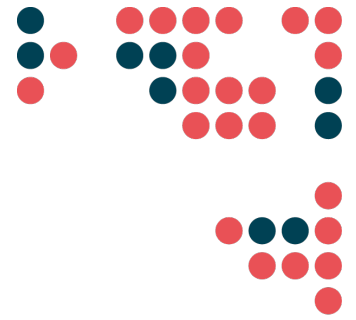




Council of European National
Top-Level Domain Registries

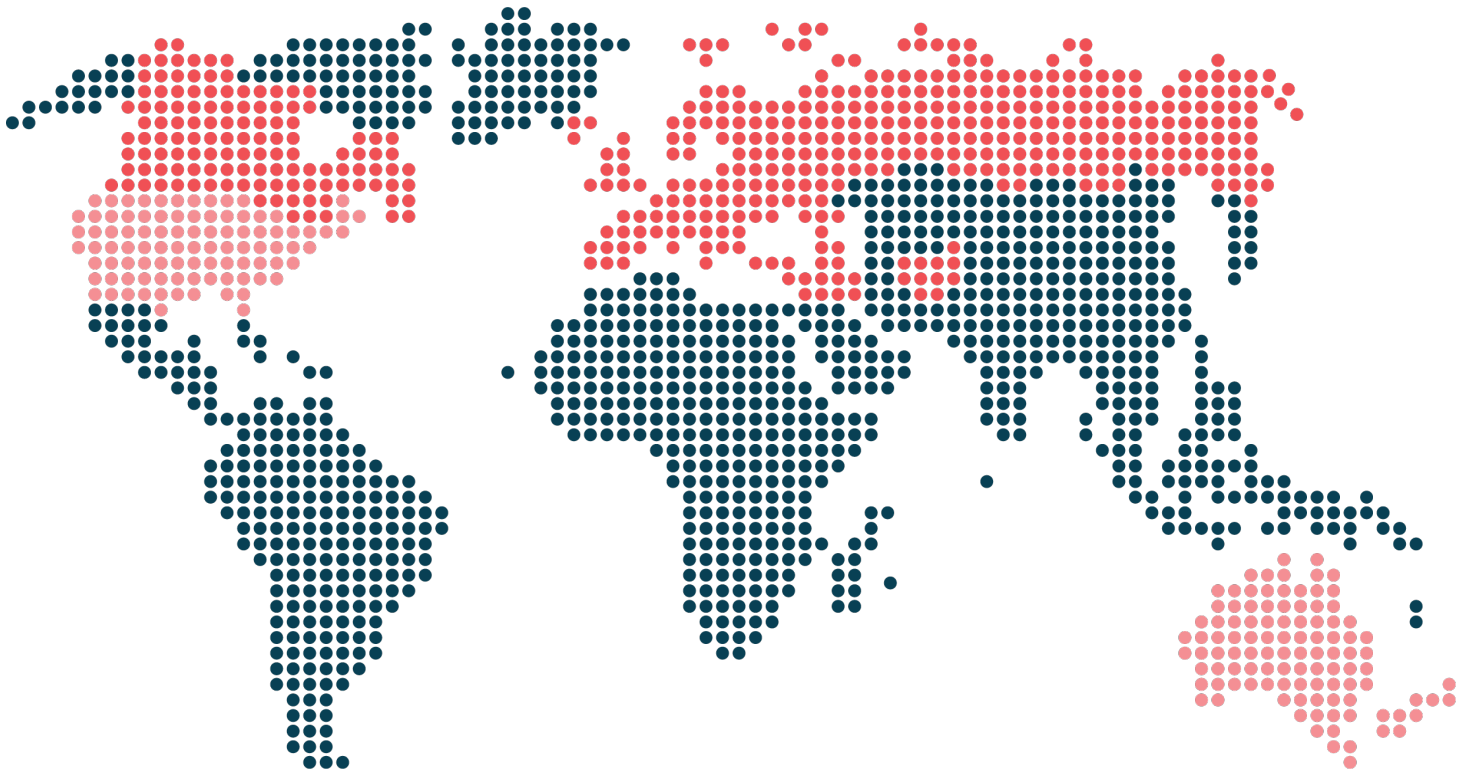


CENTRstats Global TLD Report is CENTR's quarterly publication covering status and trends in global top-level domains with a focus on European ccTLDs (country code top-level domains).

