

Basic Terms of the new generic Top Level Domains

- **What is a domain name?**

On Internet, like on any other network, computers communicate by using numerical labels called “IP Addresses”. This website, for example, is reachable by inputting the IP address 89.207.184.35 in an Internet browser.

However, as effective this means of communication is for computers, it would be next to impossible for Internet users to solely rely on it.

In the early 80s, the search for a more convenient medium gave birth to the Domain Name System (DNS). Thanks to the DNS, meaningless IP addresses can be automatically converted in human readable strings of characters, known as Internet domain names.

It is this imperceptible conversion to which all Internet users’ recourse to without knowing it, that allows this website to also be reachable via the domain name newgtldtool.com

- **What does TLD (Top Level Domain) mean?**

To understand the meaning of a TLD, one must know that domain names are read from right to left and each level is separated by a dot.

In ebrandservices.com, “.com” is the part at the extreme right and therefore at the top level of the domain.

Top Level Domains can be isolated into two defining categories:

The first category combines all TLDs based on ISO country codes (ccTLDs) and is delegated to the countries they are designated to represent. Examples include .DE for Germany, .FR for France, or .US for the United States.

The second category is a generic one (gTLDs) which combines TLDs that were created for a specific function, .COM for commercial websites, .GOV for governments, .INFO for informational websites, and .XXX for adult content providers.

If you require more comprehensive background information on domains, what they do, and how to purchase them, please confer with an eBrand Services consultant.

- **What is ICANN and what is its role?**

ICANN, or the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers, is the non-profit organization and industry regulator responsible for globally managing DNS related tasks. ICANN is responsible for facilitating technical operations, but also establishing consensus-driven governance policies, dispute resolutions mechanisms and streamlined co-ordination of all stakeholder groups. A core ICANN mission is to “preserve the security, stability, and global interoperability of the Internet.”

Whilst ICANN is the highest level of governance and coordination in the industry, there are many more elements and contributors to functionality of Domain Name System. For more on the multi-stakeholder structure of Internet governance, please refer to footnotes for additional sources.

- **What is the New gTLD program?**

Since its creation, ICANN received numerous requests from organizations to obtain the delegation of new extensions.

Depending on several factors, ICANN's approval for those delegations was not always granted and could take a considerable amount of time due to ICANN's Multi-stakeholder Model.

To address those requests simultaneously and in a transparent and effective manner, ICANN announced in 2011 the development of a program that would initiate and facilitate the creation of new Internet extensions, or "new gTLDs". Under this new process, more extensions will be created and introduced into the domain name world, and with them, the vast expansion of the industry will enable more competition, innovation and heightened consumer choice.

The new gTLD program allows private and public companies to apply for, and run, an extension (or gTLD string) that does not fall within the typical confines of a gTLD. In June 2012, ICANN announced the receipt of 1,930 individual applications from all over the world. These applications are now subject to a series of evaluations to validate their viability and suitability for the DNS. See <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/program> for more details.

- **Which benefits will "new gTLDs" bring?**

The differentiating element of the new gTLD program is that, and providing one demonstrates the required technical, financial, and operational competencies, any public or private organization has been allowed to apply for their own new gTLD. Furthermore, they can develop their own policy requirements.

Technically, all new gTLDs are required to work with higher safety standards above all introducing DNSSEC from the beginning. Of course, all within the requirements of the new gTLD program.

As a result, the industry is hoped to become more competitive and innovative making higher consumer choice available. The addition of 1,000+ new extensions to the market will invariably impact on online marketing techniques, SEO methods, and trademark protection efforts that businesses currently have in use. There have also been very critical voices questioning the benefits and

forecasting significant customer confusion and unnecessary burden for trademark holders.¹

- **How are the new gTLDs categorized?**

As stipulated by ICANN, applications were to be filed under the following four categories:

1. *Standard or Generic TLD*: open for public registration and generally without restriction. In certain cases, these strings include brand names and trademarks and are proposed solely for corporate use only.
2. *Community TLD*: these TLDs will be operated with the intention of serving a specific community group with a high level of social awareness and require designated community support.
3. *Geographical TLD*: representing cities or regions, these TLDs require local governmental support.
4. *Community-Geographic TLD*: the TLD associates with both a community group and represents a distinct geographical area.

ICANN also speaks of **IDN Top Level Domains**: IDN, or Internationalized Domain Name, is a domain name that is displayed, in whole or in part, in a non-Latin language script or alphabet. IDN's can include anything from accents on letters for French or Spanish, or full language characters such as Arabic or Chinese.

