



dotBerlin wants .berlin

A top level domain especially for Berlin! This is the cause dotBerlin GmbH is taking up. dotBerlin is going to use the next round of applications for new top level domains (TLD), held by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), to create the ultimate virtual room for the Berlin community. "At present, there are a stunning 66.000 domains featuring 'Berlin' somewhere in their domain name," says dotBerlin's Dirk Krischenowski during informal talks at the ICANN meeting. He also says the acceptance criteria of ICANN's next request for proposals will determine what the rules for a registration will look like and, most importantly, who will be able to register.

dotBerlin has already proposed its idea to the senate's office in Berlin as well as to possible partners in the realm of urban marketing. The company has to get the go-ahead from the city and state authorities, as the ICANN governmental advisory committees's rules require official approval.

"Our idea certainly raised a lot of dust at the ICANN meeting," reports Krischenowski, adding: "We didn't plan that and think that it should have been expected that a city would show up on ICANN's doorstep at some point." Right now, a number of geographic TLDs are starting out: .kat is going to be the virtual home of the Catalans. Come next year, the Europeans will inhabit .eu. The .asia zone, however, will cover more surface. At the request of ICANN, the .asia applicants are currently trying to win over each and every Asian government. Only when everyone approves can .asia hope for a contract with ICANN.

An increase in geographic domain might cause ICANN to set up a set of rules for this particular domain type, says Krischenowski. The two preceding rounds of applications have shown dotBerlin that they need to be prepared to sit it out. And they need to be prepared to invest sums similar to those invested by applicants in the latest round of TLD allocations. One spokesperson of the controversial .xxx domain mentioned 1,5 million US dollars of seed capital.

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