CENTR is the association of European country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries, such as .de for Germany or .si for Slovenia. CENTR currently counts 53 full and 9 associate members – together, they are responsible for over 80% of all registered country code domain names worldwide. The objectives of CENTR are to promote and participate in the development of high standards and best practices among ccTLD registries.

CENTRstats Global TLD Report

Q4 2020 – Edition 33



EUROPEAN ccTLDs

Key stats

- The median growth of European country-code domains (ccTLDs) in 2020 reached a 6-year high of 4.4% (CENTR30).
- Demand in new domain purchases peaked in November 2020 with an average increase of 27% year on year. Rates of domain deletions (or lapsed domains) decreased slightly, particularly toward the end of 2020.
- The median retail price for a European ccTLD domain is 10.8 EUR (ex-tax) for a 1 year registration. The price has remained stable over 2020 with just a small incline.
- The rate of 'high content' domains (domains that host functioning web pages and are not used for parking or have errors) is 44% for CENTR member ccTLDs¹.
- The median market share by local registrations is 64% in favour of the national ccTLD and 49% based on popular websites in each country's Alexa top 1000 websites².

Registrations and growth drivers

The median growth of European country-code domains (ccTLDs) in 2020 reached a 6-year high of 4.4% (CENTR30). The growth trend over the year was significant in that it is the first time since CENTR started formally recording data (2010) that such a sharp turnaround in the trajectory has been observed. The historic change was driven by two factors: an increased demand for new domains as well as reductions in the number of domains being deleted (whether from active deletes or expiries). Demand in new domain purchases peaked in November 2020 with an average increase of 27% year on year (CENTR30).

The underlying reason for the surges in demand is linked to lockdowns across Europe. As [reported](#) by CENTR,

lockdowns across Europe due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that for many small businesses, having a web presence was no longer considered as a bonus, but rather a tool for survival. The high demand also highlights the importance of country code domains to European businesses and citizens as a means of getting online. As lockdowns restricted the movement of people in a geographic sense, it is likely that the local focus of a country code domain may have been particularly appealing. A cake store moving from shop front to online for local deliveries would be wise to ensure they are easily identified as local – something a ccTLD can at least in part help achieve. This sort of local focus can be found in educational awareness activities from several country-code registries such as [.ie \(Ireland\)](#), [.fr \(France\)](#), [.ca \(Canada\)](#) among others.

Average retail prices (including any promotions) of the largest registrars³ of European ccTLDs shows no significant changes over 2020. This is important, as it implies the recent demand in domains is unlikely explained by price discounting.

How domains are being used

CENTR studies how domains are being used by scanning hundreds of thousands of member ccTLD domains as well as the top 100 largest gTLDs every month. For European ccTLDs, data shows 30% have errors (e.g. connection, DNS or HTTP errors), 26% are considered 'low content' (e.g. a registrar default page is shown, there is a 'for sale' message, etc) leaving 44% which we consider 'high content'. These figures will be important to track throughout 2021 as they may provide insight into how new domains purchased over 2020 have developed.

This data will become increasingly important for domain registries in understanding the sustainability and financial stability of their businesses. Registries with high rates of errors and low content domains in their zones may need

1 Domain usage data: Data from CENTR 'signs of life' domain crawler. Random samples of 50K domains across 12-14 ccTLDs and top 100 gTLDs each month.

