

.αθήνα | .cat | .中国 | .berlin | .上海 | .cym | .تونس | .nyc

GeoTLDs – Diversity, Multilingualism and Local Content

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This booklet contains a compilation of materials on GeoTLDs. The various articles were written by Werner Staub and Dirk Krischenowki. They are work in progress and may change frequently.

Editorial

Over the past couple of years, the concept of offering choice in domain names has become generally accepted. Users recognise that the ending of a domain name may express the community that the domain relates to, or the community that the registrant wishes to relate to.

In this context, the cultural, regional, local or linguistic community gains importance. A number of recent Top-Level Domains – the latest in this group is .asia – illustrate this trend. This trend combines naturally with the need to use one’s native script for domain names, including the ending of the domain name – whether it be on the right (in a left-to right writing system) or on the left (in a right-to-left writing system). Or, who knows, the top-level domain might eventually also appear the bottom: with a stylus on a handheld electronic device, writing top-to-bottom is more convenient, as it was 4000 years earlier on paper rolls. The use of Internationalized Domain Names on the Top Level (IDN.IDN) has become a key area of development. Along with it, the principle of using domains relating to a local, linguistic or cultural community offers unprecedented potential for Internet users.

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A number TLD registries and user initiatives have recognized this. China’s .cn registry has introduced .中国, which means China. Arab experts are working on the representation of their country top-level domains in Arabic. Korea’s .kr registry has introduced functional second-level domains for main cities, such as .seoul.kr or .busan.kr. The Catalan linguistic and cultural community launched .cat this year. A number of communities prepare projects for city and linguistic TLDs, such as .nyc, .berlin, .cym or .bzh. The list is growing because there is a need.

GeoTLDs – we explain the need to coin such a term in one of the articles – will be an important step for the development of the Internet, for its diversity, for fostering local content, for better understanding. We might put it as bluntly as this: Restricting the choice of vocabulary does not normally improve understanding. Extending the choice of vocabulary mostly does, even if it requires learning.

Werner Staub and Dirk Krischenowski

1. GeoTLDs – Diversity is Key

The 2004 new sTLD round brought about a new type of TLD in the form of .asia and .cat. As we always struggle for words to capture their nature, I call them “GeoTLDs”. Culture, language and ethnicity are also part of geography.

Contrary to ccTLDs, GeoTLDs do not have a territorial meaning. They are a wonderful addition to the Internet as they provide a way to demonstrate one’s commitment to a community that is not defined by borders, yet linked to where the individual chooses to be.

A number of language communities have come forward and describe the strings they propose. Have a look at .cym, .sco, .gal or .bzh. Other initiatives are regional, such as .lac, for cities, such as .berlin or .nyc. GeoTLDs will be a significant component of the next TLD introduction phase, I believe.

Will they be? They will, unless we do the wrong thing now.

Feed them to the speculators, or send them down the infinite loop?

Initially, the discussion in the GNSO PDP oscillated between these extremes.

One mistake would be to send GeoTLD applications to an infinite loop. And indeed, at the Wellington ICANN meeting, one proposal went as far as to say: “we cannot define any policy on place names”. That is the infinite loop. Who else will ever define a policy?

The other mistake would be hand them out to the cyber-real-estate developer with the deepest pockets. This was indeed implied in the first consensus for the first-come-first-served approach on the TLD level. Speculators can move swiftly, communities have to do their homework. Taken literally, first-come-first-served implies that the natural community of a Geo name wouldn’t have a chance against a speculator.

Emerging consensus? The TLD community matters

During the Amsterdam meeting of the GNSO council, significant progress was made to establish a relationship between the TLD string and its community—or its communities. The idea is to use the concept of community support. For the time being, this merely appears as a way to deal with contention.

Deriving the TLD requirements from the meaning of the string

Of course that is only a first attempt to find a wording. I believe that we should not look for a single generically phrased principle, across all types of TLDs. The criteria must depend on the meaning of the TLD string, at least in the case of GeoTLDs. It is obvious that an international city name cannot be subject to the same criteria as the name of a small town. Nor can the name of a large ethnic or cultural group be treated like the name of a domestic animal.

Dirk Krischenowski from dotBerlin and I have worked a bit on that approach. Rather than throwing all GeoTLDs in the same basket, we propose to look at the properties of each name. In the case of GeoTLDs, this leads to about half a dozen key properties. From each property,

it is relatively easy to derive the logical requirements. If a name matches more than one property, a TLD proposal to use it should obviously satisfy all the requirements.

As a by-product, the line that separates ccTLD-IDN from gTLD-IDN

The meaning-based approach also helps differentiate between gTLDs and ccTLDs in the case of IDN.IDN TLDs. A given IDN string may be a popular name or abbreviation for an ISO-3166 territory. If its meaning matches the territory, one can safely regard the string as an IDN equivalent of a ccTLD. How this should be handled is of course up to the relevant community, and logically subject to ccTLD principles. If the meaning is not congruent to that of a country code, then it can be treated as a gTLD that must satisfy the requirements linked to its meaning.

All this is to say that GeoTLDs have a big role to play thanks to their diversity. Diversity solves problems. We don't have to create it, it is there. We just have to take into account the meanings (mind the plural) of the TLD strings proposed.

2. GeoTLD Requirements

During the GNSP policy development process for new gTLDs, the use of geographical, geopolitical, ethnic and cultural names as TLDs has become an important subject of discussion. For the purpose of this discussion, we refer to them as "GeoTLDs" for short.

The purpose of this paper is to propose an evaluation methodology for Geo names. This initiative is based on the recognition that GeoTLDs are extremely valuable for the development of the Internet.

The increasing need for localization is one of the reasons why GeoTLDs will be important. Regional, cultural or linguistic communities can develop their use of the Internet through thanks to TLDs designed for their needs. At the same time, any TLD is highly visible the Internet community worldwide. The use of Geo TLDs has political, economic and cultural implications irrespective of the purpose of the TLD. A given community may have legitimate objections to the use of a name by another group. There are cases where more than one community has legitimate claim to a given Geo name for linguistic, cultural or historic reasons.

a) Rationale

TLDs based on Geo names have particularly high value because their meaning is clear to a large number of people who also consider themselves to be associated with the name.

On the other hand, it is not possible to design a taxonomy of TLD candidates in this respect. Currently, we have become accustomed to one type GeoTLDs, the ccTLDs. The ISO 3166-1 two-letter country code list provides a clear taxonomy of ccTLD candidates, but natural names do not offer this kind of consistency. A taxonomy is intrinsically a top-down approach. It is well suited when uniformity is a fundamental requirement. However, the very purpose of gTLDs is to enable diversity.

We therefore propose continue to build upon the principle that communities should be able to apply for the TLD of their choice as freely as possible. This is consistent with the bottom-up process practiced by ICANN up to now.

However, specific constraints are required for the use of Geo names as TLDs. Simple guidelines should be defined, both as a way to avoid abortive TLD projects and as a way to guide communities towards practicable proposals. These guidelines should be differentiated. One should only apply constraints that are really needed. Some types of Geo names call for requirements that are not needed for other names. We therefore propose a matrix of requirements based on the properties of a Geo name proposed for use as a TLD. The purpose of these requirements is to ensure that any TLDs based on Geo names are created and managed responsibly for the benefit of the underlying communities.

b) A Property/Requirement Matrix based on the Meanings of a Proposed TLD string

The analysis is on the intrinsic properties of the proposed TLD string.[1]

A given name string may have one or more properties listed. For each potential property, a given requirement is either applicable or not applicable. The requirements for a given string can thus be defined as those marked "applicable" for each line in the matrix that corresponds to a property of a given Geo name. In case a name has more than one property, a TLD proposal for that name would have to satisfy the criteria identified for each of the properties.

GeoTLD string		Applicability of requirements for a TLD based on string with that property:				
Property	Examples	String must be reserved for community designated by string	TLD organization must be rooted within community designated by string	TLD organization must be accountable to community designated by string	Sizeable homonym communities must be represented in TLD policy oversight	TLD to be created only if there is no objection from relevant national or local government(s)
The string is a language name (endonym or widely used exonym) [2]	"cymraeg" (endonym) or "welsh" (exonym) / "中文" (Chinese) / "romani" (Sinti and Romany)	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
The string corresponds to an ISO-639-2 three-letter language code [3]	"cym" (Welsh) / "zho" (Chinese) / "rom" (Romani) / "cat" (Catalan) / "sco" (Scots)	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
The string is widely understood to designate an ethnic community , culture or heritage [4]	"apache" / "xhosa" / "sapmi" / "bzh" (Brittany) / "gal" (Galicia)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The string is widely understood to designate a World City or Global City [5]	"東京" (Tokyo) / "berlin" / "nyc" (New York City) / "london" / "sãopaulo" or "paulista"	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
The string reflects the name of a Metropolis [6] [7]	"tunis" / "mumbai" / "osaka" / "hanover" / "melbourne"	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The string reflects the local name of a large city [8]	"york" / "syracuse" / "cartagena" / "napoli" / "sanjose" or "sanjose"	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The string reflects a widely used city code or acronym [9]	"bcn" / "lon" / "par" / "nyc" / "sfx"	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
The string designates a geopolitical region or territory [10]	"rhodos" / "asia" / "africa" / "lac" / "scandinavia"	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
The string designates a natural geographical object	"arctic" / "himalaya" / "sahara" / "gobi" / "rhine" or "rhein"	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
The string is a widely used name for a territory designated by an ISO-3166-1 code	"中国" (China, matches "cn") / "تونس" (Tunisia, matches "tn") / "türkiye" or "turkey" (match "tr")	application of ccTLD principles				

Evaluation Steps

The above matrix is proposes a set of additional requirements applicable to GeoTLDs. The general criteria for new TLDs are also applicable.

