

# ICANNWIKIQUICKIE

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# Rhetorical Questions on IDN TLD Approaches

by Jothan Frakes - <http://blog.jothan.com/>



With the IGF underway, there's a lot of discussion surrounding Internationalized Domain Names (IDN). There has been lots of great progress in IDN technology with IE7 and Firefox browsers now fully IDN-Aware, strong IDN registrations and websites behind them.

Now that many of the hurdles to implementation have been addressed to where the technology is either currently available to most internet users, or shall be soon, we now focus to the other aspects of IDN.

Most folks who work in a non-Romanized character set state that their user experience is a better experience if the entire domain name is in their native character set (Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, etc.) versus having to switch back and forth between Bopomofo and ASCII keyboard entry to compose a URL.

With discussions are now turning to implementations of IDN top level domains, I wanted to pose some questions (rhetorical) to our community on CircleID as fodder for some good dialog on the topic.

Here's some rhetorical questions to consider that I think exist in the IDN discussions...

How many folks will step up and state that they should operate an IDN version of an existing Top-Level Domain (TLD):  
(translated using Google)

.网络 (.network in Chinese) or

.정보 (.info in Korean)?

Who is most appropriate when there is an incumbent operator of the roman character string, or multiple languages in addition to the initial string?

.Ásia (.asia in Portuguese) or

.اسيا (.asia in arabic)

in addition to .asia.

Who then is the registrant of news.asia, and is it the same registrant as news.Ásia, news.اسيا, الأخبار.اسيا or notícia. Ásia?

Exacerbate this with generic words that there are trademarks for and how intellectual property interests clamoring for these strings (i.e. united, apple, or delta) and all interested parties registering domains. How will this play out?

Is the registry the government, or is it the private entity that currently operates the equivalent existing TLD, or should it be a new company?

What if the government is one registry, with one sovereign set of laws, and another registry of the same string in a different language is a company?

These are tough questions that are being addressed that are part of the large discussions that are in play over the IDN solutions on the horizon.

# Registrar Accreditation Policy and Process Must be Reviewed

from ICANN.org

**President and CEO of ICANN, Dr Paul Twomey today called for major review of ICANN's Registrar Accreditation Agreements (RAA) and the Accreditation process.**



“What has happened to registrants with RegisterFly.com has made it clear there must be comprehensive review of the registrar accreditation process and the content of the RAA” he said. “This is going to be a key debate at our Lisbon meeting scheduled for 26 - 30 March 2007. There must be clear decisions made on changes. As a community we cannot put this off.”

“ICANN introduced competition to the domain name market in 1998. Back then there was one registrar. There are now over 865. That’s a good thing because it has made domain names cheaper and offered more choice. But the RAA was designed and signed when the domain name market was much smaller. The market now supports about 70 million generic TLD names and is growing.” Dr Twomey said.

“Registrants suffer most from weaknesses in the RAA and I want to make sure that ICANN’s accreditation process and our agreement gives us the ability to respond more strongly and flexibly in the future” he said.

“What is presently happening with RegisterFly makes it clear that there are also some problems with proxy registrations. Specifically, proxy registrations are available as a choice, but people who have them have great difficulties getting access to their data and having their domain name transferred where a registrar is uncooperative or has other problems with transfer. ICANN has had difficulty accessing this data too,” Dr Twomey said.

“We need to expedite data escrow. There has been a long and detailed discussion and much interaction between ICANN staff and registrars on this issue. But we need to reach a conclusion. Recent events and the Lisbon meeting present that opportunity. There are resource implications and usage rules that need to be discussed among the ICANN community. I look forward to the continuing efforts and collaboration of registrars with ICANN in that regard ” he said.

“Registrants clearly want ICANN to have more capacity to access data on their behalf if there are significant problems with their registrar. There is a need for better enforcement mechanisms and an ability for ICANN to intervene more quickly if a registrar fails or is engaged in damaging business practice” he added.

“There’s also no way that registrants can measure the performance of registrars in any independent comparative way. That should be encouraged” Dr Twomey said.

“The vast majority of ICANN’s accredited registrars offer high levels of service and integrity. But as we have seen, there is the risk that poorly performing registrars can hurt registrants very significantly. If the domain name industry wants to remain community self –regulating as it has been until now we need to put in place further sensible and practical measures to protect registrants” he noted.

Dr Twomey said he would like to see the following issues included in any discussion:

## **Purpose of Register Accreditation Policy and Agreement**

What is the primary purpose of the Registration Accreditation Agreement? Is it a compliance tool?

If so how can it be strengthened to protect registrants?

### **Rating of Registrars**

How should ICANN and/or the registrar constituency encourage a system that rates registrars according to customer service and performance and should this be available to registrants?

