CENTR news

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Current affairs, news and articles from
European Country Code Top Level Domain Registries

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IANA stewardship transition: Let's make it work for ccTLDs

Martin Boyle speaks about the IANA stewardship transition in terms of where the work is up to and how to get involved

Much discussion has followed the US government statement in March on its intention to transition its IANA stewardship role to the global multi-stakeholder community. Are we ready for these discussions? Do we know what "good" outcomes would look like?

The Structures

The IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group (ICG) coordinates the development of the proposal for the transition. We expect the IANA customer groups to develop the proposals, working with other interested stakeholders. The ICG role is to:

• Act as liaison to interested parties in the IANA stewardship transition, including the "operational communities" (the "customers" for the IANA functions: names, numbers, protocol parameters). This task includes:

  - Soliciting proposals from the operational communities;

  - Soliciting the input of the broad group of communities affected by the IANA functions;

• Assess the outputs of the operational communities for compatibility and interoperability;

• Assemble a complete proposal for the transition; and

• Information sharing and public communication

The ICG is about to issue a request for proposals (RfP) to the operational communities (see here for a "mature" draft). Community proposals are expected to enjoy broad support from all interested parties. We would like each community to submit a single proposal for their interests.

For the **domain name** part of the IANA, a Cross-community Working Group on IANA Transition (CWG-IANA) will develop a community consensus proposal for gTLDs and ccTLDs is currently being set up. Active engagement in is work is vital if we are to ensure a solution that accommodates the diversity of the ccTLD community.

CENTR has a drafting group to identify what members might want from a new IANA stewardship model. The group prepared a draft focusing on what a good solution looks like: what are the principles that need to underpin the new stewardship arrangements? What are the risks for ccTLDs of failure and how might these be mitigated?

Timelines

• Applications to join the CWG-IANA are due **11 September**.
• The ICG deadline for proposals from the operational communities is **mid-January**.

The timescale is tight for a good reason! We need to provide a consensus proposal to NTIA in time for a decision in Sept or early October 2015.

How to engage

The **ICG** includes four members from the ccTLDs; Xiaodong Lee (.cn), Mary Uduma (.ng), Keith Davidson (.nz) and myself (Martin Boyle, .uk). We want to hear your input during the process. ICG documents are public and there is also an activities page available. I also intend to keep CENTR members up to date with the work via the CENTR GA mailing list and CENTR events.

The CWG-IANA call for ccTLD members is open until 11 September 23.59 UTC. Applications should be sent to ccNSOsecretariat@icann.org.   The Group's Charter is available (PDF) as well as the Call for Nominations (PDF).

The **CENTR IANA drafting group** will continue its work and we welcome engagement in this discussion: the mailing list is on iana-future@centrlists.org.

The IANA stewardship transition will be on the agenda at the CENTR General Assembly on 1 October and I am happy to take questions and welcome active engagement.

Article: Martin Boyle (Nominet)

New gTLDs: Is the jury *still* out?

New gTLDs (Generic Top Level Domains) now represent around 2 million registrations (based on around 337 unique strings). This reflects around 1.3% of all gTLD registrations globally and even less if you include ccTLDs - however to be fair, it's still early days. So how, if at all, can we get an indication of their relative success and impact on the domain market today and going forward?

Measuring Success

As the TLD market expands and business models are becoming more varied, using registration volume may no longer be the best measure of success. It does however still provide value when combined with other benchmarking information as it can provide indications of the general momentum and health of a new gTLD. Volume could also be argued a good measurement particularly in new gTLDs considering that many applicants are commercial businesses with focus on making a return on their investment – registration volume is arguably a strong driver to that return. Apples versus apples is important to consider here - consider for example a domain with wholesale price of $500 and another of $5.

Although many of the new gTLDs are still in early stages of their business cycles, others have been in general availability for several months now – the current top 10 (in terms of registrations) are below.

Top 10 new gTLD (28 Aug 2014)		
	Registrations	*Growth (30d)*
xyz	455,943	13.2%
berlin	137,262	0.5%
club	98,670	10.5%
guru	68,918	4.2%
wang	60,738	43.7%
photography	43,637	4.9%
email	38,626	6.6%
link	37,170	6.5%
公司 (xn--55qx5d)	35,917	NA

Given the above, one would be forgiven for being a little sceptical about the uptake of these new gTLDs especially when taking into account the probable influence of domainers, reserved registrations, parked domains and free registrations which all representing varying proportions within the zones. Most of the TLDs so far are 'bucket-like' in nature meaning they are not particularly defined to a specific group/community or have positioned themselves in a premium way.