A number of the requirements listed above require an interaction with the community or the communities intrinsically related to the proposed TLD string. This is one of the cases where a pre-evaluation hearing would be useful. The application task force for a given proposed TLD could thus present the project and obtain input and advice from the ICANN community, the communities concerned with the string and from governments.

In order to clarify as many of the Geo name-related issues as early as possible, the standard TLD application form can include question as to whether (to the best knowledge of the applicant), their proposed TLD string has specific Geo name properties. This is also a good opportunity for the applicant to expand on how the applicant intends to fulfil the related requirements.

c) Conclusion

Applying uniform requirements without regard to intrinsic properties of a proposed TLD string would destroy the beneficial potential of geographical and cultural TLDs for the Internet.

In the same fashion, failure to any needed requirements for the sake of uniformity would be a destructive policy.

We believe that a viable approach consists in deriving the requirements from the meanings of a proposed string, taking to account the view of the communities who use the name.

While there are cases of natural contention between several communities for the a given name, the differentiated treatment also facilitates the finding of acceptable solutions to overcome contention.

References

1. This is to say that the properties of the string are looked at before the purpose of the TLD is looked at.
2. While the endonym - or one of the endonyms - is likely to be the choice of the a community proposing a language-name TLD, the well-known exonyms should not be available for use as unrelated TLDs.
3. The list is available on ISO 639-2. Two-letter language codes are not considered here as they would interfere with the ISO-3166-1 code space.
4. This category accounts for cases where language and ethnic group or culture are not referred to by the same word or do not designate the same community
5. This criterion limits the number of cases to several dozen based on GaWC Research Bulletin 5, Loughborough University, 28 July 1999)
6. "A full member is either a capital city or a city with more than one million inhabitants", City Mayors: Metropolis World Congress
7. "The United Nations has set up its own classifications scheme: a Big City is a locality with 500,000 or more inhabitants; a City is a locality with 100,000 or more inhabitants; an Urban Locality is a locality with 20,000 or more inhabitants; a Rural Locality is a locality with less than 20,000 inhabitants..." Sociumas magazine
8. As several large cities may have the same name, participation of homophone cities in TLD policy making facilitates productive use for all the communities. Many homonym cities already entertain special friendly ties between each other.
9. E.g. 3-letter IATA city code. N.B. City codes do not necessarily match airport codes, as in "lon" for London and "lhr" for London Heathrow airport.
10. This category covers regions or territories that do not correspond to an ISO-3166-1 code, including cases where they are bigger or smaller or overlap with several countries.

3. Practical Thoughts on GeoTLDs

Localization has become a major trend on the Internet. But as it progresses, we find even greater demand for more localization. This also applies to domain names. Advocates of local or regional communities and organisations with a cultural or linguistic purpose have come forward with projects to create TLDs for their own communities. I refer to this type of TLDs as GeoTLDs. They serve a local community and are a logical choice to develop for community and thanks to the community. GeoTLDs will enrich the DNS in a way the ccTLDs have influenced the DNS and Internet in the last two decades.

The creation of a TLD has economic, cultural and sometimes political implications. It is therefore necessary to have guidelines for GeoTLDs comparable to those in place for country-code TLDs (ccTLDs). The guidelines must establish a balance between need to protect communities' legitimate rights related to names and the need to minimize barriers for the development of the Internet.

The purpose of this paper is to show that TLD strings with a geographical, cultural or linguistic meaning can and should be approved by ICANN if minimal requirements are met. These can be specified along the following lines:

- The TLD is relevant and meaningful to the concerned community
- The TLD applicant fulfils certain criteria linked to the meaning of the string (see: "GeoTLDs - Requirements Depend on ...")
- The TLD application complies with laws of the relevant government(s)
- The TLD is applied for in good faith with respect to other potential TLD applicants

a) The Internet goes local

When the Internet became popular, it was seen as a gateway to the world. Today, it becomes relevant within local communities. Although companies worldwide generate significant revenues on the Internet, user attitudes have changed remarkably in recent years. The focus shifted from global products and services to interacting with local consumers, businesses and organizations.

This trend comes from users' daily lives, which, inevitably, are generally linked to the local environment. "Local" means interaction within a certain area and in the framework of a specific culture and language. Various studies show that 90 percent of people's daily life happens within a radius of 12 miles, 80 percent of couples getting married live in a circle of 7 miles and employees drive in average max. 30 miles to their work.

The major players on the global Internet have identified this development. They have already implemented local strategies to broaden their reach and to safeguard future markets. Locally focused community portals, local Yellow Pages, local Internet marketing and local search have become a reality in the last few years.

In this context, TLDs for local and community purposes have a role to play.

b) Why do we need to agree on guidelines now?

Communities whose identity based on language, culture or urbanity are not served by the global gTLDs and the national ccTLDs. As of today the only visible and serious prospects for new TLDs are communities who derive from these backgrounds. These include:

- .SCO – The Scottish culture and language community (www.dotsco.org)
- .CYM – The Welsh culture and language community (www.dotcym.org)
- .BZH – The Brittany culture and language community (bzh.geobreizh.com)
- .GAL – The Galician Community (www.puntogal.org)
- .LAC – The Latin American Community (www.lacnic.net)
- .NYC – New York City community (www.cb3qn.nyc.gov/page/33828)
- .BERLIN – Berlin community (www.dotberlin.de)

To serve the global Internet community with these TLDs, we must ensure that GeoTLDs are delegated to reliable registries that are accountable and responsive to the relevant communities. Potential GeoTLD strings must not become victims of misuse and speculation. This is why we cannot just wait until ICANN published the new gTLD applications received.

At the same time, the guidelines must be such that GeoTLDs are not discouraged.

If we get it right, TLD strings based on geographical, geopolitical, ethnic and cultural communities will greatly contribute to the development of the Internet.

c) Subsidiarity - a key principle for geoTLDs

The Oxford English Dictionary defines subsidiarity as the idea that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

The principle of subsidiarity logically applies to GeoTLDs. It currently characterizes the relationship between ICANN and ccTLDs, as well the relationship of many national governments to the respective ccTLD.

Whenever possible, a policy for a GeoTLD should be set locally in the respective local community. Only policies that have substantial effects outside of the TLD community should be established in an international framework, such as the ICANN process.

The principle subsidiarity is likely to be observed in GeoTLD registries' relationship with relevant authorities. Most of the GeoTLDs policy issues are local within the community and should therefore be addressed by the local community and according to relevant laws. In almost all the forthcoming new Geo Name applications it's the Internet community that will apply and not a geographical region or a political body.

d) Safeguards against inappropriate use of geo strings as TLDs

The intrinsic value of geo strings implies that there is a danger of misuse. A speculator might intend to use one or several geo TLDs in total disregard for rights and needs of the communities just to maximise profit. There may also be attempts to hoard geo TLDs for future re-sale to the underlying community - a form of cybersquatting on TLD level.

Geo TLDs should be community-oriented. But unless there are safeguards, communities are at a disadvantage against speculators. To prepare a TLD application, communities need public debate. Their activities cannot be treated confidentially, as the community needs to participate and the sponsor has to fund sufficient support and resources in the public.

Here are some examples of conceivable cases of foreseeable manipulation attempts - or defence against manipulation attempts - with GeoTLD strings:

- Speculative application for a TLD string to shake an eligible applicant down
- Speculative application for a recognisable geo string, but purporting to have a different purpose
- To prevent a speculative application, a local authority is forced to send in an ill-prepared application for a TLD without the support of the community

In both cases, be it speculation or panic to prevent speculation, the potential of the geo string is squandered. Here are two proposed measures to avoid this kind of destruction.

1. Pre-evaluation of applications

An adequate mechanism could be a pre-evaluation of applications by a standing pre-evaluation committee, for instance by designated people from ICANN, GAC and GNSO. Pre-evaluation is nothing new, it is widely and successfully used in major industries, for instance frequently in the pharmaceutical industry, where pre-evaluation hearings take place before authorities recommend the filing of the application for a new pharmaceutical drug. The TLD process could copy and leverage these well established mechanisms.

