legal and Regulatory Workshop, Paris, France** **21st CENTR Administrative Workshop**
7-8 October 2010	**43rd CENTR General Assembly, Brussels, Belgium**
7-12 November 2010	79th IETF Meeting
14 November 2010	**23rd CENTR Technical Workshop, Prague, Czech Republic**
15-19 November 2010	RIPE 61, Rome, Italy

visit our website at
www.centr.org