

Procedure for Selecting a Top-Level Domain String for Private Use

Draft for Public Comment

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Introduction

This document describes how ICANN will select a top-level domain (TLD) string as recommended in [SAC113, "SSAC Advisory on Private-Use TLDs"](#). This initial version is for consultation through a Public Comment proceeding. Comments received will inform future revisions. The procedure will be performed by staff of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), which is part of the ICANN organization (ICANN org), and includes approval of the string by the ICANN Board. If IANA needs additional help in administering this procedure, it may consult with other members of the technical community, such as other parts of ICANN org, the ICANN Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC), the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), and the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). The final output of this selection process will be an IANA operational responsibility.

1. Preparation

This procedure is intended to implement the recommendation in Section 5 of SAC113, *"... that the ICANN Board ensure a string is identified using the criteria specified in Section 4.1 and reserved at the top level for private use. This particular string must never be delegated."*

The four criteria used to select the string are provided in Section 4.1 of SAC113, namely:

1. It is a valid DNS label.
2. It is not already delegated in the root zone.

3. It is not confusingly similar to another TLD in existence.
4. It is relatively short, memorable, and meaningful.

It is important to note that SAC113 does not specify that the “best” string that matches the four criteria be chosen to fulfill the recommendation. Although criteria 1 and 2 are based on easy-to-verify factual tests, the other two criteria are not.

Criterion 3 is subjective because it is not possible to know how different populations of Internet users measure similarity and confusability. As one example, Internet users who speak Spanish might find two short strings confusingly similar while Internet users who speak Chinese might not find the same two strings similar at all.

Each of the three tests in criterion 4 are subjective because it is not possible to know how different populations of Internet users measure what is relatively short, what is memorable, and what is meaningful. In particular, Internet users who speak one language might not find a particular string memorable or meaningful at all, while other Internet users who speak other languages might find that string memorable and meaningful.

2. Selection

IANA will develop a set of candidate strings, where each string in the set is considered to match all four criteria. From this set, a preferred candidate will be identified through deliberation within an internal evaluation team. Should any issues emerge with assessing the potential suitability of the candidates, IANA intends to consult with any relevant expertise to inform its decision making.

3. Publication

After the string is selected, IANA will publish a short document describing its selection. The document will contain the chosen string, and a description of how the chosen string meets all four criteria.

4. Public Comment Proceeding for the String

ICANN org will hold a Public Comment proceeding on the draft selection document. The proceeding will ask the community to verify that IANA followed the process given in the final version of this document in making its choice. Commentary on the string itself will be out of scope for the Public Comment proceeding.

5. Board Resolution

After the completion of the Public Comment proceeding for the string, ICANN org will evaluate the results and prepare a resolution for the ICANN Board to consider. The preamble to the resolution will detail the steps that were performed, and the resolution will be to reserve the chosen string from ever being put in the root zone for the global DNS. Upon adoption of the associated Board resolution, the status of the identified string will be memorialized in appropriate documentation and shall be permanently reserved against delegation in the DNS root zone.