



ICANN Registry Request Service

Ticket ID: W3M9L-100W7

Registry Name: Afilias Limited

gTLD: .INFO

Status: ICANN Review

Status Date: 2010-02-09 14:37:48

Print Date: 2010-02-09 14:37:57

Proposed Service

Name of Proposed Service:

.INFO 1 and 2 Character Allocation Proposal

Technical description of Proposed Service:

Appendix 6 of the existing .INFO agreement between ICANN and Afilias (dated December 8, 2006) located at <http://www.icann.org/en/tlds/agreements/info/appendix-06-08dec06.htm> includes a list of second-level .INFO domain names to be reserved from registration, including:

o All single-character labels.

o All two-character labels shall be initially reserved.

Afilias now proposes to amend this contractual language and implement an equitable phased allocation program that will permit the introduction of one- and two-character .INFO domains to the marketplace, while still reserving two-letter domains that correspond to the two-letter country code names found on the ISO-3166 list.

Afilias' proposed equitable phased allocation program will have three main components, to be introduced in the following order:

- 1. An RFP round to invite interested registrants to propose specific plans for use and promotion;*
- 2. An auction round that offers domains not allocated during the RFP round; and*
- 3. A first-come, first-served (FCFS) release of any domains not allocated during the RFP or auction rounds.*

This equitable phased allocation program is designed to secure usage and promotion commitments resulting in increased awareness of the .INFO domain within the domain name marketplace, which will in turn enhance Afilias' ability to compete on more even terms with TLDs that already have one- and/or two-character domains resolving on the Internet.



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Consultation

Please describe with specificity your consultations with the community, experts and or others. What were the quantity, nature and content of the consultations?:

See Below

a. If the registry is a sponsored TLD, what were the nature and content of these consultations with the sponsored TLD community?:

Not Applicable

b. Were consultations with gTLD registrars or the registrar constituency appropriate? Which registrars were consulted? What were the nature and content of the consultation?:

Because this proposed equitable phased allocation is similar to the other recent registry service requests approved by ICANN, and because there is no impact on registrars under our proposed implementation, Afilias saw no need to engage in substantive consultations with gTLD registrars or the registrar constituency.

c. Were consultations with other constituency groups appropriate? Which groups were consulted? What were the nature and content of these consultations?:

Based on the lack of any substantive objective from the broader ICANN community in connection with similar registry service requests approved by ICANN, Afilias saw no need to consult directly with other constituency groups.

d. Were consultations with end users appropriate? Which groups were consulted? What were the nature and content of these consultations?:

Based on the lack of any substantive objective from the broader ICANN community in connection with similar registry service requests approved by ICANN, Afilias saw no need to consult directly with other constituency groups.

e. Who would endorse the introduction of this service? What were the nature and content of these consultations?:



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The release of two-character domains has been addressed in detail from the technical perspective in several previously approved Service Requests. For example, the RSTEP report on GNR's two-character name proposal

(<http://www.icann.org/registries/rsep/RSTEP-GNR-proposal-review-team-report.pdf>) provides an exhaustive review of the issues and addresses them in a positive manner.

The GNSO Council approved the recommendations sent to the ICANN Board for the introduction of new gTLDs, including endorsement of the recommendations of the Reserved

Names Working Group set forth in the RN-WG Report, which included the following recommendations: (i) single character domain names not be reserved at the second level in the future gTLDs; (ii) those currently reserved in existing gTLDs be released; (iii) registries be

permitted to release any combination of two letter and/or digit strings provided that measures to avoid confusion with any corresponding country codes are implemented. All GNSO constituencies supported the registration of single character domain names. The RN-WG Report can be found at <http://gns0.icann.org/issues/new-gtlds/final-report-rn-wg-23may07.htm>.

Further, the gTLD Registry Constituency (RyC) is in support of the release of single character domains names provided the implementation is appropriate and permitted to be unique for each registry. The RyC statement can be found at <http://www.gtldregistries.org/pdf/RyCSingleCharacter2ndNames-ConstituencyStatement.pdf>.

