



**VIA EMAIL**

June 6, 2013

Dr. Stephen D. Crocker  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Mr. Fadi Chehadé  
President and CEO  
ICANN  
12025 Waterfront Drive  
Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

Re: ICANN's Actions Regarding Dotless Domains

Dear Dr, Crocker and Mr. Chehadé:

Microsoft Corporation ("Microsoft") writes to express its grave concern about ICANN's recent preliminary approval of Charleston Road Registry Inc.'s<sup>1</sup> ("CRR") amendment to its .search application to operate .search as a dotless domain. In addition to the concerns we have previously expressed on the substance of the application, we are also concerned about the sequence of decisions and process ICANN appears to be following. This includes: (i) the decision by ICANN to commission its own study of the potential risks related to dotless domain names vs. basing deliberations on SSAC's report; and (ii) granting a preliminary approval *before* ICANN has commissioned its study, let alone considered it.

We find this sequence of decisions extremely troubling in light of the chronology of events, which includes, for example, SSAC's release 15 months ago of its SAC053 report recommending against use of dotless domains and recommending contractual prohibitions against such use; and the public, written support of the SSAC's SAC053 recommendations (and warnings about the risks of ignoring those recommendations) seven months ago by three major browser companies (including Microsoft), a computer security expert renowned for discovering the DNS cache poisoning vulnerability (and also ICANN-selected Trusted Community Representative for the DNSSEC root), and ALAC. Indeed, the detailed chronology set forth below highlights the irregularity of ICANN's decisions.

Date	Event
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<sup>1</sup> CRR is a wholly owned subsidiary of Google Inc.

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Date	Event
Feb. 23, 2012	SSAC publishes SAC053 - SSAC Report on Dotless Domains, which recommends: "Dotless domains will not be universally reachable and the SSAC recommends strongly against their use. As a result, the SSAC also recommends that the use of DNS resource records such as A, AAAA, and MX in the apex of a Top-Level Domain (TLD) be contractually prohibited where appropriate and strongly discouraged in all cases." No SSAC member (including Warren Kumari of Google <sup>2</sup> ) objected to or withdrew from the report.
June 23, 2012	ICANN Board Resolution (2012.06.23.09) "directs ICANN staff to consult with the relevant communities regarding implementation of the recommendations in SAC053 and no later than September 1, 2012, to provide a briefing paper for the Board which details the technical, policy and legal issues, if any, which may arise as a result of implementing SAC053 recommendations, listing the options, if any, for mitigating such issues."
Nov. 5, 2012	Public comment period on SAC053 closes. Mozilla, Microsoft, Ian Fette (Google), Dan Kaminsky, and ALAC support SSAC recommendation that dotless domains should not be used, recommend that new gTLD registry operators be contractually prohibited from using them, and warn about implications of allowing dotless domains. The vast majority of comments opposing SSAC recommendations are from new gTLD applicants and their Affiliates.
Apr. 6, 2013	Letter from Charleston Road Registry Inc. to the General Manager of ICANN's new gTLD program, providing copy of New gTLD Application Change Request Form that includes amendment of .search application for .search to operate as dotless domain.
May 14, 2013	ICANN posts preliminary approval of CRR's requested amendment to the .search application, including the operation of .search as a dotless domain
May 18, 2013	ICANN Board passes resolutions relating to SAC057: Advisory on Internal Name Certificates including 2013.05.18.08, which "directs the President and CEO, in consultation with the SSAC, to commission a study on the use of TLDs that are not currently delegated at the root level of the public DNS in enterprises. The study should consider the potential security impacts of applied-for new-gTLD strings in relation to this usage. No Board discussion of SAC053 is reflected in the agenda for, meeting summary of, or resolutions from of the meeting.
May 28, 2013	ICANN announces that two studies have been commissioned – one called for by ICANN Board resolution 2013.05.18.08 and the other "on the potential risks related to dotless domain names based on SAC 053 report." According to the announcement, the dotless domains study report will identify and describe the potential risks raised by dotless names and "will also provide options for ICANN as to how to mitigate the various risks and will describe the pros and cons of the options."

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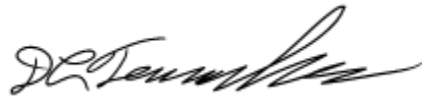
<sup>2</sup> During the Seoul Meeting Public Forum, ICANN Board member (and Google employee) Harald Alvestrand stated: "I, as an individual, am very worried about the idea of a one-level DNS system. I think that's a broken idea."

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ICANN's preliminary approval of CRR's amendment to its .search application and, two weeks later, ICANN's request for options to mitigate the potential risks associated with dotless domains suggest that ICANN has already decided to approve their use. Given the security and stability risks associated with dotless domains, Microsoft urges ICANN to withdraw its preliminary approval and ensure that the dotless domain study report receives unbiased and thorough consideration. ICANN's mandate of accountability and transparency calls for nothing less.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the points raised herein, please feel free to contact me at [davidten@microsoft.com](mailto:davidten@microsoft.com).

Respectfully submitted,



David Tennenhouse  
Corporate Vice President, Technology Policy  
Microsoft Corporation

cc:

Andrew Maurer, Australian GAC Representative  
Peter Nettlefold, Australian GAC Representative  
Heather Dryden, Chair of the GAC  
Suzanne Radell, US GAC Representative  
Cyrus Namazi, Vice President, DNS Industry Engagement  
Mr. Cherine Chalaby, Chairman of the New gTLD Committee