### **Affiliated Registrars / Group ownership**

Affiliated registrars have common ownership or control. What is the best mechanism for ICANN to hold affiliated registrars accountable for an affiliate's actions?

### **Additional compliance enforcement tools**

Stronger compliance tools need to be included in any reform to the RAA. What are those tools? Do they encompass liquidated damages? Should registrars be able to be suspended more readily? Are there other options? What are the mechanisms that allow such options to be enforced quickly?

### **Transfer policy**

What elements of the transfer policy need to be reformed? Should registrants have an alternative to their current registrar for the issuing of authcodes and the unlocking of them? Should ICANN or another entity be able to do this?

### **Registrar operator skill testing**

How is it possible to assess registrar skills and to train registrars to a common standard of performance upon which registrants can rely?

### **Accreditation by purchase**

It is possible for companies to 'avoid' accreditation application process by buying a registrar. How can abuse of this loophole be stopped?

### **Proxy registrations**

There needs to be an examination of proxy registrations in light of difficulties faced in registrar data recovery. What is the balance between privacy and disclosure?

### **Reseller liability under RAA**

What tools are needed to ensure better accountability by resellers to registrants?

### **Registrar data escrow**

What data needs to be escrowed? If implementation needs to move faster, greater resource allocation is required. What level of resourcing is necessary?

### **Clarification of ICANN's responsibilities and the options available to registrants**

ICANN recently posted a guide for registrants on its website but additional consumer options (outside ICANN) should be identified for and provided to registrants. Is there a need for a new entity to assist customers and intervene on behalf of their concerns?

“All ICANN stakeholders need to be involved in this debate. But in particular I would like to see registrars and registrants actively engaged in the discussion,” Dr Twomey said. “It is in their interests to make sure that poor practice is driven from the process and that the protection of registrants is increased.”

# Are We Slowly Losing Control of the Internet?

by Karl Auerbach <http://www.cavebear.com/cbblog/>

I have long been intrigued by the question of how do we turn the internet into a lifeline grade infrastructure.

My hope that this will occur soon or even within decades is diminishing.

Most of us observe, almost daily, how even well established infrastructures tend to crumble when stressed, even slightly. For example, even something as small and foreseeable as a typo in someone's name or SSN number during a medical visit can generate months of grief when dealing with insurance companies.



I was at the O'Reilly Etel conference last week. The content was impressive and the people there were frequently the primary actors in the creation and deployment of VOIP. However, not once during the three days did I hear a serious discussion by a speaker or in the hallways about how this evolving system would be managed, monitored, diagnosed, or repaired.

My mailbox is being filled with IETF announcements for the upcoming meeting in Prague. I see internet draft after internet draft making proposals that are going to cause implementation errors, security holes, and ultimately service outages.

Take for example the prime candidate protocol for VOIP - SIP.

I've spoken to many people who have implemented SIP components. There is a common theme - that SIP is far too complex. Even the basic encoding method is a mess - apparently the SIP working group could not agree among alternatives, so like most committees, they comprised by allowing all alternatives. The result is that the SIP implementer has to write code to handle many different representations of exactly the same information. That means that there will probably be code paths that are insufficiently, or never, tested. It also means that SIP systems will probably be susceptible to failure or misbehavior when introduced, perhaps years after initial instillation, to new SIP devices based on different SIP engines.

And to top that off, many of the new proposals for SIP use completely different encoding methods (the darling of the moment is XML) from the textual ASCII/UTF8 form used in the core parts of SIP. Implementers are going to go gray from the stress of trying to make this mish-mosh work. And people who have to maintain and troubleshoot VOIP will go bleary eyed and take hours longer to resolve outages than they would had there been a consistent and uniform design.

There is a lot of talk about the benefits of network effects, but few people talk about how those

same network effects lock-in the work of the past and make it difficult, perhaps impossible, to evolve to new and improved mechanisms.

History often survives and reaches out through very long periods of time. It has been said that the size of modern day airplanes are derived from the width of the Roman horse: The width of the horse dictated the spacing of wheels on Roman carts. Those carts created standardized ruts that coerced other carts to conform through the ages. Early railroads, adopting carts, spaced the rails one-rut-pair width apart. That width dictated cargo load size. The need to carry those cargos has affected airplane design.

Consider how long it has taken to deploy IPv6 - a technology that celebrated its 10th anniversary a few years ago. And IPv6 has the luxury of being an alternative to IPv4 rather than a transparently compatible upgrade. Consider how much longer it will take to deploy VOIP protocol redesigns when the old protocol is embedded in telephones around the world?

We have to admire old Ma Bell for building a reliable and maintainable system. Yes, it took a 100 years of work - and modern telco phones, particularly on the local loop, use a lot of technology created in the late 1800's.

You would have thought that in this internet age that we might have learned that clarity of internet protocol design is a great virtue and that management, diagnostics, and security are not afterthoughts but primary design goals.