Market Penetration

One noticeable stand out in the list is .berlin. It is the one gTLD with the most defined focus – the city of Berlin. In terms of market penetration (ie. domains divided by market base or population of Berlin in this case) its ratio, although small would most likely be the highest in the group. This is mainly because the others have such broad terms, their base is so huge (even impossible to calculate) their ratio would be insignificant and not bear comparison.
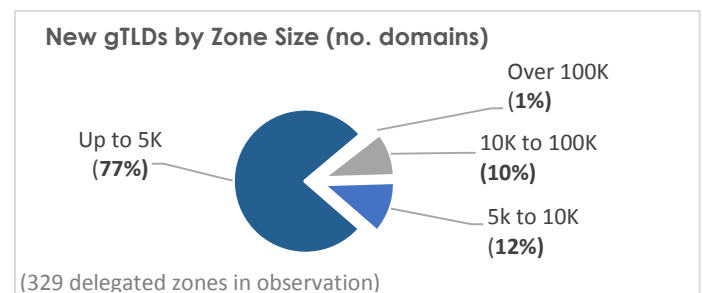
Having said this, .berlin may have a closer saturation point on registration volume given there are only so many potential registrants in Berlin. This situation is similar to the challenges faced by ccTLDs in that focusing only on a defined market will naturally create closer cap which in turn may hinder growth. This saturation is not such a bad thing however as it tends to focus the TLD operator on zone quality perhaps providing an edge when it comes to tough times and domain renewal cycles. At the recent Australian IGF the .melbourne applicant seemed to speak to this point stating they plan to position themselves as a 'premium' domain. This probably means higher prices (potentially reducing abuse) and some restrictions (geographic) as to who can register – both strategies will most likely ensure a higher quality zone file is maintained.

Relevancy over Volume

Back to the point earlier that volume is not everything – relevancy and usage are perhaps the best alternates (apart from financial) to measure health or success. If we assume that focus on zone quality does in fact help the TLDs health, it goes to say that those with well-defined and targeted strings may have better chances of longer term survival among the soon crowded landscape of gTLDs. ccTLDs are well positioned in this scenario as they are mostly trusted, well established and have clear and obvious target markets. Applying this rationale to new gTLDs might mean that geo TLDs might have a head start on the relevancy argument assuming they control their pricing and restrictions.

Conclusion

As seen below, most new gTLDs currently delegated have a zone size of less than 5,000 registrations. The top 10 largest new gTLDs (left) represent around 50% of all new gTLDs however they are growing positively. Although not all that impressive in volume, there is still time and many of the geo TLDs have not opened for general availability either.

New gTLDs by Zone Size (no. domains)

Over 100K (**1%**)
10K to 100K (**10%**)
5k to 10K (**12%**)
Up to 5K (**77%**)

(329 delegated zones in observation)

The 'success' of a new gTLD will also differ depending on who you talk to. If an applicant made their intended return on investment with 5000 defensively registered domains in their zone, then they might consider it a success – however it's hardly brought value to the internet.

The success question ultimately lies on whether a domain name exists to provide commercial gain or to serve a more practical purpose for internet users. Striking that balance may prove the greatest challenge to the new gTLD applicants.

This edition of the CENTR QnA we spoke to Sascha Kämpf who has been with DENIC (The Registry for .de) since 2001 and is Product Owner Registry Services - the team responsible for all services & applications available for DENIC's registrars. Given Sascha's extensive experience at DENIC, we asked a few questions in relation to his work, current topics and thoughts on the CENTR Administrative Working Group.

Tell us a little about what you do at DENIC?

I am the Product Owner of Registry Services. We are a DevOps-team involving software developers, software testers and operation engineers. In my role as product owner, I am responsible for the life cycle of all applications and services for our registrars and for the Internet community, including our registration system and whois servers. I am always ready to lend an ear to the wishes of all our registrars – no matter how large, medium or small. Together with my team I am shaping future innovative services tailored to the needs of our registrars, the Internet community and DENIC.

Have there been any particular career highlights with the .de Registry you could share?

I was involved in the introduction of IDNs back in 2004 and also the landrush of one and two-character domains in 2009.

Lately my team and I have been responsible for the design, implementation and launch of the redemption grace period for .de.

The introduction of IDNs in 2004 was a particularly exciting experience since we had to make sure all our software met internationalized requirements.

Since my first working day in 2001 I have come a long way: Starting with a technical perspective in the Hostmaster department up to providing second level support to the registrars as part of the Business Services team. In this position I was also involved in launching a ticketing system (OTRS) which allows us easy tracking of correspondence and many more features which the former system of plain, old-fashioned "Mail Folders" could not offer. I am also a training supervisor and so far have been responsible for the training of two apprentices.

As a regular participant to the CENTR Administrative workshops, how have you found the workshops' impact on your daily work?

Participation in the admin working group has always been very rewarding for me as presentations allowed me to see how other registries deal with similar problems. I also value the social networking and open discussions.

During the workshops I get a lot of ideas and feedback for my daily work and future projects which makes them even more valuable to me.

As newly appointed interim Chair of the CENTR Administrative Working Group, are there areas you plan to focus on?

I would like to see more collaboration in the working group and also interdisciplinary work among the other CENTR groups.

Registry Lock is a good topic where the Admin working group could help to create a standard for the ccTLD community. The CENTR workshop jamboree is a very good opportunity to look at such a topic from different angles.

I also hope for more interaction with participants in creating future agendas since the meetings should be interesting for all CENTR members.

We are all CENTR members and we all should put topics on the agenda that are of interest to us and that help the ccTLD community thrive.