The breakdown of applications can be further understood on the basis of the following statistics:²

Total applications: **1,930**

1. Total strings applied for: **1,409**
2. ICANN category - Standard or Generic TLD: **1,791**
3. ICANN category – Community TLD: **73**
4. ICANN category – Geographical TLD: **55**

¹ See for details http://icannwiki.com/index.php/New_gTLD_Program

² Applications Infographic - <http://news.dot-nxt.com/gtld/all/infographic>;

5. ICANN category – Community-Geo TLD: **11**
6. Total uncontended application: **1,179**
7. Applications with 1 or more contended applications: **751**
8. Total dotBrand applications: **690³**
10. Total IDN strings: **116**
11. Total geographically relevant strings: **93⁴**

Of notable significance, the total of geographically relevant names can be extended to 93 if one includes those of important geographic reference that were not filed under the ICANN Geo category.

The above categories have been deducted from the application process and have limited use in reference to Marketing and Brand Protection issues.

A selection of alternative categories and trends amongst the categorized groups:

- **DotBrand gTLDs:** These are restricted and branded TLDs applied for by companies and are typically utilized exclusively for internal use only – i.e., a closed registry with a brand owner as sole registrar and registrant. Notably, some brand applicants have indicated that they will not be reserving their extension for solely internal purposes and will enable customers to directly express their customer loyalty by utilizing a ‘dotBrand’ domain.
- **Generic Keyword gTLDs:** These extensions will be open and unrestricted for general public usage. These extensions will all be vying for a spot in the market as a self-descriptive, yet accessible, TLD to meet consumer needs. Examples include: .WEB, .SHOP, .DOT, .SITE and .BLOG.
- **Industry, Product and Service gTLDs:** These new gTLDs are directed at a specific industry, product or niche service group (be it professional or personal). These gTLDs may, or may not, have registrant restrictions in place to control those that utilize the namespace. Prime examples include: .AUTO, .MED, .ARCHITECT, and .INSURANCE.

³ This total was initially 699, however 9 brand applications have since been withdrawn.

⁴ 66 applications were officially filed under the ‘Geographic Category’, albeit an additional set of strings is relevant of equal relevance and pertaining to a geographic area.

- **Unrestricted:** Unrestricted generic top-level domains are those domains that are available for registration by any person or organization for any use within the general rules of the program. Including: .ART, .BABY, .KIDS, .BLOG, .CITY and .CAFE.
- **Restricted:** As previously mentioned, not all new extensions will be open for everyone to register. The level of restriction varies depending on the extension, and whilst some will not be available for external usage at all, others will request proof of membership in a certain group or organization, or will impose strict use regulations and will monitor registrant compliance with these rules.
- **Geographical gTLDs:** Geo-TLDs have taken country code domains to a new level and city, region, and societal subgroups will now be available. Geo-TLDs in the sense used here not only include those that have filed their ICANN application officially as a geographic TLD, but also those which must be considered geographically related, such as selected ethnic and linguistic TLDs. Regardless of whether these extensions pertain to your home market, or your desired market, options for tailoring to the local market are now more manageable.

- **What are contested applications?**

As mentioned above, 1,930 applications were received and these represent 1,409 different extensions requests. Applications in contention are those from different companies applying for the same individual string. Subsequently, ICANN has made it clear that only one application will prevail and the process to determine whom the successful applicant is, is currently still taking place. Please note that these applications are also referred to as ‘contention sets’.

- **What total number of new extensions are anticipated?**

The complete number of expected new gTLDs is still up to speculation. The evaluation, objection, pre-delegation and contract signing process is lengthy and the overall outcome remains to be seen. Our analysis (<http://newgldtool.com/app/files/ten-reasons.pdf>) has calculated that, including withdrawals and reconciled contention sets, the theoretical outcome is 1,398 new extensions. To be cautious, industry experts quote that a total of 1,000+ names will enter the market over the coming years and at a rate of up to 100 per month from Q3 of 2013.

New gTLD REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- **Are the new gTLDs available for anyone to register?**

The registration policy for each new gTLD will depend on the extension required and, whilst some will be open and unrestricted, others will be for company use only, or restricted to certain community or professional groups.

- **How can brand owners protect their rights?**

If you are a trademark holder and wish to secure to a trademarked name in any of the new gTLD extensions, please consult our complementary white paper on the Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH):

<http://newgldtool.com/app/files/trademarkclearinghouse.pdf>. Recording your trademark in the TMCH is a critical step and must occur prior to the release of the new extensions. In conjunction with multiple benefits, inclusion within the TMCH database will enable trademark holders to participate in early registration periods designated for those intending to secure trademarked names. TMCH inclusion is critical for brand protection. Please consult further eBrand

information packages for a comprehensive outline on the TMCH and what function it plays.

If you have a new gTLD in mind, and are unsure of the registration policy, do not hesitate to contact us.

- **Is a ‘pre-order’ mechanism currently available?**

Pre-order (or pre-registration) in the true sense (binding order and payment of money) is not yet an option. Do not be misled by promises of pre-registration; insofar that it is not viable for any registrar to guarantee that a domain can be secured this early in the process.

An Expression of Interest in one or several gTLDs, or one or several domain names may, however, be submitted to eBrandServices. Upon receipt of an EOI, eBrandServices will provide you with relevant information including availability date, pricing, and policy requirements as soon as it becomes available.

