



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

24 March 2015

Jeremiah Johnston
President
Internet Commerce Association
1155 F Street, NW
Suite 1050
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mr. Johnston:

Thank you for your letter dated 4 February 2015. I appreciate the role the Internet Commerce Association and its members have played in helping shape ICANN policy over the years and in providing a voice and platform for propagation of best practices among the domainer community. It is in this spirit that I welcome the opportunity to address your comments about the short video interview I gave in late January during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos.

I regret that the ICA interpreted some of my comments in the interview as expressing a “disdainful view” of domain investing. As you might have gathered from the reporter’s questions, some people have asked whether the new gTLD program might have created an opportunity for “land grabb[ing]” by industry insiders. It was not my impression that the question being asked referred to established practices in the secondary market; rather, I believe the reporter was inquiring about some of the very practices by registries you cited in your letter. My response -- that alternatives are available in different gTLDs -- was intended to try to allay the concern that the program was creating artificial scarcity of domains, not to criticize participants in the marketplace. Registry operators and registrars have the freedom to be innovative both in service offering and pricing. With the introduction of new gTLDs, the marketplace will effectively decide whether the practice of, e.g., holding back or selling “premium” registrations will be successful or not.



With regard to my suggestion that the introduction of new gTLDs could help reduce cybersquatting in the long term, I continue to believe that this has potential as an outcome of the New gTLD Program. Users could become accustomed to entering, e.g., `www.website.[brand]` into their browsers, reducing the opportunity for those who deliberately register domain names that infringe on others' trademarks to profit. We are in complete agreement that there is a very important legal distinction between registering generically-termed domain names and cybersquatting. I am heartened to hear of the ICA's efforts to discourage the latter.

Thank you, as always, for sharing the concerns of the ICA with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fadi Chehadé". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Fadi Chehadé
President and CEO