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Fw: For a City-Friendly Internet - .NYC

- *To:* <stld-rfp-comments@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Subject:* Fw: For a City-Friendly Internet - .NYC
 - *From:* "Thomas Lowenhaupt" <tjpl@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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Toward a City-Friendly Internet By Thomas Lowenhaupt

Cities need a place on the Internet from which they can highlight their cultural, educational, financial, technical and other resources. They need a place where their residents, institutions, and businesses can communicate and transact with one another, and the world.

For a decade now the globalizing force of the Internet and its domain name structure have diminished cities. For example,

- As the Internet altered the role of distance and time and challenged boundaries between local, region, and national governments, the domain name system only provided countries with top level domain names (TLDs).
- Local deliberations on the issues of the day were diminished as the net globalized intellectual intercourse.
- Like the euro and the dollar, social capital now floats globally, diminishing the local.
- Why seek guidance from the church in town when you can go straight to the Vatican?
- Why buy from the corner grocer when you can have Wal-Mart deliver?
- Why forage the Girl Scouts' flea market when all the good stuff is on eBay?

This is not intended as a blanket criticism of the Internet, merely of the manner of its introduction and impact on cities. When considering the current state of affairs, we must recall that our .com world was not created through a careful RFC process, but emerged through bureaucratic confusion, indecision, and inertia. And that the .com TLD's prescribed use was for the research and educational arms of certain commercial firms, not as an open TLD.

It's time we experiment on how best to restore a balance between the local and the global in commerce, in culture, and in government. It's time cities have access to Top Level Domain names.

By gaining access to TLDs (like .NYC, .Berlin, .London, .Paris, .Beijing, and .Tokyo), cities can benefit in many ways. Here's how cities, might use TLDs (I use examples of my home city, New York):

- Marketing Power - A TLD will ease the selling of a city to prospective residents, tourists, and businesses. Websites like: jobs.nyc, shows.nyc, hotels.nyc, and officespace.nyc will make a city's resources readily available to the world.
- Quality of Life Improvements - Imagine navigating the Internet using an organized .NYC domain. Want a library? Go to library.nyc and find links to the QBPL, NYPL, Carnegie Library. Visit schools.nyc and link to our public schools, our private schools, universities, etc. Local issues can be identified and vetted. And you'll find local people, activities, and business far easier searching in .nyc than the global .com web.
- Revenue - Public access facilities and community content can be funded with revenue raised selling domain names.

For a people to be independent, self-governing, and competitive in our globalizing time, they must have access to state-of-the-art communication tools. In a world where most person-to-person, person-to-group, business, and government communication takes place over the Internet, a Top Level Domain is necessary for organizing and marketing.

Recommendation

The ICANN should begin to redress the damage done to cities by examining ways cities might use TLDs. While there are many ways the ICANN could approach the city TLD issue, the most effective and streamlined method would be to issue the .NYC top level domain in the current round to the city of New York, as a joint applicant with NameSpace Inc.

New York City brings outstanding financial, management, technical, and organizational resources to the operation of .NYC as a sponsored TLD. Additionally, through the City University and other local educational and research organizations, it can conduct an experiment on the efficacy of city TLDs in a scientific environment, one that will provide the ICANN with all necessary information upon which to judge the validity of issuing additional city TLDs. The city will learn from the experience several 'cities' have had with their TLDs - Los Angeles (.LA), the Vatican (.VA), Singapore (.SG), and Hong Kong (.HK), and countries. In examining the extant 'city' TLDs, the ICANN will be taking a step toward identifying any unfair advantage those TLDs offer in the global competition of cities.

In the 2001 round NameSpace Inc. was an applicant for the .NYC TLD. Recently it committed to donate its rights to .NYC to the

city and to assist it with the operation of .NYC as a sponsored TLD. NameSpace brings standing with the ICANN and experience with the domain name business.

New York's interest in a TLD arose from the city's grassroots: first there was a resolution from one local community board, then another, then a Congressman, and most recently the Public Advocate (our second highest elected official). The mayor's office and city council are both addressing the opportunity. As you are aware, the city has suffered from a variety of maladies resulting from the 9/11 incident, and as this comment is submitted, the city has not completed the organization of its resources for the TLD application. However, far in advance of the October filing deadline it will have the scope and details of its application formalized. .NYC will play an important role in its rebuilding effort.

End.

Thomas Lowenhaupt is a member of a New York City Community Board. He can be reached at TomL@communisphere.com.

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