- **Is an ‘Expression of Interest’ binding? What commitment am I making?**

As previously noted, an ‘Expression of Interest’ or EOI is currently available via our eBrand Services new gTLD tool or directly with us. If you wish to submit an ‘Expression of Interest’ for a new gTLD with us, we will ensure that you are kept up-to-date with policies, pricing, launch schedules and registration deadlines. The EOI is free and non-binding.

- **What can be expected from the registration process? Are there different registration phases?**

The earliest registration phase is designed to benefit trademark holders recorded in the TMCH. Thus, not everyone can participate at the earliest possible registration stage.

The registration process can be broken into two phases:

1. **Sunrise phase:** Available for trademark holders that have their trademark/s registered and recorded with the TMCH.
2. **Go Live phase:** Available for all whom meet minimum registry requirements.

- **What can I do if I object to an application? Is there an objection period?**

ICANN has enabled “Comments, Objections & Program Feedback” during the objection period. This period has been extended until March 13th 2013 and can assist in laying an objection if you have serious concerns about a new gTLD application. If you have reasonable grounds to lay an objection, and do so via an approved dispute resolution provider, you can do so on the following grounds:

- String confusion (too similar to an existing gTLD)
- Limited public interest
- Community objection
- Legal rights

If you have major concerns and would like further advice, please contact us for information on the fundamentals of the objection period.

- **Is there a launch timeline?**

There are a lot of components to the launch timeline and as to make it clearer and more systematically outlined, we have compiled a timeline briefing. Please consult the timeline outline attached: <http://newgtldtool.com/app/files/timeline.pdf>

- **How will recording my trademarks be advantageous to brand protection?**

Recording your trademark with the Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH) will provide you with three key benefits:

1. *Scheduled release notification for trademark holders registering via eBrand Services:* whenever a new gTLD is scheduled, you will be given 30 days notice prior to the commencement of the “Sunrise period” – designed purely for trademark holders.
2. *Earliest phase registration participation:* only when recorded with the TMCH will you be able to participate in the pre-registration period for trademark holder – otherwise known as the “Sunrise phase.”
3. *Trademark claims service:* during, and for (at least) 60 days following the end of the Sunrise phase, trademark holders will be notified when a third party registers a domain name that matches their trademark.⁵

- **What is the minimum registration period?**

At this point, it has not been announced what registration periods will apply and it will depend on the new gTLD in question. Whilst we will make this information accessible to customers as the launches progress, we can safely estimate that a majority will be for one year and multiple-year registrations may be possible.

⁵ For more information, please refer to the following sources; <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/trademark-clearinghouse>;

- **Can I block a name without registering it?**

Whilst not confirmed, recent announcements have suggested that a blocking mechanism (similar to the Sunrise B phase of the .XXX launch) will be introduced. Referred to as the “Limited Preventative Registration Mechanism”, this registration will be a one-off defensive block to prevent the domain from being registered by someone else, but without the obligation for one to renew and maintain the domain in their portfolio. In effect, this name will be blocked and prevented from resolving.⁶ This is still in the discussion phase and is not confirmed.

- **Whom can I contact if somebody else has registered my name?**

A series of “Rights Protection Mechanisms” have been carefully established in order to minimize trademark infringements during the course of the new gTLD releases. If you feel as though someone has registered a domain that is a breach of your Intellectual Property rights, please contact your account manager for further advice.

- **Do eBrandServices support all the new gTLDs that will be released?**

eBrand Services will offer launch services and registrations for all accessible new GeoTLDs, Cultural and Keyword TLDs⁷. Over the course of the next two

⁶ For more on the ‘Limited Preventative Registration Mechanism’, please refer to these sources. - strawman-solution-03dec12-en.pdf; <http://domainincite.com/11619-new-gtld-strawman-splits-community>;

⁷ Provided that all applied for TLDs pass the ICANN evaluation process, there are 1398 potential Top Level Domains to be launched (January 2013). Of the 1398, 676 are categorized as ‘dotBrands’ (i.e. reserved for internal uses of the brand owner/applicant) and leaving a calculated 722 remaining TLDs. 493 of the remaining TLDs are unrestricted; insofar that they are open to the general public for registration. The final 229 TLDs (of the 722) are restricted. Of the restricted TLDs, roughly 50% have an eligibility criterion (as delineated in their application to ICANN) our customers and future clients meet and thus making them suitable for registration. Eligibility criteria’s are highly contingent on the



years, this list is anticipated to surpass 500 new gTLDs. Please send us your 'Expression of Interest' list for defined domain names under the new gTLD name spaces. Our system is configured to establish a watchlist that monitors the progress of special interest TLDs and ensures that no deadlines or pertinent policy information falls by the wayside.

extension and can be explained in detail upon request. As a result, eBrand Services intend to support a minimum of 493 TLDs, but potentially over 600. The final number of TLDs to be supported depends entirely on the quantity of TLDs that pass the evaluation stage and the final definition of their eligibility criteria.