Also, importantly, businesses with names that can reasonably be represented by one- or two character strings and who are interested in promoting their products and services using a .INFO gTLD have expressed interest in the release of such domains.

f. Who would object the introduction of this service? What were(or would be) the nature and content of these consultations?:

Afilias is unaware of any opposition to the introduction of this service. Afilias looks forward to reviewing any concerns raised during the public comment period once this proposal is posted.

Timeline

Please describe the timeline for implementation of the proposed new registry service:



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Afilias proposes the following elements for approval in connection with this registry service.

Posting of Funnel Request;

Review and initial approval by ICANN Staff that the proposed registry service raises no security, stability or competition concerns;

Public comment period in connection with proposed contractual changes.

Preparation by ICANN staff of necessary Board documentation for approval by the ICANN Board.

Following approval by the ICANN Board, Afilias would implement the service as soon as operationally feasible.

Business Description

Describe how the Proposed Service will be offered:

Afilias' three-part equitable phased allocation process is designed first and foremost to secure usage and marketing commitments from potential registrants, which in turn will raise awareness of the .INFO gTLD.

Through the initial RFP round, we will identify candidates with the most beneficial and meaningful combination of quality, innovation, brand recognition, financial commitment to the domain name, and ability to deliver in a timely manner.

Once the RFP round is concluded, Afilias will conduct an auction of any remaining names according to a schedule determined by Afilias.

For any names not allocated during either the RFP or auction rounds, Afilias will announce a release date and allow open, first-come, first-served registration where all normal business rules apply.

Our proposed implementation is designed to identify businesses that are willing and able to commit resources to promote their brand using a .INFO domain, which will help raise awareness of the value of .INFO and promote more healthy competition in the domain name marketplace.

Afilias will introduce the proposed service using the following phased approach:

Phase 1: Request for Proposals



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Afilias will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) inviting potential .INFO registrants to submit proposals explaining how they would use and promote a particular one- or two-character domain name. Each proposal will require an application fee and prior acknowledgment and acceptance of relevant terms and conditions. The domain will initially be registered through a temporary Afilias holding account before transferring to a registrar (accredited and in good standing) of the registrant's own choosing.

Evaluation criteria will take into account the applicant's business and technical capabilities, marketing expertise, business plan and the manner and purposes for which the proposed site would be operated.

The successful applicant will:

- 1. Commit to using the one- or two-character .INFO domain as their primary web address or for a specific marketing campaign, or such other use as Afilias deems beneficial to the enhancement of the .INFO brand;*
- 2. Demonstrate a financial commitment to promoting their web address resulting in increased awareness of the .INFO gTLD;*
- 3. Meet or exceed commitments made by any competing applicants; and*
- 4. Meet minimum standards of decency and morality and be deemed by Afilias to be a positive representative of the .INFO gTLD.*

Phase 2: Auction

For the one- and two-character .INFO domains not allocated during Phase 1 (RFP), Afilias will conduct an online auction in one or more phases as determined by Afilias.

Upon payment of the auction fee in full by the winning registrant, Afilias will provide to the successful bidder an Auth Code which will allow the transfer of the domain to the winning registrant's registrar of choice.

Phase 3: First-Come, First-Served (FCFS)

Following completion of the RFP and Auction rounds, Afilias, at its option, will release remaining one- and two-character .INFO domains on a first-come, first-served basis. All normal second-level .INFO registration processes will apply, including the standard registry fee.

Describe quality assurance plan or testing of Proposed Service:



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Afilias will conduct all necessary testing with any vendor or contractor to implement the Phase 2 auction.