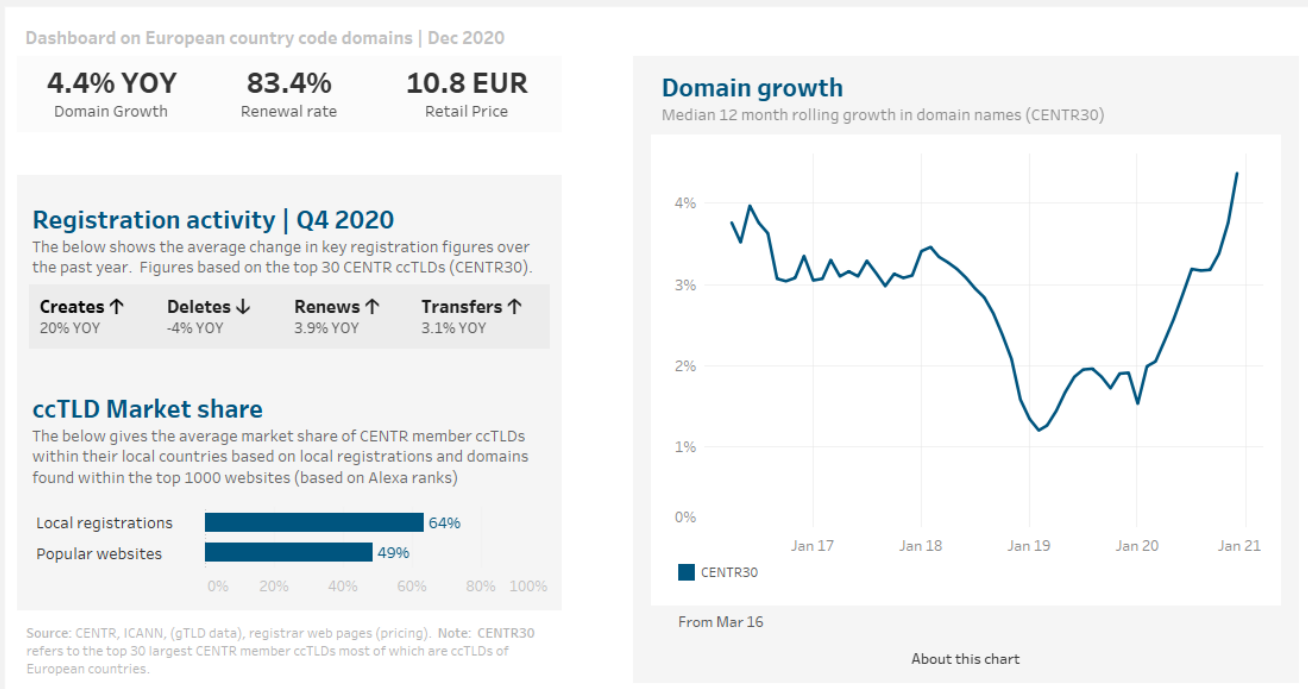
2 Alexa Rank is a rating service for evaluating websites, based on the frequency of visits/views. As many websites appear in the Alexa ranks of multiple countries, figures for Europe are based

on non-unique websites. For example, google.com is counted multiple times. This means that market share figures at European level reflect the true prevalence of different domains and TLDs across the region.

3 Based on the largest registrars of European ccTLDs. Data is scanned from websites quarterly.

to work harder in order to retain those domains. Conversely, TLDs with well used domains are better

prepared to deal with fluctuations and volatilities in the market.



GLOBAL MARKET

Global trends

At the end of Q3,2020, the global market was estimated at 352 million domains⁴ and split between ccTLDs (38%) and gTLDs (62%). Growth in domains has been trending up over 2020 most likely due to lockdowns which have increasingly pushed businesses online. The median growth of the top 300 largest TLDs globally (Global300) was 4.6% YOY. This compares to 2.3% for ccTLDs in the Asia Pacific region (APTL20), 3.2% for ccTLDs in Europe and 4.7% for the top 300 gTLDs (gTLD300).