Main purposes of the pre-evaluation are

- to increase the quality of the final application
- to give TLD applicants consulting for the application
- to prevent misuse and speculative TLD applications
- to give ICANN more certainty in planning resources for the next TLD evaluation round

Note: The pre-evaluation is not a pre-approval and it is voluntary. Details about the TLD pre-evaluation can be found in other documents we issued.

2. Fulfilment of certain criteria

In this case the applicant for a GeoTLD should be able to answer the following questions with a well-founded “Yes”:

1. Is the proposed TLD string appropriate for a Geo Name, as shown by the following criteria?

- a. The TLD string is relevant to Internet users of the community, because it's a recognisable name, abbreviation, or signification of the community.
- b. The proposed TLD string addresses the needs and interests of the people making up the community.
- c. The TLD string does not harm the DNS in any technically way.
- d. The TLD string does not confuse users typographically or visually, e.g. by mixed IDNs, numbers, punctuations or mistakable letters.
- e. The TLD string is not confusingly similar or close to existing TLD strings in matters of letters and proposed use.
- f. The TLD string does not obviously offend third parties.
- g. The TLD string is not obviously designed for bad faith or illegal use.
- h. The TLD string is not part of a potentially speculative TLD mass application.
- i. The TLD string has a reasonable support of the respective community.

2. Is the applicant's organisation appropriate to operate the proposed TLD string as registry?

- a. The TLD applicant demonstrates a reasonable and adequate support of the community for the applicant's organisation and for the policy-making process.
- b. The TLD applicant represents a wide range and major members of the community.
- c. The TLD applicant demonstrates reasonable and adequate participation of the community in the TLD application and the applicant's organisation.
- d. The TLD applicant has made a significant portion of the community aware of the TLD application.
- e. The TLD applicant's organisation is headquartered in the main geographical area of the community?

3. Are other community-relevant criteria fulfilled?

- a. The intended community is clearly definable and clearly defined by the TLD applicant.
- b. The TLD applicant shows to act in good faith/bona fide in the interest of the community.
- c. The TLD applicant has established a reasonable policy-making body with outreach in the respective community.
- d. The TLD applicant has established a charter by which relevant second level domains (SLDs) for the respective authorities, administration, institutions and other important community organisations could be delegated and get special protection against misuse.
- e. The TLD applicant has a sound business plan which has been positively evaluated by an independent auditor.

e) In the case there is more than one community which could use the TLD string

If significant groups making up a community are spread over different regions or countries, the most important conglomerations or centers of the community should be seen as home of that community. This is for instance the case if there are two or more sizeable communities which are interested in the same string or obviously already use the same string in their communication.

It should be up to the applicant to show that not only the interests of the community that applies are reflected but also appropriately the interests of other communities with the same name. Ideally the most important other communities with the same name also support the application. In case the applicant cannot show active support of other communities with the same name, for instance if they are too small to maintain a regular communication or don't see an opportunity in a TLD, the applicant has at least to show that he has tried to establish a regular communication with the communities.

f) Importance of local legislation and governments

The approval of GeoTLDs should incorporate relevant national and local legislation of the applicants' home region(s). In many countries the operation of TLDs is not regulated by governmental authorities and is therefore delegated to the private sector, in some countries TLDs can only be operated if governmental authorities are involved. In any case ICANN or GAC decisions should not over-regulate or overrule the respective legislation.

As a multi-stakeholder approach also should incorporate the consulting with relevant governmental parties, the applicant must show that he has

- informed the relevant governments timely about his initiative
- established a regular communication with the relevant governments
- consulted the relevant governments on various questions
- given representatives of the relevant governments the possibility to interact with the applicants organisation on an organisational basis, e.g. as a board member or a patronage
- reserved relevant SLD strings for the use of governments

In principle it's a good idea that ICANN or the TLD applicant asks the relevant governmental authorities about their opinion on the TLD application and the applicants organisation. But as governments are driven by political forces of the governing political parties their opinion can change over time depending on elections or political trends, as seen with the applications of .cat and .asia. Therefore the relevant governmental authorities should only have a veto against the TLD application if national or local legislation assign the operation and management of a TLD clearly to public bodies.

g) GeoTLDs and ICANN in Germany – A legal case study

According to leading telecommunication, trademark and other law experts in Germany (Prof. Koenig/Prof. Holznagel/Prof. Hoeren etc.) the administration of TLDs like .berlin, .köl (Cologne) or .bayern (Bavaria) by private sector entities or entities of the local Internet community complies with the national legal requirements.

Telecommunication legislative

Domains and TLDs are considered „numbers“ under German’s Telecommunications Act. In principle, all regulatory functions related to numbering are in the field of responsibility of the German Federal Regulatory Authority for Telecommunication affairs, the so called Federal Network Agency (“Bundesnetzagentur für Elektrizität, Gas, Telekommunikation, Post und Eisenbahnen”). According to Section 66 (1) 4 of the German Telecommunications Act (Telekommunikationsgesetz TKG), the administration of domains and TLDs is explicitly exempt from the responsibilities of the Federal Network Agency. Thus, the German Legislator has deliberately left the management of TLDs as a whole to the self-regulatory bodies of the private sector and the Internet Community. Neither the German Regulatory Authority, nor the Federal German Government or Berlin’s State Government are therefore competent for the creation of new TLDs or the allocation of concrete domains or TLDs.

Constitutional legislative

Any economic activity falls within the area of protection of constitutional rights. The administration of TLDs by the private sector is subject to the area of protection of the occupational freedom according to Article 12 (1) of the German Basic Constitutional Law (Grundgesetz). This means that any economic activity is allowed as long as there is no opposing legal provision, which itself has to comply with the constitution. Consequently, anyone is free to administer TLDs, if this is done in compliance with general legal requirements.

Public interests with regard to the prohibition of a private administration of a certain name space have to be put in an adequate relation to the legitimate interests of concerned registry organisation. It is not appropriate to schematically apply the requirements which have been devised with regard to typical rules for the practice of an occupation.

The market for the administration of TLDs is extremely small. The chance to administer a certain name space is therefore of essential importance for the registry operator. In its practical consequences, a prohibition would come close to a regulation concerning the choice of occupation.

The interests of a registry operator regarding the private administration of a certain TLD outweigh the competing public interests. This is due to the fact that, ultimately, the access to the market for the administration of TLDs is at stake for the registry operator on the one hand, while the competing public interests are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty and a not particularly high relevance for the common good, on the other. A prohibition therefore would be unconstitutional.

Trademark legislative

Both, the City and the State Berlin have a right in the name “Berlin” under German laws. These rights can also be enforced as regards the choice of Second-Level-Domains according to former court rulings (e.g. Heidelberg.de). Contrarily, the use of names as TLD’s cannot be prevented on the basis of rights to a name, if the TLD is used as a label of geographic origin and provided that the respective local and national governments are offered the opportunity to

reserve or block Second-Level-Domains within the TLD-Zone prior to their public allocation (e.g. Senate.berlin, Bundestag.berlin).

A name is only unlawfully arrogated when the interests of its holder are violated. The addressed part of the public therefore would have to assume that there is a direct or indirect connection between the TLD and a certain governmental authority. In contrast, section 12 of the German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch) does not protect the holder of a name against other uses of this name which do not lead to a confusion of correlation.

TLDs do not indicate the service or web site of an individual. They rather identify respectively constitute name spaces. The relevant part of the public does not expect a governmental administration of TLDs (see .de). As a consequence, a local TLD like .berlin will not lead to a confusion of correlation with regard to the federal capital of Berlin.

The federal capital does not enjoy a legal protection against a dilution of its name that goes beyond the danger of confusion. The German Trade Mark Act (Markengesetz) accepts third parties' – fair – use of city names.

ICANN

As in the case of .cat and .asia, ICANN asked the respective governments whether they have objections against the creation of a TLD name at the end of the application procedure. An interesting question is what the Federal Government respectively the Local Government have to or may answer if ICANN asks whether they have any objections against a TLD.

According to the so called GAC Principles for ccTLDs, which have been issued by the Governmental Advisory Committee, ICANN should avoid amongst others in the creation of any new generic TLDs well known and famous country, territory or place names as well as well known and famous country, territory or regional language or people descriptions unless in agreement with the relevant governments or public authorities. This provision is however not legally binding ICANN but constitutes a mere recommendation. Moreover, Art. 11 sec. 2 lit. j and k of ICANN's Bylaws explicitly allow ICANN to diverge from the GAC Principles. In this case, ICANN is solely obliged to state reasonable arguments in their decision. Such arguments, which justify a diverging decision of ICANN, can be identified as regarding local TLDs like .berlin, .münchen or .bayern. ICANN is therefore able to introduce local TLDs even without the consent of the relevant German governments or other public authorities.

Even a mere factual conduct, like the issue of a statement to ICANN, may be a restriction of a constitutional right and must therefore comply with the constitutional requirements for such a restriction.

