

ICANN Approves Historic Change to Internet's Domain Name System

Board Votes to Launch New Generic Top-Level Domains

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Singapore / ICANN's Board of Directors has approved a plan to usher in one of the biggest changes ever to the Internet's Domain Name System. The Board vote was 13 approving, 1 opposed, and 2 abstaining.

During a special meeting, the Board approved a plan to dramatically increase the number of Internet domain name endings -- called generic top-level domains (gTLDs) -- from the current 22, which includes such familiar domains as .com, .org and .net.

"ICANN has opened the Internet's naming system to unleash the global human imagination. Today's decision respects the rights of groups to create new Top Level Domains in any language or script. We hope this allows the domain name system to better serve all of mankind," said Rod Beckstrom, President and Chief Executive Officer of ICANN.

New gTLDs will change the way people find information on the Internet and how businesses plan and structure their online presence. Internet address names will be able to end with almost any word in any language, offering organizations around the world the opportunity to market their brand, products, community or cause in new and innovative ways.

"Today's decision will usher in a new Internet age," said Peter Dengate Thrush, Chairman of ICANN's Board of Directors. "We have provided a platform for the next generation of creativity and inspiration."

The decision to proceed with the gTLD program follows many years of discussion, debate and deliberation with the Internet community, business groups and governments. The Applicant Guidebook, a rulebook explaining how to apply for a new gTLD, went through seven significant revisions to incorporate more than 1,000 comments from the public. Strong efforts were made to address the concerns of all interested parties, and to ensure that the security, stability and resiliency of the Internet are not compromised.

ICANN will soon begin a global campaign to tell the world about this dramatic change in Internet names and to raise awareness of the opportunities afforded by new gTLDs. Applications for new gTLDs will be accepted from 12 January 2012 to 12 April 2012.