Why was there not as much growth in Asia Pacific ccTLDs compared with Europe? There are several possible explanations for this. Firstly, we need to examine the countries in the sample. Most of them are found in South-East Asia, where there is a lower average internet penetration. With fewer people connected to the internet, there is less reliance on having a web presence (or a domain) for a business. If we accept that the higher demand for domains in Europe came from small businesses, it makes sense that demand in South-East Asia

may be less impacted. Another aspect is the prevalence of social media. In some parts of South-East Asia, social media usage is quite high, which could be another reason businesses do not feel the need to use their own domain names.

Among geographic gTLDs (geoTLDs) growth has been slow, with the group struggling to gain adoption in the cities and regional markets they are focused on. The median growth of the top 20 geoTLDs was just 0.2% year on year - which is well under the top 300 gTLD median of 4.6%. The median domains under management for this group is just 20,000, which is low when compared to population sizes of the cities and regions they are focused on. Despite the low registrations in geographic gTLDs, their average renewal rates are relatively high. Importantly data on how they are being used suggests a greater proportion of active websites compared to other gTLDs.

⁴ Total domains is estimated only as not all ccTLDs around the world release information on their domain name counts. The

total also specifically excludes .tk (Tokelau) as reported figures are not considered reliable.

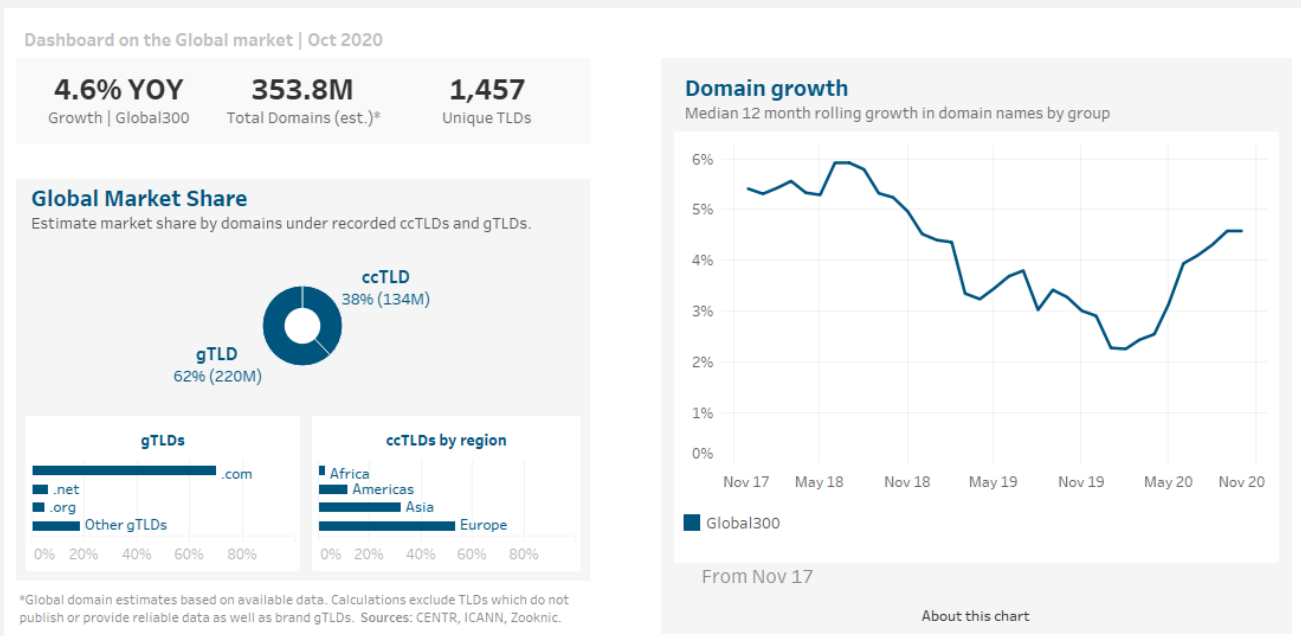
High growth TLDs over the 12 month period to September 2020 were5:

- ccTLDs: .id (Indonesia) up 40%, .cy (Cyprus) up 23% and .ar (Argentina) up 22%
- gTLDs: .bar up 1769% to 110,792 domains, .wang up 1157% to 1.3 million domains and .monster up 488% to 130,006 domains

gTLD highlights

- The top 10 largest gTLDs have a share of 91% of domains under all gTLDs with .com alone holding around 70%. This ratio has not changed much over the past few years.