Under certain circumstances, a governmental conduct can be assessed as a restriction of a constitutional right just because of its factual impact. For example, this is the case if the conduct in question influences a third party in a way that this third party constrains the exercise of a constitutional right.

A governmental statement to ICANN has to be neutral and impartial. It would neither be allowed to claim an exclusive right to the use of a name nor the requirement of a governmental administration.

If the issue of a statement is a restriction of a constitutional right only depends on the question whether the statement is in principle suited to keep ICANN from assigning the administration of the name space to the applying entity. Under the assumption that a mere „political“ statement has a similar meaning to ICANN as a „legal“ statement, even a „politically“ dismissive attitude would constitute a restriction of a constitutional right.

With regard to constitutional law, a dismissive statement to ICANN has to be assessed just like a legal prohibition or a governmental administration of the respective name space.

4. Benefits of GeoTLDs

The introduction of a TLD is a small technical step but it can be a measure that encompasses and affects various human, political, cultural, social, and economic aspects in people's daily life worldwide. Therefore the question should be answered which benefits a TLD based on a Geo name will offer to the respective community and the Internet community at large.

a) GeoTLDs are of public interest

Of public interest are things and by this TLDs, which directly serve the interests of the general public in a substantial, intellectual and moral area and lead to added value for the community. GeoTLDs fulfil these criteria in multiple ways because they,

- create relevant and long-term attention for the community, not only on the Internet, and thereby strengthen the image and branding of the community,
- safeguard the community's competitiveness against other communities in relation for instance to resources,
- support the community's identity and corporate feeling even if the community is geographically spread,
- increase communicative plurality on the Internet by giving even small communities a voice,
- create virtual namespace for expression of the manifold interests of the community.

b) GeoTLDs offer multiple benefits to the respective communities

Since domains and TLDs have been issued they have been used as a clear identifier by individuals, communities, projects or businesses and others. Although the current Domain Name System (DNS) potentially offers names for all each entity or individual wants to have an identifier which is close to him. Similar to number plates, many want to get a number plate with their name, nickname or at least initials on it. The same applies to domains; everyone wants to have a domain which is short, suitable, memorable and descriptive. This covers the second level as well as the top level. For most local communities the gTLDs are too generic and too global, and the ccTLDs are too national, but GeoTLDs and the respective second level domains offer a virtual identity which addresses this demand in a perfect way and is a complementary choice to them. By a GeoTLD communities will benefit in multiple ways:

- *Individual Name Space* - The limited number of TLDs and domains within some TLDs has created weird competition. Growing numbers of disputes are one of the clues that existing ccTLDs and gTLDs are not sufficient to differentiate between 6 billion individuals, some hundred million organisations and thousands of local communities worldwide. GeoTLDs will calm this competition down, since new and suitable SLD/TLD combinations will be available with them.
- *Intuitive and semantic usage* – GeoTLDs offer the opportunity to build a TLD with a solid fundament and framework. Due to the possibility to reserve and delegate domains for public and community interest, many important terms could become more intuitively accessible and semantically to use by a descriptive domain. Internet users will find things they are searching for easier on the net, for instance information and

interactive services from the local government, administration and institutions.

- *Strategic advantage* - Today local communities compete for human and economic resources nationally and internationally. An own GeoTLD raises explicit attention for the community, gives the community an independent voice and space for expression, and is also a long-term location factor in terms of Internet infrastructure.
- *Local economy* - GeoTLDs will stimulate e-commerce and revenues within the community, especially in areas in which the revenues are based on an national or international TLD so far (hotel.com vs. hotel.london).
- *Image and branding* - GeoTLDs will ease the marketing of the community to prospective residents, tourists, businesses and investors from all over the globe. Websites like jobs.cat, hotels.asia, and offices.london will make the communities resources intuitively and more readily accessible to the world.
- *Equality of opportunity* - GeoTLDs will establish a focal point for bringing the benefits of the information society to the local community and help combat the rise of a digital divide within and between rich and poor communities.
- *Clear differentiation* - GeoTLDs create a namespace which is clearly differentiated from others. For instance SLDs with the extension .berlin will be recognised worldwide by Internet users as space where information and services from Berlin, about Berlin or by Berliners is offered. Especially the full community name (if not too long) will foster a semantic understanding.
- *Learning curve* – Through local academic, educational and research organizations the local community and the global Internet community can learn to leverage the knowledge created by observing the GeoTLD in a scientific environment. This information will conduct a proof of concept on the efficiency of GeoTLDs, one that will provide ICANN with necessary information upon which to judge the validity of issuing additional GeoTLDs.
- *Geo name community* – Other locations worldwide with the same Geo name, even if small, will profit from the increased visibility of the Geo name (e.g. Sydney (Australia) and Sydney (Canada)).

c) GeoTLDs are identity of communities

For a community a GeoTLD is much more than technical infrastructure, it will be the community's identity on the Internet, although the identity of a community is quite difficult to describe and conceive. Identity is perceived by the entirety of all individuals and stakeholders, in the community and from outside. The identity can be based on a full name (e.g. in case of Maori), on an abbreviation (e.g. in case of NYC - New York City) or other significations (e.g. in case of BZH - Brittany).

The community's identity is a virtual phenomenon resulting from different perspectives like community's members mood, their personal experiences and satisfaction, quality of the community area, goals and values, pace, architecture, commerce, traffic, stories, community

identification, sense of cohesion, language, cultural heritage, and differing individually. By this the community's identity is multi-dimensional, there is not just one community identity, there are characters and personalities. Some of the identity attributes and properties develop slower (like cultural heritage) and some faster by adopting new influences more easily. Even a single event like a World Exhibition can be crucial to the community's identity.

GeoTLDs are likely to develop, move and unify the community's image and identity in many ways. One of the most important changes for the identity of the community will be the perceived identity by the community's individuals. If marketed to the heart of the population first and adopted by them in their daily lives, Geo Name TLDs are likely to trigger the development of identification and pride as well as corporate feeling, which are some of the most valuable changes in the mindset. Marketed to the world outside, GeoTLDs can create a product with a clear branding. Such brands help to build community's identity. Values perceived from outside for communities with an own TLD could comprise modern and traditional attitudes in conjunction: sustainability, diversity, openness, self-fulfilment, prospect, potential, and option.

5. GeoTLD Case Studies

There are a lot of silly, inadequate or undesirable application cases for new TLDs imaginable. But nearly all the cases have one thing in common which will make these application scenarios unlikely: The TLD applications will not meet the basic ICANN criteria to run a TLD. These criteria are realistic business, financial, technical, and operational plans and a sound analysis of market needs. In contrast the hypothetical example cases the authors invented should show which application cases and problems are likely and realistically to emerge in the future.

a) Clear cases in which a GeoTLD should be approved

.london

London is the capital city of England and of the United Kingdom, and is the most populous city in the European Union. An important settlement for nearly two millennia, London is an international leader in finance, and its involvement in politics, education, entertainment, fashion, media and the arts contribute to its status as a World City. London has an estimated population of 7.5 million and a metropolitan area population of between 12 and 14 million. Its inhabitants are very cosmopolitan, drawing from a diverse range of peoples, cultures and religions, speaking over 300 different languages and come from a broad range of geographic and ethnic backgrounds. Wikipedia defines the members of the London community, the Londoners, as people who inhabit or originate from London. The term Londoner is generally accepted as covering all people from Greater London.

.london could be a reasonable TLD for the community of Londoners and a natural complement to the *.uk* TLD which is the TLD of the community the United Kingdom. Laws in the United Kingdom defer the management of TLDs to the private sector. If the *.london* application fulfils the proposed criteria for both the string and the applicants' organisation, the TLD should be approved.

.αθήνα (.athens)

Athens is the capital and largest city of Greece and the birthplace of democracy. Named after goddess Athena, Athens is a cosmopolitan metropolis with a population of 3.7 million people. People in Athens speak Modern Greek which is distinctive from ancient forms of the Greek language and alphabet. Over 15 million people speak Modern Greek in Greece and Cyprus.

.αθήνα would fit best in the daily life of the Athens and Greek community since IDNs on the Second-Level are already introduced and used in Greece.

.東京 (.tokyo)

Although not a single city, the Tokyo metropolis is home to the Japanese government and emperor and is considered to be the capital of Japan. About 12 million people live in Tokyo, while about 33–36 million people live in the entire greater Tokyo area, making it part of the most populated urban area on earth. Tokyo is one of the 55 World Cities.

Although hardly to key in on a Latin character keyboard a .東京 TLD makes sense. The target market for a .東京 TLD would be the greater Tokyo area. The string .東京 would give the most meaning to the community and should be considered as TLD.

.sanjose / .sanjosé

There are besides other towns and counties two major cities with the name San José. One of them is San José, the capital city of Costa Rica with 310.000 inhabitants. The other big San Jose is in California, United States, and counts 910.000 inhabitants.

We propose that the applicant for a .sanjose / .sanjosé should show measures not to exclude people and entities from other regional authorities with the name San Jose or San José from registering domains.