The CENTR meetings should continue to be an open space where we all can discuss freely, share ideas, brainstorm, work together as well as have fun and return home with the feeling that the workshop was rewarding and valuable.

What are some of the current and future themes considered the most important to you in relation to your work at DENIC and the CENTR Administrative Working Group?

I am certain Registry Lock will remain a very important theme these next few months. A lot of registries are currently working on this feature's implementation and I am very interested to see how it will be accepted among registrars and registrants alike, despite different standards.

The launch of new gTLDs, especially geoTLDs, should be something we continuously monitor and particularly market share of geoTLDs vs. ccTLDs and the standards adopted by those other Registries.

Overall, it will be very exciting to see where the road will take us. Since starting work at DENIC a lot of things have changed and the domain industry is still a very fascinating place to be!

Q&A

with
Sascha
Kämpf

Product Owner
Registry Services
with DENIC

CENTR

Q&A

News & Blogs

New .at-report focuses on Security Domain hijacking, phishing and DNS spoofing are just some of the many risks the Domain Industry is facing. What threats Internet users are facing and what precautions Registries and Registrars can take in order to contribute to a stable and trustworthy World Wide Web you can read in the new .at-report

CZ.NIC Association introduce a new version of educational app for children with dyslexia At the website of the Google Play service, those interested will now also find two brand new games for practicing visual memory and attention training. Another update is the completely voice-recorded Encyclopedia.

Infographic: EURid compensates 2013 CO2 emissions EURid produced an infographic showing compensation of CO2 emission through wind turbine construction and the production of biodiesel from jatropha seeds.

IEDR Results Registration and Profit Increases in 2013 .ie Registry IEDR reported positive trading performance for 2013. Annual results show total volume growth of 17.6% in new .ie domain registrations and a 5.8% increase in profit

.nz directly at second level from 30 September All existing options like .co.nz, .org.nz and .govt.nz will continue to work as they always have and people will still be able to get names with them. What the change means is that from 1pm, 30 September 2014 people will be able to get names with them, without them or both.

Afnic launches sustainable development initiative We know the positive effects of the Internet in the fight against global warming (better remote management of energy costs, ability to reduce business travelling by using teleconferencing and telecommuting etc.), but what the internet "costs" in terms of greenhouse gas emissions is less well known. In that spirit, Afnic has decided to assess its carbon footprint.

IETF90 The latest IETF meeting was held in Toronto between 21-25 July. CENTR has published a detailed report on the meeting covering; Domain Name System Operations (DNSOP), an IANA plan working group, crypto standards, DANE working groups and more. Click on the report to open >>

Nominet produce "The Story of the Web" The World Wide Web has gone from "never heard of it" to "can't live without it" in 25 years. It took off because of its instant user appeal, but also because it's open and free. From HTML to hacktivism, the W3C to MP3s, lolcats to LulzSec, from one website to over 180 million, here are its defining moments.

Upcoming CENTR Events

Sep 10-11 2014
45th CENTR **Legal & Regulatory workshop** (Oslo)
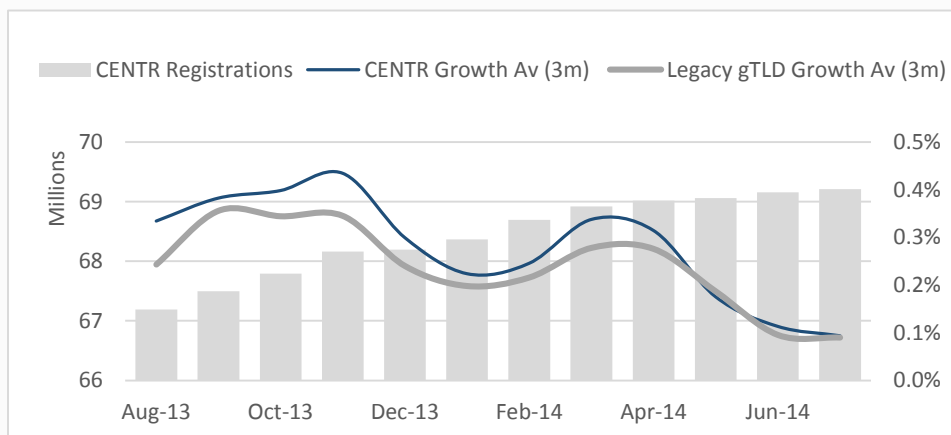
Sep 18, 2014
33rd CENTR **Administrative workshop** (Tallinn)

Sep 30, 2014
Open Day - Registrar Networking Event (Brussels)

1-2 October, 2014
52nd CENTR **General Assembly** (Brussels)

Legend: CENTR Registrations | CENTR Growth Av (3m) | Legacy gTLD Growth Av (3m)

Source: CENTR stat database, gTLDs: Hosterstats.com
Note: 'CENTR' members represent more than 95% of European ccTLDs in terms of domain registrations

CENTR Total Registrations

69,210,102

The average monthly growth (taken over the past 3 months) for combined CENTR members was 0.09%. Combined registrations over the past 12 months has been 3.28% net.

The highest percentage growth for July 2014 was .ir (Iran) at 1.5% and in net domains was .eu (European Union) adding over 20K domains .