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# INTRODUCTION TO NEW GTLD PROGRAM BY ICANN AND THE IMPACT ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

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# Definitions

- **Domain Name:** An easy-to-remember string of alphanumeric characters which maps to an addresses (IP addresses) that uniquely identifies a computer on the Internet
- **Top Level Domain (TLD):** These are the two or more letters at the end of a domain name that give a domain name meaning or association.
  - **generic Top Level Domain (gTLD):** A generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) is a domain name that does not have a country designation. Instead, gTLD's are themed domain names and identify a domain name with a certain subject.
  - **country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD):** Two-letter, top-level domains that identify a country or territory. ccTLDs are generally used or reserved for a country (a sovereign state or a dependent territory)



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# ..Definitions

- Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN): Body mandated with the coordination of Internet resources; domain names and Internet number resources.
- New gTLD Program: an initiative that will enable the introduction of new gTLDs (including both ASCII and IDN) into the domain name space.



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# Background

- There are eight (8) gTLDs that predate the formal establishment of ICANN:
  - .com .edu .gov .int .mil .net .org .arpa.
- After the formation of ICANN in 1998, there were two (2) application rounds:
  - In 2000, approximately 50 applications were submitted and evaluated and the following seven (7) gTLDs were approved:  
.aero .biz .coop .info .museum .name .pro.
  - In 2003-4, ten (10) applications were submitted and evaluated and the following six (6) gTLDs were approved:  
.asia .cat .jobs .mobi .tel .travel.
- Applications received during these rounds were evaluated against previously-published criteria, and those applicants who were successful went on to sign TLD Registry Agreements with ICANN.



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# New gTLD Program..

- The incentive to introduce new gTLDs was as follows:
  - has the potential to promote competition in the provision of registry services,
  - Need to add to consumer choice
  - Need for market differentiation
  - Need for geographic and service-provider diversity
- December 2005: GNSO began work on a policy towards issuing new gTLDs. The process to establish the *New gTLD Program* entailed a detailed and lengthy consultation process with all constituencies of the global Internet community.
  - Governments, individuals, civil society, business and intellectual property constituencies and the technology community were engaged in discussions for more than 18 months.



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# ..New gTLD Program..

- October 2007: the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO)—one of the groups that coordinates global Internet policy at ICANN—completed its policy development work on new gTLDs and approves a set of recommendations.
  - Contributing to this policy work were the other ICANN Supporting Organisations and Advisory Councils (The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC), Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) and Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC)).
- June 2008: The ICANN Board of Directors adopts new gTLD policy proposal.



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# ..New gTLD Program

- After June 2008 (policy implementation): ICANN then began devising rules and procedures, drafting materials for applicants, putting those rules, procedures, and materials out for comment, and revising them accordingly.
- Today: The process is still ongoing. Draft Application Guidebook version 4 (DAGv4) discussed during the most recent ICANN meeting (ICANN38).



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# Benefits and Costs of New gTLDs

*Assessing the gap between private and social net benefits in order to determine model that promotes social welfare and economic efficiency*



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# Benefits of New gTLDs

- New gTLDs might provide competition to existing gTLDs resulting in lower prices
- New gTLDs may support new business models through the offering of new or differentiated services - *innovation*
- New gTLDs might relieve scarcity in domain names – *names with meaning*
- New gTLDs might reduce search costs given that organisations may want to register TLDs based on the organisation's name

*dot EAIGF thus www.eaigf for the EAIGF versus eaigf.or.ke OR eaigf.org, etc.*



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# Costs of New gTLDs..

- Costs of obtaining and running a gTLD
  - Contractual rights to operate a new gTLD
    - USD 185,000 evaluation fee
    - An extended review costs another US\$ 50,000
    - Dispute Resolution filing fee is US\$ 1,000-5,000
    - Dispute Resolution Determination fee between US\$ 2,000 – 122,000 depending on size of panel and complexity of issues
  - Cost of operating the new gTLD
    - Approx. US\$1-2million as per KPMG survey
- Costs to competing (existing) registries



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# .. Costs of New gTLDs

- Increased search costs due to customer confusion
- Increased registration costs in an effort to register names in many TLDs to ensure reach by customers
- Intellectual property/Trademark infringement – misappropriation of domain names – can be mitigated through ICANN puts in place intellectual property protection policies, e.g sunrise period registrations, etc
  - Defensive registrations to protect trademark/secure names
  - Increased cost to organisations for policing new gTLDs registrations
- Adverse investment effects of potential free riding on efforts undertaken by another domain name owner
- **Bandwidth constraints for African networks with the expansion of the root zone**



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# Conclusion

- We need to get involved in the Internet governance policy development processes as it clearly affects us
- We need to articulate the needs for Africa in relevant Internet governance forums
- Need and value to participate in global, regional & national IGF forums:
  - Presents a platform for creating awareness and sharing experiences
  - Present a platform to discuss such Internet governance forums



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# ASANTE!

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