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10 January 2017

# **Global Domain Name Registration Guidelines**

**Registration Guidelines and Practices**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide a global domain name registration guidelines. These guidelines affect operations of ccTLDs and gTLDs. The administration of ccTLDs and gTLDs is delegated to entities or organizations known as a Registry.

The Registry will thereon introduce a registration process, which will enable Registrars to be able to acquire 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level domain names under either ccTLDs or gTLDs.

Through a Registry, Registrars can either acquire a 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level domain name on behalf of a registrant for a certain fee determined by them.

This document outlines the registration process of Domain Names as guided by the ICANN's Guide to Domain Names registration. The document also covers registration fees, transfer and renewal process guidelines among others.

The last part of this document is aimed at investigating and understanding the registration process of various Registry Operators.

The guidelines referenced here are derived from prominent Registry operators, namely:

**.UK:** <https://www.theukdomain.uk/uk/>

- [608 457](#) Domains

**.NZ:** <http://www.getyourselfonline.nz/>

- [669 714](#) Domains

**.AU:** <https://www.ausregistry.com.au/>

- [3 035 916](#) Domains

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**“Accredited Registrar”** Registrar that has entered into an agreement (the Registry-Registrar Agreement) with the Registry Operator and is authorized to register Domain Names in the TLD;

**“Applicant”** means the entity or collective entity applying for the domain name;

**“ccTLD”** means country code domain at the top level of the Internet's domain name system assigned according to the two-letter codes in the International Standard ISO 3166-1 (Codes for Representation of names of Countries and their Subdivision);

**“Domain”** means set of host names consisting of a single domain name and all the domain names below it;

**“Domain Name”** means an alphanumeric designation that is registered or assigned in respect of an electronic address or other resource on the Internet;

**“ICANN”** means Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a California non-profit public benefit corporation;

**“IDN”** means Internationalized Domain Names;

**“TLD”** means Top-Level Domain;

**“UDRP”** means Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy means the ICANN UDRP as described in <http://www.icann.org/dndr/udrp/policy.htm>;

**“Privacy Registration Service”** means a service that a Registrar may provide to a Registrant whereby the Registrant is listed as the Domain Name holder of record, but instead of listing the Registrant's contact information, alternative, reliable contact information (such mail forwarding service) provided by the Registrar or its affiliate is listed in the Whois database;

**“Proxy Registration Service”** means a service that whereby a Registrar lists itself or its affiliate as the Domain Name holder of record and lists reliable contact information in the Whois database instead of listing the Registrant and its contact information;

**“Registrant”** means the authoritative holder of a registered Domain Name;

**“Registry”** Registry Operator of a particular ccTLD or gTLD;

**“Registry database”** means an electronic database comprising of Registry data in an SLD;

**“Reseller”** means a person appointed by the Registrar to promote, market and/or provide some or all of the Registrar Services for its own account within a particular namespace;

**“SLD or Second-Level Domain”** means any subdomain which fall directly under a TLD in the domain name space;

**“TLD” or “Top-Level”** Domain means a top-level domain of the domain name system;

**“Unrestricted” TLD” or SLD”** means a TLD or an SLD that has no eligibility requirements and that normally accepts applications from all-corners on a first-come, first-served basis;

**“Whois”** Service means the protocol used to provide a public information service in relation to the Registry data.

## **3. Domain Registration**

### **3.1 Domain Name registration process**

According to ICANN's Domain Name registration guidelines, the following are the process steps to register a Domain Name:

#### **3.1.1 Choose the top-level domain and the second level domain**

3.1.1.1 The first step of registering a Domain Name is to select the top-level domain (TLD) (e.g. .com, .net, .org or under ccTLD .za, second-level domain (SLD): .co.za, org.za) that you would like to register a name in that Domain Namespace.

#### **3.1.2 Select a Registrar or Reseller with which to register**

3.1.2.1 The next step is to select the Registrar and decide a number years for which you would like to register. Most Registrars offers a registration period of from 1 to 10 years.