.cym

The Welsh (Cymry) are an ethnic community associated with Wales and the Welsh language, which is a Celtic language. The ISO 639-2 codes are .wel and .cym. The string .cym is the endonym-based abbreviation and language code. The community has a size of nearly 1 million people. A TLD application for .cym should clearly be approved if the proposed TLD organisation is accountable to the Welsh language community. Conversely, neither .cym nor .wel should not be available for other purposes. The same applies of course to the full language names Cymraeg or Gymraeg or Welsh, and to the country name Cymru or Wales.

b) When is the community too small or too big?

.heidelberg

Heidelberg is a scenic city in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, halfway between Stuttgart and Frankfurt. As of 2005, 140,000 people live within the city's area. There's no significant suburban area. Heidelberg is a favourite touristic destination to US and Japanese visitors and is known by a number of United States Military installations in and around Heidelberg, including the Headquarters of the United States Army in Europe.

Without external or local government funding, it would be probably be difficult to present a feasible and sound business plan for .heidelberg. The community is clearly too small to raise significant domain registrations and generate enough revenues to pay back the application cost and the running TLD management costs. But if the applicant has community support and financial stability, ICANN could approve the TLD.

.africa

There are only a few possibilities left to designate a continent by a TLD string. The European Union has it .eu string and Asia is served by .asia.

One line of thought is to argue that .africa this string should only be approved if a supranational African organisation or an organisation which has support of most African nations and communities applies. This may be unrealistic.

The other line of thought is to apply the criteria that were used in the case of .asia, namely the absence of objections voiced by relevant governments.

c) Politically sensitive strings

There are a lot of communities worldwide with common roots in culture, language, territory or other heritage which claim to become an autonomous community or authority.

In the case of .cat and .asia, the principle used was to see if there were no objections from the relevant national governments. Of course the way in which the question is asked has some importance. There is a huge difference between a government stating that it supports TLD and a government stating that it has no objections. And there is also a big difference between not objecting (i.e. not sending a letter to ICANN) and officially stating there are no objections.

The most practical approach in this case is to publish applications and offer a challenge period. Once a government - or the GAC - has gone on record with objections or concerns, there is a reason to put the application (and the string) on hold until the controversy is settled.

d) Hypothetical cases in which a geoTLD should not be approved

.new@york / .東yo

TLD strings which potentially could harm security and stability with the DNS should not be allowed. These include pure numbers (confusing to IP-numbers), strings with mixed letters between different character sets and strings with symbols like @, \$ or .(points).

.py (cyrillic)

The cyrillic transliteration of the string .ru results in a string that matches .py, the ccTLD for Paraguay, .py.

This case can be handled by the principle that new TLDs should not be confusingly similar to existing TLDs.

It may be worthwhile going further and apply the principle that no two-letter IDN.IDN TLDs that may be visually confused with any two-letter Latin string should be introduced. The reason is that a new ISO-3166 codes may be introduced at a later stage.

e) Can three-letter strings be confusable with ccTLDs?

It can be argued that a new three-letter TLD could be confusable with a ccTLD because the difference resides in the omission or addition of a single letter.

In general there is no problem with TLD strings which differ only in one letter to existing ones. There are several examples where similar strings do not cause technical problems or confusion:

- *.co (ccTLD Columbia) / .com*

- .ne (ccTLD Niger) / .net
- .bi (ccTLD Belize) / .biz
- .in (ccTLD India) / info

f) Natural name collisions

Other than in the case of homonym cities, there are no so many obvious cases of natural name collisions. One of them is the name of Rom or Roma. The citizens of Rome are called Romani in Italian, as they were also called in Latin.

The endonym for the city of Rome is Roma. Not only is Rome a modern-day world city, but also the cultural root. In several languages Rome is called Rom.

Roma and some variants such as Rom or Rrom and Romani or Romany designate the Roma people and language, respectively. ISO 639-2 for Sinti and Romani language is "rom", although sometimes the subgroup codes from the Ethnologic classification are used (e.g. "rmy"). The Romany and Sinti, which are nomadic communities usually called "Gypsies" in English. Their communities are known in German and Dutch as Zigeuner and in Italian as Zingari. The community of romanies and sinti counts over 10 million people and includes heterogeneous ethnic groups who live primarily in Southern and Eastern Europe, Western Asia, Latin America, the southern part of the United States and the Middle East. They are believed to have originated mostly from the Rajasthan region of India.

A TLD for the Romany language could express the desire of the Romany and Sinti community to create a common namespace for their cultural and linguistic activities. Since the community is spread over various territories, there is no government which is charge of the community. If there's an application for .romani it is likely that the application would fulfil the proposed criteria for both the string and the applicants' organisation. In this case the TLD should be granted.

If both the city of Rome and representative organizations for the Romany people applied for a TLD, it would probably be easy to agree on two non-confusable strings, e.g. .roma for they city Rome and .rmy for the Romany language.

On the other hand the use of ".rom" by anyone would be a bad idea, as it could be too easily confused.

g) Offensive TLD strings

This danger can probable be best avoided through a simple principle, such as:

"A TLD must not be designed to offend, racially discriminate, incite to hatred or cause harm."

While the principle is simple, the interpretation of course requires skills. These are, however, precisely the skills that ICANN, the independent evaluators and the GAC must have.

Some geo strings could have be offensive. A hypothetical example is ".ostmark". This string would imply a Neo-Nazi view because (besides other, non-offensive meanings) the word was used by the Nazi regime to designate the territory of Austria. This string could offend many

people, and would potentially be used for bad faith purposes or illegal content. Such a TLD could be problematic and the exclusion of the string for TLD purposes could be based on the fact that it is deliberately designed to offend, while there is no recognizable ethnic or cultural community that would indeed want to identify itself with that word.

h) TLD-level cyber squatting

Depending on the details of the gTLD application process, a financially solid organization may simply send in a large number of applications for valuable strings. These are likely to be geo strings.

If the purpose of these applications appears to be the re-sale of the TLD to the respective communities, then the TLDs should not be granted. One could of course expect that such an applicant would be smart enough to disguise the cyber squatting intent. The positive aspect here is that a good "disguise" will inevitably push the applicant towards raising real community support. In other words, as long as the evaluators do make a credible analysis of community support, the speculators are motivated to use their capital in a way to support the communities.

6. GeoTLD Categories

This categorization should help identify which issues are limited to a certain category of Geo names (also called Place names or Toponyms). The authors claim that here are two categories of Geo names in general: Geo names with a geographical focus and geo names with ethnic focus. Note: a given name may match more than one.

a) Geo names with a Geographical Focus

1. Names based on geography

Geography is the study of the earth and its features and of the distribution of life on the earth, including human life and the effects of human activity. In the context of TLDs it is hardly possible to discuss geographical names without referring to the physical landscape on which human activities are being played out and in which humans and human communities exist. Therefore geographical names can be defined as names, abbreviations, or significations related to physical geographical conditions such as landscape, water or air.

- *Areas and Regions*

Areas and regions can be used to mean any considerable and connected part of a space or surface; specifically, a tract of land or sea of considerable but indefinite extent; a country; a territory; a district; in a broad sense, a place without special reference to location or extent but viewed as an entity for geographical, social or cultural reasons. The proper technique of space delimitation covers regionalization.

e.g. Caribe, Normandie, Langue d'Oc, Kansai, Middle East, Polar, Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW)

- *Natural Objects*

Typically relates to diverse communities are related to a single natural object, hence the natural objects do tend to have a weaker community link than cities or areas. Conversely, community support is more difficult to ascertain.

e.g. Mediterranean, Atlas, Alps, Sahara, Nile, Amazon, Pacific etc. rivers, mountains

2. Names based on geopolitics

The complement to physical geography is human geography. It focuses on the study of patterns and processes that shape human interaction with various environments. It encompasses human, political, cultural, social, and economic aspects. Political geography is a field of human geography that is concerned with politics. Therefore geopolitical names can be defined as names, abbreviations, or significations of political activities related to physical geographical conditions or geographical area.

- *Continents*

There are several variations as to which land masses qualify as continents, and which must be classified as super-continents, micro-continents, subcontinents or islands. Seven landmasses and their associated islands are commonly reckoned as continents, but these may be consolidated. For example, North and South America are often

considered a single continent, and Asia is often united with Europe. Ignoring cases where Antarctica is omitted, or where Australasia or Oceania are used in place of Australia (when considered as the largest island of the globe), there are half a dozen traditions for naming the continents. Like with the name "africa" in some cases geographical names can be also names of geopolitical relevance.

e.g.: Antarctica, South America, North America, Central America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania

Issues: Presumption of Interest. Logical candidates for TLDs. Presumption of exclusivity. Strong presumption that a string clearly representing the continent should not be used in a way that does not represent the area.

