



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

## NEWS RELEASE

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# Internet Naming System Goes Global

## ICANN Approves Initial Use of Internationalized Domain Names

**Seoul, South Korea... October 30, 2009...** The Internet's naming system has become truly global with the approval of new extensions that will eventually enable entire website address names to be written in all the language scripts of the world.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) today agreed on the introduction of a number of "internationalized" domain names, or IDNs, where scripts such as Chinese, Korean or Arabic will be used in the last portion of an address name – the part after the dot such as dot-com and dot-org.

Currently, due to technical constraints, all domain names end in letters from the Latin alphabet (A through Z). After years of work by ICANN, a global system for the use of other scripts in domain names has been designed, tested and now approved. It could lead to a dramatic increase in the number of global Internet users.

"This is only the first step, but it is an incredibly big one and an historic move toward the internationalization of the Internet," said Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's President and CEO. "We just made the Internet much more accessible to millions of people in regions such as Asia, the Middle East and Russia."

At the close of ICANN's 36<sup>th</sup> International Meeting in Seoul, South Korea, the ICANN Board approved a "fast track" system for a limited number of IDNs. The program will be rolled out in stages, with the first set to begin on November 16. Initially, IDNs will only be allowed on a limited basis involving country codes, which are the designators at the end of an address name, such as dot-kr (for Korea) or dot-ru (for Russia). Those countries

can now use IDNs to replace the dot-kr or the do-ru. Eventually, the use of IDNs will be vastly expanded to all types of Internet address names.

“This is a culmination of years of work, tests, study and discussion by the ICANN community,” said Peter Dengate Thrush, Chairman of the Board of Directors. “To see this finally start to unfold is to see the beginning of an historic change in the Internet and who uses it.”

“The meaning behind this measure is that the Internet belongs to everyone, no matter what language they speak,” said Rod Beckstrom. “It’s all about inclusion of all people in all regions of the globe. The Internet is about bringing the world together and this will facilitate that effort.”

Other achievements at the Seoul meeting included:

- Discussions on the constantly evolving cyber-security threats to the domain name system (DNS). Security experts discussed how best to collaborate and share information in advancing DNS Security (DNSSEC).
- Initial discussions for how ICANN will keep itself accountable to the global Internet community following the signing of a new agreement between ICANN and the United States government (the Affirmation of Commitments).

The next international ICANN meeting (its 37<sup>th</sup>) is scheduled to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, March 7-12, 2010.

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To read more about the implementation of the IDN measure passed by the ICANN Board go here: <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/idn-cctld-implementation-plan-30sep09-en.pdf>.

To read about IDNs in general go here: <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/factsheet-idn-fast-track-oct09-en.pdf>.

To read about DNS Security (DNSSEC) go here: <http://sel.icann.org/node/7089>

To read more about the Affirmation of Commitments go here: <http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-30sep09-en.htm>

#### **About ICANN:**

To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn't have one global Internet. ICANN was formed in 1998. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. ICANN doesn't control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn't deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet. **For more information please visit: [www.icann.org](http://www.icann.org).**