

IGF 10 WORKSHOP 63: STRENGTHENING CCTLDS IN AFRICA REPORT

1. PREAMBLE

This workshop aims at identifying trends in the management of Africa's country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs) and strategies to strengthen them. The workshop presented findings of the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) supported research project that is focusing on the strategic evaluation of the evolution, management, positioning and contribution of ccTLDs as a critical component of the Internet infrastructure in Africa and work being conducted to improve the administration and governance of ccTLDs.

Based on data collection and input from the IGF workshop, the research will propose strategies for strengthening Africa's ccTLDs so that they can contribute to the appropriation of the internet for socio-economic, cultural, and political development.

2. THE WORKSHOP PANELISTS

The workshop was organised by Kenya ICT Action Network and was moderated by Joseph Kiragu, Administrative Manger, Kenya Network Information Centre (KeNIC), and the dot ke ccTLD.

The other Panellists included:

- Keisuke Kamimura, Senior research fellow and associate professor at the Centre for Global Communications (GLOCOM), International University of Japan
- Anne-Rachel Inne, Manager Africa Regional Relations, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
- Alice Munyua, Convenor, East Africa Internet Governance Forum (EA-IGF)/ Board Member, Communication Commission of Kenya/ Board Member, Kenya Network Information Centre (KeNIC)
- Eng. Abibu Rashid Ntahigiye, Manger, Tanzania Network Information Centre (TzNIC) dot Tz ccTLD/ Director, African Top Level Domains Organization (AfTLD)

3. THE RESEARCH PROJECTS

A. STRENGTHENING CCTLDS IN EAST AFRICA

i. The process

The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet), in collaboration with the Kenya Network Information Centre (KeNIC) and the Centre are conducting this research project "strengthening ccTLDs in East Africa" for Global Communications (GLOCOM), with support by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

The objectives of the research are to establish operational and governance of ccTLDs, organizational structures, competition and impact of price on uptake and regulatory framework in the East African region.

Currently questionnaires have been administered to the East African ccTLDs, ICT Regulators, Consumer organizations, individual users and some registrars. The questionnaires seek to determine issues affecting the ccTLDs, including Critical Internet Resource (CIR) identification, access to broadband, cybercrime, local content development, consumer protection and policy regulatory environment.

ii. Comments on the research project

Workshop participants appreciated that the research is timely coming at a time when proposals for new gTLDs are under consideration, as well as significant changes in the communications policy and regulatory frameworks in the region.

The East African IGF (EAIGF10) held in Kampala Uganda, recommended that the first priority should be on the strengthening of regional ccTLDs, after which consideration can be given to the proposed regional gTLDs, including .EAC and .AFRICA.

B. INTRODUCTION TO THE GLOBAL CCTLD GOVERNANCE RESEARCH BY GLOCOM

This research was undertaken by the GLOCOM, University of Tokyo in collaboration with other universities. The research seeks to understand and measure the governance of ccTLDs on a global scale from an integrated approach on the current practice of domain name administration. It seeks to establish the features of a strong ccTLD, which include inclusive development, organizational structure, model ccTLD charter, pricing and infrastructure.

The research used a six-matrix approach that included access, affordability, IDN availability, openness, diversity and security and trust.

C. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following are the research findings:

- Pricing registration fees centre around \$50 a year but scatter across income levels in real time.
- ccTLD pricing reflects the local standard of living.
- Per capita analysis on GDP and registrations shows that registrations grow in line with economic development.
- ccTLD price deviation gets smaller as market develops.
- There is a strong correlation between the number of ccTLD registrations and registration fees by GDP class.
- Pricing of ccTLDs does not reflect the market demand therefore the need for marketing ccTLDs.
- Few registries have clause in their policies that states that a domain name registration that may be cancelled or revoked for causes other than procedural failure such as delayed payment.
- ccTLDs act pre-emptively against illegal and harmful content more for user trust rather than regulation.

- Open participatory governance for example ICANN participation, URDP has a correlation with price.

4. CASE STUDY: TANZANIA CCTLD BY TZNIC

During the workshop, dot Tanzania ccTLD was presented as a case study for the East Africa ccTLDs. Workshop participants were informed that the dot TZ ccTLD was fully re-delegated in 30th April 2010 in a non-contested process. The domain is managed by TZNIC, a non-for-profit company established in 2006 that has 5 members of staff that report to the policy advisory committee. The operations of the ccTLD are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by members.

Tanzania has adopted a 3R model, which means the registry, registrar and registrant model, where TzNIC the registry register domains for end users. The registry has created opportunities for local capacity building.

The registry is funded through a grant from communications regulator, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), however sustainability expected in the near further from revenues from registry service fees.

Currently, the dot TZ registration fee is about \$3.5 to \$17, while renewal is \$3.5 to \$13. TZNIC has conducted 2 promotions where domain registration fees have been waived resulting in an increase of 120 domains name registrations per month. This promotion was aimed at addressing the low domain names retention due to suspensions from 6100 to 3500 when the renewal and registration fee were introduced.

The Challenges faced by TZNIC include:

- Service availability,
- Lack of awareness of the value of ccTLD domain name,
- Sustainability and
- Decentralization of registrars from capital city

The following were the recommendations by the TZNIC:

- Importance of local management of ccTLDs;
- Awareness creation and sensitization for increased uptake; and
- Hosting of the service locally would take advantage of local internet exchange point (IXP)

5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ICANN AND CCTLDS ON ISSUES OF RE-DELEGATION

The Research had noted that one of the challenges seems to be understanding of ICANN processes and how they affect ccTLDs.

ICANN representative said that re-delegation involves changes in the administrative contact or sponsoring agent. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has a step-by-step re-delegation guide which is dependent on agreements among the local Internet community and submission of correct documentation. ICANN then verifies

information submitted within a given time frame. Once an agreement on re-delegation has been reached, ICANN effects the required changes in the technical and administrative contacts, list servers and sponsoring agent through its Technical arm -The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA).

It is important to note that re-Delegation processes are unique from one ccTLD case to another; the duration varies from a few days to number years depending on the circumstances surrounding the process.

ccTLDs in Africa that are going through the re-delegation process can learn from ccTLDs that have been successfully re-delegated, which include TzNIC, KENIC, among others. KeNIC multi-stakeholder model has been emulated in the EA region.

6. WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were the workshop recommendations:

- That ccTLDs sensitisation should go hand-in-hand with DNSsec publicity.
- A good ccTLD may be measured on time of registration and technical availability. However this measurement should take into consideration the environment in which the ccTLD operates.
- Rules and regulations are important to support ccTLDs in Africa. These regulations include protection of local names, dispute resolution and development of local content.
- In considering the need for sensitization on DNSsec, it is important to establish if there is user demand, for example in the implementation of e-government.
- Registries should not be involved in content regulation, but instead they should facilitate the development of content.
- National sovereignty in the management of ccTLDs should not exploit the rest of the community.
- If domain names are to serve local users, registration fees need to reflect income levels.
- Long-term strategy is needed with regards to pre-emptive action on illegal content.
- Multi-stakeholder governance of ccTLDs reflects local user needs.
- ccTLDs are critical internet resource and avenue for local content development
- Marketing should take into consideration various that affect the optimal functioning of ccTLDs in Africa and in addition the role of different stakeholders.
- Use of mobile transfer services in the payment of ccTLD annual fees had expanded payment options and access as well as increased registration of domain names, particularly in Kenya for the dot ke domain.