



02 July 2012

To: ICANN Board
From: Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)
Via: SSAC Liaison to the ICANN Board

Subject: The New Generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) Process

This letter provides an update on the SSAC's views on the status of the new gTLD process and takes note of concerns expressed by other ICANN organizations. In particular, we have examined the letter from the Chair of the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to the Chair of the Board of ICANN, dated 17 June 2012.

We believe there are at least three distinct issues to be considered.

First, the SSAC does not have any formal view with respect to the issue of batching the review of applications. We do not believe a process for ordering applications bears upon the security and stability of the Internet.

Second, the SSAC believes that questions regarding the maximum number of new TLDs that can be added to the root zone are misplaced. The proper concern is to ensure that the overall root zone publication system is audited and monitored to confirm that its resources can support an increase without degradation in the current service level.

Third, "SAC 042 – SSAC Comment on the Root Scaling Study Team Report and the TNO Report" noted concerns with a potential combinatorial effect of adding Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6), DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC), and new gTLDs to the root zone at essentially the same time. Since IPv6 and DNSSEC records have already been added to the root zone, the SSAC does not now believe the combinatorial issue is a concern.

In addition, we would like to reiterate and emphasize the recommendations of "SAC 046 - Report of the Security and Stability Advisory Committee on Root Scaling":

Recommendation (1): Formalize and publicly document the interactions between ICANN and the root server operators with respect to root zone scaling. ICANN and the root server operators may choose to utilize RSSAC to facilitate this interaction.

Recommendation (2): ICANN, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and VeriSign should publish statements, or a joint statement, that they are materially prepared

for the proposed changes.

Recommendation (3): ICANN should publish estimates of expected and maximum growth rates of TLDs, including IDNs and their variants, and solicit public feedback on these estimates, with the end goal of being as transparent as possible about the justification for these estimates.

Recommendation (4): ICANN should update its "Plan for Enhancing Internet Security, Stability, and Resiliency," to include actual measurement, monitoring, and data-sharing capability of root zone performance, in cooperation with RSSAC and other root zone management participants to define the specific measurements, monitoring, and data sharing framework.

Recommendation (5): ICANN should commission and incent interdisciplinary studies of security and stability implications from expanding the root zone more than an order of magnitude, particularly for enterprises and other user communities who may implement strong assumptions about the number of TLDs that may conflict with future allocations.

We note with some concern that there has been no visible progress on or discussion of these recommendations at this point in the implementation of the new gTLD program.

In accordance with our usual practice, 48 hours after this document is sent to the Board, ICANN Staff will post this letter to the SSAC web site.

The SSAC welcomes comments from the Board concerning this note and thanks the Board for its consideration.

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Chair, ICANN Security and Stability Advisory Committee