- *Countries*

In political geography and international politics a country is a geographical territory. It is used casually in the sense of both nation and state (a political entity). Strict definitions tend to place it as meaning only the nation-state,[1] though general use is wider than this.[2]. Countries include both internationally recognized and generally unrecognized independent states, inhabited dependent territories, as well as areas of special sovereignty.

e.g. Japan, France, South Africa, Mexico

Issue: Countries have the possibility to leverage the ISO 3166-1 country-code list to signify themselves by a 2-letter code = country-code top-level-domains (ccTLDs). Nearly all countries are already using their ccTLD. If there are organisations which want to have another designation of the country name as TLD they should be directed to the ccTLD policies

- *World Cities and Global Cities*

A World City or Global City as defined by GaWC is a city that has a direct and tangible effect on global affairs through socioeconomic, cultural, and/or political means. In recent years, the terms have become increasingly familiar, because of the rise of globalization (i.e., global finance, communications, and travel).

e.g. London, Berlin, Sydney, Cape Town, Amsterdam

Issue: Presumption of Interest. Logical candidates for TLDs

Issue: Presumption of exclusivity. Strong presumption that a string clearly representing the World City should not be used in a way that does not represent the area.

- *Metropolises*

As defined by city mayors organisation and the UN[3] [4], a metropolis is a major city, in most cases with a population of at least one million inside its urban area, or at least over half million inhabitants in the city proper. It must be regarded as a significant economical, political and cultural center for some country or region, and is usually an important hub for international connections and communications. In many cases metropolises are surrounded by urban agglomerations or metropolitan areas, which are adjacent zones of influence, or of several neighbouring cities or towns and adjoining areas, with one or more large cities serving as hub or hubs. The metropolitan

area usually combines an agglomeration with peripheral zones not themselves necessarily urban in character, but closely bound to the centre by employment or commerce; these zones are also sometimes known as a commuter belt, and may extend well beyond the urban periphery depending on the definition used.

e.g. New York City, San Francisco Bay Area, Ruhr Area (Germany), Kansai Region (Japan), Tokyo Region (Japan), Mexico City

Issues: Presumption of Interest. Logical candidates for TLDs. Presumption of exclusivity. Strong presumption that a string clearly representing the metropolis should not be used in a way that does not represent the area.

- *Large Cities*

A city is an urban area that is differentiated from a town, village, or hamlet by size, population density, importance, or legal status. In most parts of the world, cities are generally substantial and nearly always have an urban core, but in the United States many incorporated areas which have a very modest population, or a suburban or even mostly rural character, are designated as cities. City can also be a synonym for "downtown" or a "city centre".

e.g. Florence, Tampa, Bhopal, Darwin, Marrakech

Issues: likelihood of homonym cities without a clear sense of which is "the original" or the "best known" of them. Conversely, homonym cities can easily share a TLD.

- *Regional authorities*

Names of communities based on regional authorities include abbreviations and significations of regions, counties, cities, townships, towns, villages, boroughs or other incorporated regional authorities.

e.g. Florence, Tampa, Bhopal, Darwin, Marrakech

Issues: likelihood of homonym entities without a clear sense of which is "the original" or the "best known" of them. Conversely, homonym entities should share a TLD.

- *City Codes*

Issues: presumption of interest in string as TLD (for large cities with long or difficult to write names). Presumption of reservation. One cannot simply reserve all strings that match a city or airport code.

- *3-letter IATA Airport codes or 3-letter IATA city codes.*

e.g. SFX (San Francisco), LHR (London Heathrow IATA Airport Code) LON (London IATA City Code), BER (Berlin). Some city codes match the airport code (e.g. MUC, BCN), in other cases the city code matches one of several airports (e.g. BXL), in other cases (ideally) city and airport codes are distinct (e.g. PAR, LON). The airport code database also includes many cities that do not have an airport, as well as train stations and bus terminals. Some of these codes have become popular abbreviations of the city.

- *4-Letter ICAO airport codes*
No presumption of any need to reserve as those codes.
- *ISO 3166-2 and UN/LOCODE*
ISO 3166-2 [Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions - Part 2: Country subdivision code) contains a complete breakdown into a relevant level of administrative subdivisions of all countries listed in ISO 3166-1. The code elements used consist of the alpha-2 code element from ISO 3166-1 followed by a separator and a further string of up to three alphanumeric characters
e.g. DK-025 for the Danish county Roskilde, IT-MI for the Italian province of Milano, MG-T for the Antananarivo province in Madagascar

The subdivision standard provides an important link between ISO 3166-1 and UN/LOCODE, the United Nations Code for Ports and other Locations, developed and maintained by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE). Whereas ISO 3166-1 codes country names, UN/LOCODE provides code elements for more than 32 000 names of ports, airports, rail and road terminals, postal exchange offices, border crossing points and other locations used in trade and transport. All code elements in UN/LOCODE start with the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 country code element for the country in which the place concerned is located. In some countries there are several places with the same name. In such cases the relevant ISO 3166-2 subdivision code is essential to distinguish between them. All three code systems taken together enable users to consistently code geographical information all the way down from the country level, over the subdivision level to the level of single locations used in trade and transport (see the short list below).

e.g. ISO 3166-2 subdivision code DE-BW for the Federal state of Baden-Württemberg, UN/LOCODE location code DESTR for the City of Stuttgart

- *Focus on historic name of place or community*
e.g. Babylon, Carthago, Byblos, Palmyra, Sparta, Thebes, Constantinople, Troy

Issue: Community referred to no longer exists but many communities may feel associated with the heritage.

b) Geo names with a Ethnic Focus

An ethnic group is a human population whose members identify with each other, usually on the basis of a presumed common genealogy or ancestry. Ethnic groups are also usually united by common cultural, behavioural, linguistic, or other practices. In this sense, an ethnic group is also a cultural community. Geo names with ethnic focus are names, abbreviations, or significations of communities based on human similarities which could have an background based on ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or other bequeathed similarities. Wikipedia lists around 1.000 ethnic groups. An ethnic group can have several names (e.g., names in English and in a native language, obsolete names, versions of spelling, etc.), this list may include only groups whose members self-identify and/or are identified by others as members of an ethnic group. [5].

- *Focus on Language Name / Code*

Language is a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures or written symbols which communicates information, thoughts or feelings. Among the around 7.300 language names listed by ethnologists there are 105 official languages of sovereign countries and around 480 main languages and codes for languages mentioned in the ISO 639-2 list (Codes for the Representation of Names of Languages).

e.g. Sami, Catalan, Swahili, Quechua, Ayamara, Maori, Rom

Issue: presumption of interest in string as TLD

- *Focus on Nation Name*

One of the most influential doctrines in history is that all humans are divided into groups called nations. It is an ethical and philosophical doctrine in itself, and is the starting point for the ideology of nationalism. The nationals are the members of the "nation" and are distinguished by a common identity, and almost always by a common origin, in the sense of ancestry, parentage or descent. The national identity refers both to the distinguishing features of the group, and to the individual's sense of belonging to it. Nations extend across generations, and include the dead as full members. No-one fixes a time span, but a nation is typically several centuries old. Past events are evaluated in this context often those which took place hundreds of years ago.

The term nation is often used synonymously with ethnic group, but although ethnicity is now one of the most important aspects of cultural or social identity for the members of most nations, people with the same ethnic origin may live in different nation-states and be treated as members of separate nations for that reason.

A state which explicitly identifies as the homeland of a particular nation is a nation-state, and most modern states fall into this category, although there may be violent disputes about their legitimacy. In common usage, terms such as nations, country, land and state often appear as near-synonyms, i.e., for a territory under a single sovereign government, or the inhabitants of such a territory, or the government itself; in other words, a de jure or de facto state.

In the English language, the terms nation (cultural), country (geographical) and state

(political) do have precise meanings, but in daily speech and writing they are often used interchangeably, and are open to different interpretations. For example, Cornwall is considered by some to be a nation in England which is a constituent country, or home nation, of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom is an internationally recognised sovereign state, which is also referred to as a country and whose inhabitants have British nationality. Other examples are

- e.g. Sapmi (nation of the Sami-speaking population in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia)
- e.g. Hawaii
- e.g. Poland is an example of a nation whose state was destroyed and land overrun for more than a century (1795 to 1919), yet it survived to become the basis of a renewed nation-state.

Issue: presumption of interest in string as TLD

- *Focus on shared Cultural Heritage*
Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Often though, what is considered cultural heritage by one generation may be rejected by the next generation, only to be revived by a succeeding generation. The same cultural heritage can be shared by many cultures.

e.g. Romance, Latin, Occitan, Naa

c) Endonyms, Exonyms and Demonyms designating Geo names

Most geopolitical regions have different names in different languages. For instance some cities have also undergone name changes for political or other reasons, this affects not only metropolis, but also smaller cities that are important because of their location or history. An exonym is a name for a place that is not used within that place by the local inhabitants, or a name for a people that is not used by that people. The name used by the people or locals themselves is an endonym or autonym. [6]

The following is a partial list of adjectival forms of place names in English and their demonymic equivalents, which denote the people or the inhabitants of the places.