#### **3.1.3 Check the availability of your choice of a Domain Name**

3.1.3.1 The next step is to see whether the name the applicant wants is available. In the case of a Generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD), if the Domain Name is still available, the applicant can register it directly with a Registrar or through a Reseller that has a relationship with the Registrar.

3.1.3.2 If the Domain Name you wish to register is not available, you could modify the second-level part of the Domain Name by trying a different way to describe the same idea (e.g. domain.co.za or domains.co.za). The search tools on Registrar websites often have features that suggests variations on a name that might be available when the primary name selected is not.

3.1.3.3 Some Registrar websites will suggest different SLDs (extensions) where the desired name is available (e.g. domain.org.za or domain.co.za).

#### **3.1.3.4 Eligibility Criteria**

3.1.3.4.1 Some of the domains and domain extensions have eligibility requirements (restricted) and others are not restricted.

3.1.3.4.2 One way to search the availability of the Domain Name is to make use of the Whois tool provided by the Registrar of that particular domain name extension.

#### **3.1.4 Decide on the length of registration**

3.1.4.1 Domain Names in gTLDs can be registered using the 26 letters of Latin script (A to Z), and can include the number 0-9. They can also include hyphen"-", although not as the first character or last character of the Domain Name.

3.1.4.2 This set of characters is often referred to as ASCII, which stands for American Standard Code for Information Interchange.

3.1.4.3 Domain Names can be a total of 63 characters long, not including the extension, e.g. 63 characters followed by Top-Level Domain (TLD).

### **3.1.5 Complete the registration procedures, including payment**

3.1.5.1 The final step is to complete the registration procedures with the Registrar or Reseller selected.

## **3.2 Selection of a Domain Name**

The following are the ICANN's guidelines for selecting a Domain Name to register:

### **3.2.1 Domain Name to represent myself or my business**

3.2.1.1 Registrants may register their names as Domain Names provided that name is not taken by someone else, or their organisation's name as a Domain Name for their organisation.

### **3.2.2 Distinctive Domain Name that set itself apart from others**

3.2.2.1 You might consider whether your primary goals are to have your Domain Name establish an online identity or brand, be distinctive, be descriptive or be easy to remember.

### **3.2.3 Descriptive second-level domain or top-level domain easy to remember**

3.2.3.1 For Second-level part of the Domain Name (the characters before the last dot in the Domain Name), you might have many choices, depending on what others Registrants have already registered.

3.2.3.2 Many Registrants seek a second-level Domain Name that is descriptive and easy for others to recall and type.

### **3.2.4 Register in a restricted gTLD or in a restricted second-level under a ccTLD**

3.2.4.1 Most gTLD tells users about the kind of content they will find under the extension (i.e. .legal. On the other hand, registration in a restricted gTLD may be useful as it could demonstrate that the registrant has a certain qualification that has been verified by an authoritative source, i.e. .law gTLD.

3.2.4.2 Country-code Top-level Domains (ccTLD) are two-letter extensions that correspond to a country in which it is delegated, i.e. za for South Africa, .au for Australia, and .uk for United Kingdom. Some of these domains also have restrictions on who can register in them.

### **3.3 Registrar: and how to select one**

#### **3.3.1 gTLD Registrar**

- 3.3.1.1 A Registrar for a gTLD domain is an ICANN-accredited company that processes registration for the desired Domain Name on behalf of the Registrant, if it is available.
- 3.3.1.2 The Registrar does this through the Registry, which is the entity that maintains the authoritative database for a domain name selected.
- 3.3.1.3 Domain Names can be registered through many different companies, which competes with one another on the basis of price, value-added services and customer services, among other factors.
- 3.3.1.4 It is also possible to register a Domain Name through a Reseller, which has a business arrangement with the Registrar. ICANN does not maintain a listing of domain Resellers, as it has no contractual relationship with them.
- 3.3.1.5 List of ICANN Registrars can be found at: [http://www.icann.org/en/registrars/accredited - list.html](http://www.icann.org/en/registrars/accredited-list.html)

### **3.4 Search or Domain Name availability**

- 3.4.1 Most Domain Names are available on a first-come first-served basis.
- 3.4.2 Registrants can check the availability of the name they wish to register, usually on the website of the Registrar.
- 3.4.3 You search for your desired Domain Name to see if it is available, many Registrars search systems will also allow you to search across many TLDs, both gTLDs and ccTLDs, to see whether the Domain Name is available in any or all TLDs.
- 3.4.4 Some other search systems propose names that are similar to the name you have chosen if the name you searched is not available.

