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ICANN Approves Chinese Internationalized Domain Names

Board Also Moves Forward on .XXX Domain Application

Brussels, Belgium… 25 June 2010… Millions of Chinese language users will soon be able to access the Internet using Chinese script following a decision today by ICANN's Board of Directors to approve a set of Chinese language internationalized domain names.

"This approval is a significant change for Chinese language users worldwide," said Rod Beckstrom, President and Chief Executive Officer of ICANN. "One fifth of the world speaks Chinese and that means we just increased the potential online accessibility for roughly a billion people."

The new IDN country code top-level domains (ccTLDs) and the associated organizations approved by the Board are:

- CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center)
- HKIRC (Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited)
- TWNIC (Taiwan Network Information Center).

The ICANN board also voted to allow the application for the controversial .XXX top-level domain (TLD) to move forward. The ICM registry applied for the .XXX sponsored top-level domain as a potential community site for the adult entertainment industry. The Board approved a detailed set of next steps for the application, including expedited due diligence, negotiations on a draft registry agreement, and consultation with ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee.

The decision in effect agreed with a non-binding majority decision of the Independent Review Panel. In February two of the three members of the IRP said the board should reconsider its 2007 decision to reject ICM's sTLD application.

ICANN Chairman Peter Dengate Thrush said, "The board reached a carefully considered decision, paying close attention to the findings of the Independent Review Panel, and to the extensive public comment on our proposed action."

"Today's decision is a validation of ICANN's transparency and accountability," said Rod Beckstrom, President and Chief Executive Officer.

The board asked the ICANN staff to conduct an expedited review of the ICM application to ensure that it is still current and that there have been no changes that might alter the validity of the application. The board decision also allows consultation on the top-level domain with ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee.

The next ICANN meeting will take place in Cartagena, Colombia, 5-10 December 2010.

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Transcripts and Board reports may be viewed here: http://www.icann.org/en/minutes/.

To read a chronology of the .XXX issue, go here: http://www.icann.org/en/irp/icm-v-icann/icm-icann-history-21feb10-en.pdf.

To read more about the decision processe on the .XXX issue, go here: http://icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-2-26mar10-en.htm

To learn more about IDNs, go here: http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/.

Video and audio recordings of the news conference will be uploaded to as soon as possible to http://www.icann.org/en/press/.

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