Demonyms denote the people or the inhabitants of the places, demonyms are given in plural forms. [7]

Adjectives are part of speech which modifies a noun, usually describing it or making its meaning more specific. [8]

A colloquialism is an expression not used in formal speech or writing. Colloquialisms can include words (such as "gonna" or "grouty"), phrases (such as "ain't nothin'" and "dead as a doornail"), or sometimes even an entire aphorism ("There's more than one way to skin a cat").

Dictionaries often display colloquial words and phrases with the abbreviation colloq. Colloquialisms are often used primarily within a limited geographical area. [9]

Several ethnic groups or languages are under names not used by themselves, or that do not originate from within their community. Depending on the historic context, the outside names are acceptable or not to the respective community. In general, the local community will tend to prefer its own names. If a given ethnic, language or cultural community proposes a TLD, it should not be forced to use an exonym. Conversely, it should have the ability to so if there is consensus to use an exonym or demonym within the community.

This category includes also any kind of so called transliterated and transscripted geo names.

Endonym examples

- e.g. Italia (Italy in Italian language)
- e.g. Eesti (Estonia in Estonian language)
- e.g. al-Maghrib or برغال (Morocco in Moroc language)

Exonym examples

- e.g. names of the German capital Berlin in different languages - Barlīn (Arabic), Barliń (Lower Sorbian), Beirlín (Irish), Berlien (Limburgish), Berliin (Estonian), Berliini (Finnish), Berlijn (Dutch), Berlim (Portuguese), Berlín (Catalan, Czech, Icelandic, Slovak, Spanish), Berlin (Russian, Croatian, Danish, German, Hungarian, Norwegian, Polish, Romanian, Macedonian, Serbian, Slovene, Swedish, Turkish, French, Walloon), Բեռլին or Berlin (Armenian), Berlin - גירעב (Yiddish), Berlīne (Latvian), Berlino (Italian, Esperanto), Berlyn (Afrikaans, Frisian), Berlynas (Lithuanian), Berurin - ベルリン (Japanese), Verolīno - Βερολίνο (Greek), Bereullin - 베를린 (Korean), Berlin - גירעב (Hebrew)
- e.g. names of the country Brazil in different langauges - Bāxī - 巴西 (Mandarin Chinese), Beurijil/Pūrajil (Korean), Braisil (Scots Gaelic), Brasiilia (Estonian), Brasil (Catalan, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Welsh), Brasile (Italian), Brasilia (Finnish, Latin), Brasília (Icelandic), Brasilië (Afrikaans), Brasilien (Danish, German, Swedish), Brazil (Bosnian, Breton, Croatian, Maltese, Serbian), Brazil - לזרב (Hebrew), Brāzīl, Brazili (Albanian), Brazilia (Romanian), Brazília (Hungarian, Slovak), Brazílie (Czech), Brazilië (Dutch), Brazilija (Lithuanian, Slovene), Braziliya - Бразилия (Bulgarian, Russian), Brazilo (Esperanto), Brazilska (Lower Sorbian), Brazylia (Polish), Brazylija - Бразылія (Belarusian), Brésil (French), Brezilya (Turkish), Burajiru - ブラジル (Japanese), Vrazilía - Βραζιλία (Greek)

Adjective, demonym and colloquialism examples

- e.g. Turkey (country name), Turkish (adjectival), Turks (demonymic)
- e.g. United States of America (country name), American (adjectival), Americans (demonymic), Yankee/Yankees (colloquial)

- e.g. Dublin (city name), Dublin (adjectival), Dubliners (demonymic), Dubs (colloquial)
- e.g. Earth Terra World (name), Earth Terran World (adjectival), Earthlings, Terrans (demonymic)
- e.g. Lilliput (place name), Lilliputian (adjectival), Lilliputians (demonymic)

Issues: Presumption of reservation. Presumption of interest in string as TLD. Presumption of non-use as a TLD or reservation for respective community whenever a string clearly denotes one or several language/nation/ethnic group.

References

1. [<http://geography.about.com/cs/politicalgeog/a/statenation.htm> About.com:"Geography: Country, State, and Nation".
2. <http://www.countryreports.org/country.aspx?countryid=96&countryName=Greenland>
3. A full member is either a capital city or a city with more than one million inhabitants, City Mayors: Metropolis World Congress
4. The United Nations has set up its own classifications scheme: a "big city" is a locality with 500,000 or more inhabitants; a "city" is a locality with 100,000 or more inhabitants; an "urban locality" is a locality with 20,000 or more inhabitants; a "rural locality" is a locality with less than 20,000 inhabitants... Sociumas magazine
5. Ethnic groups - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_groups
6. For example, Deutschland is an endonym; Germany is an English exonym for the same place; and Allemagne is a French exonym. Exonyms may derive from distinct roots as with the preceding example, or may be cognate words which have diverged in pronunciation or orthography. For example, London is known as Londres in French, Spanish and Portuguese; Londra in Italian and Romanian; Londýn in Czech and Slovak; Londyn in Polish; and Lontoo in Finnish. Some languages use the same spelling as the endonym but change the pronunciation, thus making it an exonym. The English pronunciation of Paris, for example, is not an attempt at pronouncing the word the way the French do, with a silent "s."
7. Singular forms simply remove the final 's' or, in the case of -ese endings, are the same as the plural forms. The ending -men has feminine equivalent -women (e.g. an Irishman and a Scotswoman). The French terminations -ois / ais serve as both the singular and plural masculine; adding 'e' (-oise / aise) makes them singular feminine; 'es' (-oises / aises) makes them plural feminine. The Spanish termination "-o" usually denotes the masculine and is normally changed to feminine by dropping the "-o" and adding "-a". The plural forms are usually "-os" and "-as" respectively.
8. Adjectives are not a universally recognized word class; in other words, some languages do not have any adjectives. The Chinese languages, for example, have no adjectives; all the words that are translated into English as adjectives are, in fact, stative verbs. Adjectives ending -ish can be used as collective demonyms (e.g. the English, the Cornish). So can those ending in -ch / -tch (e.g. the French, the Dutch) provided they are pronounced with a 'ch' sound (e.g. the adjective Czech does not qualify).
9. In some areas, overuse of colloquialisms by native speakers is regarded as a sign of substandard ability with the language. However, in the mouth of a non-native speaker, they are sometimes taken as signaling unusual facility with the language as they may be more difficult for non-native speakers to understand. A colloquialism can sometimes make its way into otherwise formal speech, as a sign that the speaker is comfortable with his or her audience, in contrast to slang, which if used in formal speech is more likely done so consciously for humorous effect. Words that have a formal meaning may also have a colloquial meaning that, while technically incorrect, is recognizable due to common usage.

7. Screenshots

.berlin (Berlin, Germany) - (<http://www.dotberlin.de>)

berlin Die Top-Level-Domain für die Community der Berliner

Menu

- Home
- About .berlin
- Support .berlin!
- Press
- Current activities
- Home
- The company
- Contact

.berlin newsletter
Bitte halten Sie mich über .berlin auf dem Laufenden

E-mail:

Subscribe
 Unsubscribe

Search

Languages

- German
- English

Sponsoren

BFB
BFB Branchen-Forum
Berliner
BERLIN-ONE net

http.net
providing business

BERLIN-PLAZA
HOTEL

Give us your vote!

I support the .berlin initiative.
(* Mandatory)

First Name:

.berlin – The Berliners' identity in the Internet

Space has become very scarce in some Internet address ranges. There are now more than 10 million domains under the top-level domain .de which doesn't leave much space for sensible names. At the same time a large part of the traffic on the World Wide Web is local. This is why we want to introduce .berlin as a new top-level domain, extending the Internet namespace by a clear, local focus point, creating a regional identity for the Berlin community with the new namespace provided by the .berlin domain.

The initiative for the top-level domain .berlin is supported by a multitude of companies, organisations, associations and individuals and has won global recognition as a trailblazer for top-level domains for urban communities. The .berlin top-level domain will make people from all over the world more familiar with the places called Berlin, their people, culture, economy, power to innovate and internationalism. The Berlin community consists of Berliners in the German capital city, but also of Berliners spread around the world and of people who identify with Berlin or live in places called Berlin.

German

.nyc (New York City, U.S.A.) - (<http://www.cb3qn.nyc.gov/page/33828>) and

(<http://www.openplans.org/projects/campaign-for.nyc>)

The .NYC Opportunity

Benefits of .NYC TLD

Today's Internet is dominated by the .com TLD (top level domain) and its 50,000,000 websites. Within that massive and messy directory, the city's vast tourism, business, and education resources are increasingly obscured. More damaging: the city's residents, businesses, and institutions can't readily find one another to take advantage of the **Internet's network effects** that propel the likes of Amazon, Ebay, Google, and MySpace.

