



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ICANN Leader Stresses Benefits of new gTLD Program to Arabic speakers and Middle East

Rod Beckstrom Tells Dubai Conference That Potential Applicants Also Need to Know of Risks and Challenges

Dubai, U.A.E.... ICANN's New Generic Top-Level Domain Program offers significant opportunities for Middle Eastern organizations to expand their online presence, according to Rod Beckstrom, CEO and President of ICANN.

He stressed the benefits and challenges of the new domains for the Middle East, and cited the region's technological know-how as a factor that would encourage the innovation and consumer choice the program is expected to generate.

Beckstrom delivered the keynote address to the Global Leaders Summit, an exclusive meeting of regional leaders, at Gitex, the region's premier technology conference, in Dubai.

"You can apply for new gTLDs in Arabic, Chinese or other scripts," he said. "This is the first time in history that it is possible to apply for new generic top-level domains in internationalized domain scripts. So it means you could apply for terms in Arabic – not only a company name or brand or a city name, but any other word or generic term," he continued.

Comparing the creation of the new gTLD program to the development of Dubai as a commercial centre, Beckstrom said, "When you open up standards in technology, when you create rules of law, it fosters and allows innovation that none of us can imagine".

"People ask me: what's going to happen to the domain name system now that you are opening up new gTLDs? And the answer is: we don't know. The innovation will come from very unlikely directions." "Opening up the right of the dot" in Latin script addresses to "dot almost anything" is being undertaken with great care to ensure the security and stability of the Internet's domain name system, which is "job number one for us", he stated.

Beckstrom highlighted the complexity of the application process and the need for applicants to be prepared to face substantial obstacles. "Running a top-level domain is not like buying a second-level domain," he noted. "You're actually running a piece of critical [Internet] infrastructure for the world. It's got to be running 24/7, reliably, and for years and years and years."

He stressed that a successful application would require "significant technology expertise or a relationship with a party that will give you that expertise", as well as the significant financial wherewithal necessary to operate an Internet registry.

Beckstrom also corrected a common misconception about the new generic top-level domain program, explaining that organizations running one of the new domains will not be required to sell Internet domain names publicly.

He noted that dot emerat, the internationalized domain name (IDN) of the United Arab Emirates, was one of the world's first IDNs.

The application window for new gTLDs opens on 12 January 2012 and closes on 12 April. In May, ICANN will publish the list of all domain names that have been applied for.

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To learn more about the gTLD program, go here: <http://newgtlds.icann.org/applicants/faqs/faqs-en>

To view a brief video (6-minutes), which explains the new gTLD program, go here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AybZsS3NmFo>

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About ICANN: *ICANN's mission is to ensure a stable, secure and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn't have one global Internet. ICANN was formed in 1998. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. ICANN doesn't control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn't deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet. For more information please visit: www.icann.org.*