

ICANN soliciting public feedback on proposed gTLD expansion through July 6, 2009

July 2, 2009

In advance of the expansion of generic top-level domains (gTLDs), the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is soliciting public comment from trademark owners through July 6, 2009. The internet's address system, which is administered by ICANN, currently uses 21 well-known gTLDs like .com and .org that act as domain name suffixes. ICANN, however, is about to significantly change the domain name system with the introduction of new gTLDs. Under the new system, trademark owners will be able to create new suffixes that incorporate their trademarks, or choose from a variety of community gTLDs such as ".bank" or ".detroit."

The changes, however, are not without cost. ICANN estimates that the application fees alone for a customized gTLD will total \$186,100.00, but some experts predict that the actual costs will run as much as \$500,000.00. Costs would increase if an application encounters obstacles, either because the proposed gTLD is too similar to a pre-existing domain or because a third party files an objection to the proposed gTLD (e.g. because it is too similar to another's trademark). While a dispute resolution process will be available, the actual details of the process are still under development. ICANN estimates, however, that it will begin accepting applications for new gTLDs sometime in 2009.

The details of the planned gTLD expansion are described on ICANN's website at www.icann.org. While the new gTLDs provide exciting opportunities for trademark owners to customize their internet presence, some critics fear that the immense cost will prohibit trademark owners from registering gTLDs that incorporate their marks, or at a minimum render them unable to defend against any new gTLD purchased by a competitor that infringes or harms their existing intellectual property rights. ICANN has stressed the importance of comments from individual corporations to its final decision on the shape the expanded system will take. [Click here to comment on ICANN's proposed gTLD expansion before July 6, 2009.](#)

If you would like us to comment on your behalf or have any questions about how the new gTLD policy may affect your brand or brand protection strategy on the internet, the United States, or abroad, contact:

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