Please list any relevant RFCs or White Papers on the proposed service and explain how those papers are relevant.:

Not Applicable

Contractual Provisions

List the relevant contractual provisions impacted by the Proposed Service:

.INFO Registry Agreement (dated December 8, 2006) Appendix 6 Section B, located at:

<http://www.icann.org/en/tlds/agreements/info/appendix-06-08dec06.htm>

What effect, if any, will the Proposed Service have on the reporting of data to ICANN:

None

What effect, if any, will the Proposed Service have on the Whois?:

None

Contract Amendments

Please describe or provide the necessary contractual amendments for the proposed service:

[old text]

B. Additional Second-Level Reservations. In addition, the following names shall be reserved at the second level:

o All single-character labels.



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o All two-character labels shall be initially reserved.

[new text]

B. Additional Second-Level Reservations. In addition, the following names shall be reserved at the second level:

o All two-character labels that correspond to the two-letter country code names found on the ISO-3166 list at the time of contract modification.

Benefits of Service

Describe the benefits of the Proposed Service:

Afilias believes that the proposed service offers the following benefits:

- 1. Enhanced competition among gTLD registry operators*
- 2. Increased choice for registrants*
- 3. Increased usage, marketing, promotion, and awareness of the .INFO gTLD*
- 4. Increased revenue and marketing resources, including potential registrar rebate programs.*

Competition

Do you believe your proposed new Registry Service would have any positive or negative effects on competition? If so, please explain.:

Afilias believes that the proposed service will help address the current competitive imbalance in the gTLD marketplace, where some gTLDs currently have one- and two-characters resolving but .INFO does not. Afilias' ability to conduct an RFP phase to identify interested registrants that are willing and able to commit resources to promote their brand using a .INFO domain names will help to show there are alternatives to the .COM brand.

How would you define the markets in which your proposed Registry Service would compete?:



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The .INFO gTLD competes in the marketplace with both gTLDs and ccTLDs. Afilias will benefit from having the ability to leverage the legitimate interests of potential registrants to help build greater awareness of the .INFO brand.

What companies/entities provide services or products that are similar in substance or effect to your proposed Registry Service?:

The following existing gTLD registry operators currently offer or have applied to offer one- and two-character second level domain registrations:

NeuStar, Inc. (.BIZ)

Tralliance (.TRAVEL)

RegistryPro, Ltd. (.PRO)

DotCooperation, LLC (.COOP)

EmployMedia, LLC (.JOBS)

mTLD, Ltd (.MOBI)

VeriSign, Inc. (.COM/.NET)

In view of your status as a registry operator, would the introduction of your proposed Registry Service potentially impair the ability of other companies/entities that provide similar products or services to compete?:

No

Do you propose to work with a vendor or contractor to provide the proposed Registry Service? If so, what is the name of the vendor/contractor, and describe the nature of the services the vendor/contractor would provide.:

Afilias is likely to work with a vendor or contractor to implement the auction portion of our proposal. We have not yet finalized the choice of the vendor/contractor.

Have you communicated with any of the entities whose products or services might be affected by the introduction of your proposed Registry Service? If so, please describe the communications.:

Afilias is unaware of any entities whose products or services might be affected by the introduction of our service.



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Do you have any documents that address the possible effects on competition of your proposed Registry Service? If so, please submit them with your application. (ICANN will keep the documents confidential):

Once approved, Afilias' proposed service will help improve competition in the TLD marketplace.

Security and Stability

Does the proposed service alter the storage and input of Registry Data?:

No. Afilias anticipates no change in the storage and/or input of Registry Data.

Please explain how the proposed service will affect the throughput, response time, consistency or coherence of responses to Internet servers or end systems:

Afilias anticipates no adverse impact on the throughput, response time, and consistency of coherence of responses to Internet servers or end systems.

Have technical concerns been raised about the proposed service, and if so, how do you intend to address those concerns?:

Afilias is not aware of any technical concerns regarding the proposed service..

Other Issues

Are there any Intellectual Property considerations raised by the Proposed Service:

Any Intellectual Property considerations raised by the proposed service are addressed by established, existing processes (UDRP).

Does the proposed service contain intellectual property exclusive to your gTLD registry?:

No.



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List Disclaimers provided to potential customers regarding the Proposed Service:

Not Applicable.

Any other relevant information to include with this request:

None.