New TLDs: The ICANN Story

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Lots of people depend on the Internet
- 420+ million Internet users worldwide
- 601+ million by 2002

Lots of people depend on the Internet’s Domain Name System (DNS)
- Highly reliable - billions of name resolutions every day
- Highly scalable - massive growth of Internet supported
- Universal resolvability - means every computer on the Internet can reach every other, with amazing reliability

Lots of businesses depend on the DNS
- User confidence is essential
New Top-Level Domains

• Why add new TLDs?
  – Usefulness of the DNS for Internet users
  – Increased registry competition
  – User choice

• First group chosen in November 2000
  – Global Open: <.info>, <.biz>
  – Professionals: <.pro>
  – Individuals: <.name>
  – Specialized: <.museum>, <.aero>, <.coop>
1st Round of New TLDs

- “Proof of concept”
- Basic idea:
  - Choose diverse TLD models
  - Launch with care
  - Observe carefully
  - Learn from experience
Selection process

• Basic features
  – Transparent & predictable
  – 44 applications, publicly posted
  – Independent review by technical & financial experts
  – Community input mechanisms

• Result was diverse group for proof of concept:
  – For-profit and not-for-profit registries
  – Open and chartered TLDs
  – Established firms and entrepreneurs
  – US & non-US
Challenges for new TLDs

• Biggest challenge: Launch phase
  – Intellectual Property & cybersquatting fears
  – Opening day rush:
    • Robust technical infrastructure
    • Fairness to everyone

• Consumer Alert: Sleazy pre-registration offers
  – See Federal Trade Commission Warning:
    <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/alerts/domainalrt.htm>
The Future

• If the “proof of concept” phase is successful, there will be future rounds
  – So far, every reason to think it’ll be successful
  – Goal: Less burdensome, less expensive, more objective selection process

• Bottom line(s):
  – It’s an exciting time for the Internet
  – Businesses need to pay attention
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