

IDN

3 Character & Variant Management

Seoul

IDN Implementation Status

- With responsible rules and oversight, significant consensus to launch Fast Track process soon
 - The Board will consider launching that process at this meeting
- Additionally, significant progress has been made towards the launch of the new gTLD process, including the delegation of IDNs
- Culmination of years of work that has resolved many issues, but some difficult issues still open, among them:
 - The new gTLD 3-character requirement
 - Variant management

3-Character Requirement for an IDN gTLD

- Practice & RFC 1591 currently requires that all two character codes be interpreted as ISO 3166-1 country codes and reserved for ccTLD use
- Many languages exist where meaningful words can be represented in less than three characters, which would pose a restriction for IDN gTLDs under current rules
- Objective: determine a set of rules (an exception) so that gTLD strings of less than three characters can be registered in some cases, without interfering with the rules reserving two-character codes as specified in RFC 1591

Variant Characters and TLDs

- Variant characters occur where a single character has two or more representations, which may or may not look visually similar
- Variant TLDs are those which contain one or more characters that have variant characters
- Allowing variant TLDs may result in user confusion, while excluding them may 'disenfranchise' cultures that use the characters in the excluded TLD strings

Objectives for Addressing both Issues

- A working team was formed to engage with relevant language communities to:
 - Develop recommendations to address the three-character requirement and management of variants in TLDs described earlier
 - Report back with recommendations to Board and community in time for the Seoul meeting

Working Team Charter: Handling IDN TLD Variants

- Develop definition of variants as used in IDNs, i.e., what does “variant” mean as used in IDN tables (for gTLDs and ccTLDs)
- Determine whether blocking or reservation of variant TLDs is necessary to prevent user confusion
- When delegated, the user experience when using variant TLDs must be at least as good as when using TLDs without variants.
 - Determine under what circumstances TLD variants might be delegated
 - Determine responsibilities of TLD operator to whom TLD and variant(s) might be delegated

What problems do variants solve?

Delegation of variant TLDs

- will allow broader participation
 - users not familiar with variant characters
 - users can only type one of the variant characters on their keyboard
 - often one region uses only one string/character and another region uses only the variant version
- may degrade the user experience due to similarity
 - unless delegated with an aliased or bundled functionality

Short-term Solution

- Requested desired variants: reserved
 - to requesting IDN ccTLD manager
 - allocation when stable solution is found
- Not requested, un-desired variants: blocked
 - list generated by tool, based on IDN tables
 - no subsequent application will be accepted
 - need for dispute mechanism

Long-term Solution

- Enable the delegation of variants that
 - Avoid user confusion
 - Ensure good user experience
- Several solutions are being discussed