



August 16, 2016

ICANN
12025 Waterfront Drive, #300
Los Angeles, CA 90094

Dear ICANN Board,

Greetings. I am contacting you today regarding the administration of the TLD .gay.

For purposes of introduction, I am Michael Rogers, the Executive Director of Netroots Connect, a US-based 501(c)3 corporation engaged in building capacity and collaborations between online and offline leaders. Since our inception, we have been central to the national LGBT community's efforts to integrate the growth of the Internet into our existing community organizations at the national, statewide and local levels.

On a personal note, I have worked in the LGBT movement for over 30 years, including senior positions at the National LGBTQ Task Force, Harvey Milk School and GALA Choruses, the latter being an international association of thousands of LGBT singers from across the globe.

I am committed, both personally and professionally, to share with you why it is so important to our community to award .gay to an operation truly concerned with using the TLD for the community's benefit. I have been aware of the .gay application for four years and am quite familiar with the work of the company's (Dotgay, LLC) principle, Scott Seitz.

Knowing ICANN's history, I am unclear as to why such an application would be rejected. Our organization's concern is further accelerated by the recent report from the ICANN Ombudsman. The lack of designation makes me wonder if ICANN is aware of the potential harm to the gay public this presents, or just unfamiliar with the LGBT community's needs and extensive history of how gay and now .gay can be misused by individuals intent on harming individuals. Here are some examples:

> Reparative Therapy – Despite being discounted by every major mental health association in the country, including the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association, operators across America and worldwide take advantage of unknowing individuals and their families by offering so called “reparative therapy,” or treatment to make someone “not” gay.

> Anti-equality organizations – There exists organizations almost singularly focused on slowing (and reversing) gains made by LGBT people. These groups are global, national and local in scope and present great challenges to those seeking a fairer and more just society. In these cases, it's easy to see how the .gay TLD without appropriate registration restrictions and Public Interest Commitments could be used nefariously to benefit individuals at the expense of a community that has unquestionably suffered discrimination around the world.

> The number of LGBT teens contemplating and attempting suicide is much higher than the non-LGBT population.¹ Imagine a young person seeking therapy to encounter therapy.gay only to be duped into believing the site represents professionals who support them. A non-community oriented actor could use such a TLD to build an international network of reparative therapy “professionals.”

> Anti-gay organizations could lure unsuspecting users to websites by purchasing the organization’s name with a .gay TLD. Even the mere presence of the domain suffix “.gay” would lend credibility to such an organization, even if the site directed to information detrimental to the user and the larger community.

Having worked to build collaborations across the LGBT community, I have seen numerous efforts to bring together movement’s organizations on behalf of various efforts. As the administrator of a network of over 600 LGBT organizations I can tell you that the .gay effort is unparalleled in its success in bringing together the community in support of a project.

As the director of the nation’s preeminent organization for building collaborations across the community and web, I strongly encourage you to fully consider the interests and efforts of the gay community and how Dotgay, LLC’s application for .gay has been mistreated. ICANN’s acceptance of the ICANN Ombudsman recommendation is the right path forward and it will provide the correct and deserving approval of community priority for Dotgay, LLC’s application for .gay.

Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to share my thoughts and those of Netroots Connect.

Sincerely,



Michael Rogers
Executive Director

¹ Proctor, Curtis D.; Groze, Victor K. (1994). "Risk Factors for Suicide among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youths". *Social Work*. 39 (5): 504–513.doi:10.1093/sw/39.5.504.