- The gap between domains created and domains deleted has been quite close, which suggests a certain degree of speculation or low price campaigns. A particularly noticeable jump in deletions was observed around the second quarter of 2020.
- Over the top 100 gTLDs, 43% have errors (e.g. DNS or HTTP errors) and 33% are parked. This leaves 22% which are considered ‘high content’ ⁶. These figures are based on a sample of 50K from each of the top 100 gTLDs.



[View the interactive report](#)

⁵ Growth statistics exclude TLDs with fewer than 5000 domains at the beginning or end of the growth calculation

⁶ Data based on the CENTR ‘signs of life’ domain crawler using a random sample of 50,000 domains per gTLD.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

ccTLD registrations: CENTR member registries (European ccTLDs) and co-operation with APTLD (Asia Pacific region ccTLDs) and LACTLD (South America and Caribbean ccTLDs). Other ccTLDs supplemented by data from Zooknic. When data on a ccTLD is not reliable, meaning it is not updated from quarter to quarter, it is not included in growth calculations within this report.

gTLD registrations: ICANN (CZDS) and direct zone downloads with TLD operators.

Parking statistics (on new gTLDs only): <https://ntldstats.com/parking/tld>. Percentages expressed (parked domains as a proportion of total domains) are based on the total domain counts ntlldstats.com provides.

European country market share: geographic distribution of domain location (registrant) sourced from CENTR member registries (ccTLDs) and Zooknic (gTLDs). Market share averages at country level include domains registered from foreign European ccTLDs.

RATIOS USED IN THIS REPORT

The following are calculations for ratios used in this report. These ratios are calculated by CENTR on a monthly basis.

Add ratio: total adds over previous 12 months / total domains (current).

Delete ratio: total deletes over the previous 12 months / total domains (current)

Renewal rate: renews / (renews + deletes).

Park ratio: based on definition of parked domains at <https://ntldstats.com/parking/tld> as a proportion of total domains

Note that renewal, add and delete ratios for gTLDs have a 4-5-month lag in data. In most cases, total domains counts are recorded at the beginning of each month.

Exclusions in data – Some calculations in this report exclude TLDs with limited or unreliable data.

TERMS

ccTLD – a Country Code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) is a two-character top-level domain used and reserved for a country or independent territory. Examples include .uk for the United Kingdom or .de for Germany.

gTLD – a Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) is a 3-or-more-character string. Examples include .com, .org .club, .london

IDN – An Internationalised Domain Name is a domain that contains at least one label that is displayed in software applications, in whole or in part, in a language-specific script or alphabet, such as Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic, Tamil, Hebrew or the Latin alphabet-based characters with diacritics or ligatures, such as French (source: Wikipedia). A ccTLD IDN is an IDN at the top level – e.g., the ccTLD IDN for the Russian Federation is .PΦ, which is the Cyrillic script version of .ru.

Registrant – The individual or organisation that registers a specific domain name. A registrant holds the right to use that domain name for a specified period of time.

Registry – An internet domain name registry receives domain name information into a centralised database and transmits the information in internet zone files so that domain names can be found by users around the world via the web and email.

Market Share – TLD market share in European countries is calculated by using the locally registered domains under each TLD group (ccTLD, new gTLD, legacy gTLD) in over 30 European countries measured as a percentage of their sum (source: CENTR and ZookNic). Market share averages are calculated quarterly.

CENTR would like to thank the Regional Organisations (LACTLD, APTLD and AfTLD) for their continued support in the development of statistical reporting for the global ccTLD community. ccTLD data sourced by CENTR comes via direct automated communication with CENTR ccTLD members, CENTR surveys and other ongoing data collection.

ABOUT CENTR

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For any questions on this report, please contact patrick@centr.org

View the interactive report