There is a lot of noise out there about internet stability. And a lot of people and businesses are risking their actual and economic well being on the net, and the applications layered on it, really being stable and reliable.

But I have great concern that our approach to the internet resembles a high pillar of round stones piled on top of other round stones - we should not be surprised when it begins to wobble and then falls to the ground.

I am beginning to foresee a future internet in which people involved in management, troubleshooting, and repair are engaged in a Sisyphean effort to provide service in the face of increasingly non-unified design of internet protocols. And in that future, users will have to learn to expect outages and become accustomed to dealing with service provider customer service "associates" whose main job is to buy time to keep customers from rioting while the technical repair team tries to figure out what happened, where it happened, and what to do about it.

# In Bad Taste

by John Levine - <http://weblog.johnlevine.com>



So-called domain tasting is one of the more unpleasant developments in the domain business in the past year. Domain speculators are registering millions of domains without paying for them, in a business model not unlike running a condiment business by visiting every fast food restaurant in town and scooping up all of the ketchup packets.

Since 2003, the contract between ICANN and each unsponsored TLD registry (.biz, .com, .info, .net, .org, and .pro) has added an Add Grace Period (AGP) of five days during which a registrant can delete a newly registered domain and get a full refund. Although this provision was clearly intended to allow registrars to correct the occasional typo and spelling error in registrations, speculators realized that this allows them to try out any domain for five days for free.

As soon as the speculators (who call themselves "domainers") figured this out, they started using automated software to register domains like crazy. They put up web pages full of pay-per-click ads, keep the few that make money during the five days, and refund the rest. Many of the speculative domains are expiring ones, since those might already be indexed in Google and have some traffic, others are slightly misspelled versions of existing domains to catch traffic from people who make typing errors.

Registries are close-mouthed about the number of domains that are refunded, but informed estimates from Bret Fausett, citing VeriSign's Stratton Scavlos, and from Godaddy's Bob Parsons say that it's grown in recent months to be about 99% of them.

That's bad.

The minor problem is that the vast speculative traffic makes it hard for normal registrants to get names they want, although there's no particular reason to think that there's much overlap between the recycled and typo domains the speculators favor, and the new domains that new registrants want. A related and slightly more serious problem is that domains are repurposed to new, different, and often sleazy uses, with the standard example being a rape crisis site that turned into a sex toy store. The big problem is that it puts a severe load on the registries, and the speculators are being subsidized by the real registrants. Assuming the 99% number is reasonably accurate, that means that for every normal paid registration, there are 100 speculative registrations and then 100 refunds, that is, 200 unpaid registry transactions for every paid one.

Management at PIR, which runs the .ORG registry, have told me what a problem it's been to keep up with the growing load of speculative registrations. Last month they wrote a letter to the ICANN Security & Stability Advisory Committee expressing their concern both about the load on the registry and showing the example of the crisis center site suddenly sprouting ads for butt plugs. Yet, Karl Auerbach noted that VeriSign hasn't complained about the load on .com, so they can evidently afford the 200 free transactions for every \$6 paid one, telling us that the actual cost to handle a registration is under three cents.

Fixing this problem would be easy—keep some of the money when a domain is refunded. Bob Parsons suggests keeping the 25 cent fee paid to ICANN but refunding the full registry fee, to avoid giving registries any incentive to encourage refunds.

Many other people have reported on this situation, but what I haven't seen brought out is that this problem was both completely unnecessary and completely predictable. The AGP was added to registry contracts at the same time as the redemption period and other items to make it easier for a registrant to reclaim a domain that expired by mistake. Mistaken expiration problems were real, and there was considerable discussion at ICANN and elsewhere about them, but mistaken registrations simply are not a significant problem. There aren't very many of them, and unlike a mistaken expiration, the most you lose from a mistaken registration is the ten bucks or so you paid for it. So where did the AGP come from? As far as I can see, nobody asked for it, some member of the ICANN staff added it, the board never debated it, and it went through on auto-pilot.

Anyone who registered domains back in the pre-ICANN era, which I hope would include some of the ICANN board members, should remember what went on back in the good old days. You e-mailed a registration form to NSI who did the registration within a day or so and sent you a bill for \$100 or later \$70. Unpaid domains were deleted after a couple of weeks. Domain speculators took advantage of that loophole, too, registering thousands of domains (limited by the slow e-mail based system), and, before the era of pay per click trying to resell them at a profit before they expired. It is my distinct recollection that the new multi-registrar system started in 1999 required prepayment to stop that speculation. I realize that 1999 was an aeon ago in Internet years, but it's only seven people years. Have we really forgotten our history that fast?



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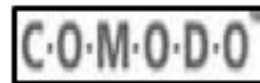
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