Seeking a more city-friendly Internet, where a carefully managed and crafted .nyc domain would make it easier for residents and visitors to locate city resources, Queens Community Board 3 passed an **Internet Empowerment Resolution** in April 2001. The Resolution called upon the city administration to acquire the .nyc TLD citing several advantages:

- The city can better market itself globally as a tourist destination by setting aside and managing names like www.hotels.nyc.
- City life will be easier with a more intuitive Internet, e.g., Looking for a school? Start at www.schools.nyc.
- Residents and businesses can more easily **locate and network with one another** within a managed .nyc top level domain.
- Funds raised through name sales should be invested in Internet access and education efforts.
- Defensively, New York City will be better able to compete with cities like Singapore and Hong Kong, and their .SG and .HK TLDs.

Watching the Opportunities

While the marketing, quality of life, revenue, and networking advantages provide the pillar benefits to a city TLD, the following points to regional benefits that might arise from a .nyc TLD. For example, here's a suggestion from the committee chair that brings in a few historic details.

Linchpin for Regional Consolidation

When King Charles II selected the Hudson River as the boundary between his New York and New Jersey provinces, he did not foresee today's port and market realities, or even yesterday's. For example, not agreeing on ways to share their valuable, shared harbor and waterways, New York and New Jersey waged many disputes, with one resulting in state police exchanging shots mid-river. The Treaty of 1834 stopped the shooting, but it took another 87 years to create the **Port Authority of New York & New Jersey** and begin addressing the regions squandered opportunities.

Today, the Port Authority administers many common harbor and development interests – bridges, tunnels, rail, water, air, and tele ports. But strategic planners declare that if the region is to grow and maintain its role in an increasingly globalized market, it must solve the remaining problems caused by King Charles' myopia.

Some suggest a second regional consolidation is required (the first, in 1898, combined 5 county governments into today's NYC). Minimally, transportation and land use needs must be addressed, with broader advantages arising through service delivery consolidation and regional economic planning and development.

The .nyc TLD might provide the linchpin for addressing these needs, with residents and businesses operating within the region eligible for .nyc TLDs only if their geographic governance organization (city, town, village, etc.) joins a consolidated .nyc regional governance entity.

.cym (Wales, United Kingdom) - (<http://www.dotcym.org>)

dotCYM Parth Domain
Ymgyrchu dros barth rhyngrwyd .cym
Campaigning for a .cym internet domain
 Ar gyfer cymuned ieithyddol a diwylliannol y Gymraeg
 For the Welsh linguistic and cultural community

HOME PAGE

The Welsh language and culture is a community that we believe should be identified and enhanced by having its own sponsored top-level domain (sTLD) on the Internet. Under a .CYM sponsored TLD those organisations, companies and individuals, throughout the world, that express themselves in the Welsh language and/or wish to encourage Welsh culture will be able to be registered and will be clearly identifiable.

The success of the dotCYM campaign will unite the Welsh-speaking communities across the world. As well as Wales, there are historic Welsh communities in other parts of the British Isles, North and South America, and Australia.

The success of the dotCYM campaign will confirm that the World Wide Web really is multi-national and a multilingual medium. It will also play a pivotal role in promoting further the use of the Welsh language on the World Wide Web as a modern medium of communication.

We can succeed. Recently an application by puntCAT for a .cat domain for the Catalan language and culture was accepted. But we need your help.

LATEST NEWS

- [Article published in Agenda](#)
- [dotCYM Group Respond to Welsh Language Board's IT Document.](#)
- [dotCYM Supports pikBZH](#)
- [The beginning of the dotCYM campaign](#)

(C) 2006 dotCYM

.bzh (Brittany, France) - (<http://bzh.geobreizh.com/www/bzh>)

Brezhoneg | Français | English

11482 signatures pour la création du .bzh

point bzh domaine

.bzh pour un domaine breton

Association pointBZH pour la création du domaine breton • Les Bretons veulent leur extension Internet

+ Objectif de l'Association

+ Pourquoi le .bzh

+ Nouveau : actualités du .bzh

+ Signez la pétition pour le .bzh

+ Tous les signataires

+ Qu'est-ce qu'une extension ?

+ Liens

+ Nos coordonnées

AIDEZ-NOUS !
 FAITES SUIVRE LA PÉTITION
 OU AFFICHEZ
 NOTRE PUB **point bzh domaine**
 Cliquez ici

■ Signez la pétition

Nous, **Internauts bretons**, demandons aux organismes internationaux chargés de la régulation des extensions des noms de domaine :

- la création de l'extension Internet **.bzh** !

Nous, **Citoyens bretons**, demandons aux élus bretons :

- d'appuyer la demande de création du .bzh !

Nom (de famille) *

Prénom *

Ville *

Profession *

E-mail *

Signer

(*) Tous les champs sont obligatoires

■ Présentation

La Catalogne vient d'ouvrir son extension .cat pour promouvoir sa langue et sa culture, la Guadeloupe, la Guyane, la Martinique et la Réunion disposent déjà de leurs propres extensions .gp, .gf, .mq et .re ! La Bretagne se doit d'obtenir son .bzh ! Pour que l'AFNIC et l'ICANN chargés de réguler les extensions Internet entendent notre voix, signez cette pétition !

■ Les 20 derniers signataires

11482 signatures pour le moment !
 (depuis le 15 mars 2006)

SOLER ADRIA
 CATALONIA ADVOCAT

LE MINTER J-JACQUES
 ROAZHON RETRAITÉ

.gal (Galicia, Spain) - (<http://www.puntogal.org>)

.gal
Asociación PuntoGal

mar.gal dorna.gal
alen.gal navega.gal
fisterra.gal percebe.gal

Inicio

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Puntogal presentará a campaña polo dominio galego na rede no Festigal
Martes, 18 Xullo 2006

A asociación promotora da iniciativa polo dominio galego na rede, Puntogal, presentará o luns 24 de xullo a campaña dentro da programación do Festigal, que se desenvolverá no Campus Sur, en Santiago de Compostela.

Manolo González, presidente de PuntoGal, e Camilo Regueiro, vicepresidente, serán os encargados de explicar os obxectivos desta campaña o vindeiro luns ás 13:00 horas.

Ler máis...

Banners en apoio do .gal
Venres, 16 Xuño 2006

A Asociación PuntoGal abriu unha campaña de apoio á iniciativa do dominio galego coa colocación de banners en páxinas web ou weblogs do país. Para isto, na nova sección de

Enquisas
¿Cantas posibilidades cres que temos de conseguir o dominio?

- Ningunha, o caso catalán foi excepcional
- Poucas, é un proceso moi complicado
- É factible se unimos forzas cunha única voz
- Está feito!

Votar
Resultados

RSS 0.91
RSS 1.0
RSS 2.0
ATOM 0.3
OPML SHARE IT!

.sco (Scotland, United Kindom) - (<http://www.dotsco.org>)

dotSCO

The Campaign for a .SCO Internet Domain

dotSCO - a web domain for the Scots language and cultural community.

Scots On The Web | [Press](#) | [Lend Your Support](#) | [Our Supporters](#)

Why do we want a .SCO?

Because the Scots language and culture is a community that we believe should be identified with its own domain on the internet. Under a .SCO domain those organisations, companies and people that express themselves in the Scots language and/or wish to encourage Scots culture will be able to be registered and will be clearly identifiable.

Can languages and cultures have domains?

Since cooperatives (.coop), the aeronautical industry (.aero), museums (.museum) and the Catalan language and culture (.cat) have all been recognised as communities with their own domain on the internet, then the Scots language and culture should have a very strong basis for having .SCO as a domain.

.lac (Latin American Community)

28.12.2005 | Clarín.com | Informática 2.0

EN BUSCA DEL NOMBRE PROPIO

Dominio para América latina

Se espera la apertura de nuevas propuestas de dominios en la ICANN para que el .lac pueda hacerse realidad.

Sebastián Bellagamba

Una de las mayores fortalezas que tiene Internet es su universalidad. Consiste en miles de **redes independientes** interconectadas entre sí. Y para que esta interconexión sea efectiva requiere, entre otras cosas, de un **sistema de identificadores de red** que sea global y único, ya que de no ser así generaría fragmentación técnica y crearía confusión en los usuarios.

El elemento central que aporta esta característica a la red es el Sistema de Nombres de Dominio (DNS). Cada sitio de red tiene una dirección única, llamada **dirección IP** (Internet Protocol). Las direcciones IP son cuatro grupos de números, donde cada grupo está conformado por un número comprendido entre 0 y 255, por ejemplo 66.102.7.104. Como estos números son difíciles de recordar, el DNS permite utilizar los **nombres de dominio**. Así, resulta más fácil usar **www. google.com** que 66.102.7.104.

Los nombres de dominio se rigen por una estructura jerárquica. Debajo de los **servidores de raíz** se encuentran los llamados **dominios de primer nivel**, por ejemplo **.com**, **.ar**, **.net**, etcétera.

(<http://www.clarin.com/suplementos/informatica/2005/12/28/f-00601.htm>)

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Notes