### **3.5 Registration Process**

ICANN Domain Name registration process is as follows:

- 3.5.1 Registrant to provide contact and technical information.
- 3.5.2 The Registrar will keep records of contact information and submit the technical information to the entity known as the Registry, that maintains the central directory for that TLD. Each TLD has only one authoritative Registry, which provides other computers on the Internet with the information necessary to send your emails or to find your website.
- 3.5.3 As part of the registration process, Registrant will be required to enter into a contract with the Registrar or Reseller that the Registrant has selected.

- 3.5.4 That contract sets forth the terms under which the registration is accepted and will be maintained.
- 3.5.5 Upon a successful completion of the registration process, the Domain Name becomes a Registrant new domain name.

### **3.6 Domain Name Costs**

- 3.6.1 Registrars are allowed to set their own prices for Domain Name registration services.
- 3.6.2 Registrars may also offer Domain Name registrations packaged with other services.
- 3.6.3 An extremely high price can indicate that the Domain Name is being offered by a sales channel that focuses on the names it has determined to be premium or higher value.

### **3.7 Protection of Personal Information**

- 3.7.1 For most gTLDs, information about the Registrant of each Domain Name is publicly available in each Registry's Whois database. Whois database is used to facilitate the resolution of the technical problems and to enforce consumer protection, trademarks and other laws.
- 3.7.2 As part of the registration process, Registrant must provide the Registrar with accurate and reliable contact details and promptly correct and update these details as necessary.
- 3.7.3 The Registrant information includes full name, valid postal address, email address, voice telephone number and fax (if applicable) for the registrant.
- 3.7.4 In order to avoid identity theft and other criminal activity, many individuals are legitimately concerned about having their personal data publicly available on the Internet. Registrants may opt to use their business or their employment valid postal and email addresses or another option is to make use of privacy protection or proxy services, usually for additional fee that Registrar may charge. Another option is to register through an intermediary, such as Internet Service Provider (ISP) or web hosting company, which then becomes the Registrant of record.

### **3.8 International Domain Name (IDN) Registration**

- 3.8.1 International Domain Names (IDNs) are Domain Names containing characters from non-Latin scripts, such as those used by Arabic or Chinese languages.
- 3.8.2 Registrants should check with Registrars to see whether it supports IDNs registrations.
- 3.8.3 It is possible to register a Domain Name in certain non-Latin scripts, it may not be possible to use the Domain Name for email because the technical standards for IDN email is not yet finalized.
- 3.8.4 A complete list of IDN gTLDs and ccTLDs can be found on ICANN's website at: <http://icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/string-evaluation-completion-en.htm>

### **3.9 Domain Name Registrant's rights and obligations**

3.9.1 As the licensed holder of a Domain Name for its registration period, Registrant have the right to use that name during that period of registration, consistent with certain terms and conditions, as well as applicable laws and regulations.

3.9.2 Domain Name Registrants are required to:

- Provide Registrar with accurate and reliable contact details and promptly correct and update them as necessary, including full name and postal address, as well as the name, postal address, email address, voice telephone number and, where available, fax number for the technical administrative contact listed.

3.9.3 The Registrar is required to:

- Inform the Registrant about the intended purpose for which any personal data that it collects from the Registrant will be used.
- Take reasonable precautions to protect Registrant's personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorized access or disclosure, alteration or destruction.

### **3.10 Domain Name Renewal**

3.10.1 Registrant must contact their Registrar before the expiration of the Domain Name if intended to renew the registration, unless the domain registration has been signed for an automatic renewal services offered by the respective Registrar.

3.10.2 Registrants are given a choice of selecting a one year, or longer, registration period upon first registration.

### **3.11 Accidental deletion of a domain due to Domain Name Not renewed**

3.11.1 Some Registrars have instituted a Redemption Grace Period (RGP) for expired Domain Names.

3.11.2 Under the RGP, deletion of a name, whether intentional or not, results in 30-day Deletion Name RGP, and is placed on Registry-hold.

3.11.3 Domain Names in the Registry-hold do not function, Registrant cannot send or receive emails from the Domain Name in the Registry-hold. This is to alert the Registrant that the registration has lapsed.

3.11.4 Other Registrars have adopted other ways to alert the Registrant if the Registrant fails to renew the Domain Name, such as sending email and postal mail notifications to remind the Registrant to renew the domain.

### **3.12 Domain Name Transfer**

- 3.12.1 According to ICANN's Registration Guidelines, registered Domain Names can be freely transferred to another Registrar as long as more than 60 days have passed since it was registered or previously transferred, and no other exclusions stated in the Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy (IRTP) apply. ICANN IRTP can be at: <http://icann.org/en/transfers/>
- 3.12.2 People consider transfers for variety of reasons, including potential costs savings, value added service and customer services.
- 3.12.3 Each Registrar is allowed to develop its own transfer procedures and deadlines as long as they are clear, concise, and meet certain ICANN contractual requirements.
- 3.12.4 Depending on their Registrar's procedures, the Registrant will probably need to initiate the request with the new Registrar. Once it has confirmed the request, it will send a transfer request to the TLD or SLD Registry involved. The Registry will then communicate with the current Registrar, who may ask to confirm the transfer with the Registrant and then send an acceptance or rejection notice back to the Registry, which will notify the new Registrar.
- 3.12.5 If the current Registrar does nothing, the transfer will proceed. If it denies the transfer, it must give a valid reason for doing so. The new Registrar then advises the Registrant when a transfer is complete.

### **3.13 Domain Name Disputes**

- 3.13.1 Remedy for dispute with a third party depends on the nature of the complaint. All ICANN accredited Registrar have agreed to follow a Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) to resolve disputes over registration and use of domain names.
- 3.13.2 During registration, each Registrant agrees to abide by this policy. ICANN's UDRP policies can be found at: <http://www.icann.org/en/udrp/policy.htm>

#### 4. Global domain name registration comparison for selected ccTLDs

GLOBAL DOMAIN REGISTRATION COMPARISON				
Country ccTLD	.AU	.NZ	.UK	.ZA
Domain Registration Function	Centralized <sup>1</sup>	Centralized <sup>1</sup>	Centralized <sup>1</sup>	Centralized <sup>2</sup>
System Registration Process	EPP	EPP	EPP	EPP <sup>3*</sup>
Registrar Accreditation	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>5</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Eligibility Criteria	Australians only	New Zealand only	Britain (UK)	South Africans <sup>4</sup>
Registration License	2 Years	1-10 Years	1-10 Years	1-10 Years <sup>3</sup>
REGISTRATION PROCESS				
<b>Registration Process</b>				
Registration system Model	Registry-Registrar-Registrant	Registry-Registrar-Registrant	Registry-Registrar-Registrant	Registry-Registrar-Registrant <sup>3</sup>
<b>Policy</b>				
Renewal Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Auto-Renewal	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>
ADR Policy	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>
<b>Transfer Process</b>				
Transfer Policy (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Transfer Fees	No	No	No	No
Transfer Waiting Period	None	5 days	None	None
Reseller info	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Personal Information Protection	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Centralization means the registration on unrestricted domains is centralized to a single entity performing Registry function including the central Whois function.
2. EPP only on ZACR administered SLDs.
3. Only on centralized SLDs
4. Eligibility criteria applies only on selected SLDs
5. Not all Registrars are accredited