
Neustar Analysis Shows ICANN Mitigation Plan Overstates Risk of Harmful Domain-Name Collision

Sep 17, 2013

In comments to ICANN, Neustar provides model to calculate risk, eliminating the need for “uncalculated risk” category and unwarranted delay to new TLD program.

Sterling, Va. – [Neustar](#), Inc. (NYSE:NSR) today filed comments with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) opposing its proposal to delay the launch of hundreds of new generic top-level domains (TLDs). Neustar stated that its evaluation of existing data demonstrates that the inclusion of numerous proposed TLDs in an “uncalculated risk” category is unwarranted. The company believes that the risks can be calculated, and mitigated, and suggests a means for doing so.

ICANN proposed delaying the new TLDs to re-examine concerns that the new names could cause domain name “collision,” or confusion with queries for existing domain names. ICANN based its proposal on a study it commissioned that designated two TLDs as being at “high risk” for collision, about 1,000 TLDs as “low risk” and about 150 TLDs as having an “uncalculated risk” of collision.

In its comments, Neustar analyzed the same data used in the ICANN-commissioned study and added three new important factors to propose a more accurate methodology to quantify the risk of harm associated with domain-name collision risk for every applied-for TLD, eliminating the need for the “uncalculated risk” category. Using its proposed methodology, Neustar found that only three TLDs — .home, .corp and .mail — stand out as having the potential to cause considerably higher collision risk to the domain name system than other proposed TLDs. Applied-for TLDs currently included in the “uncalculated risk” category should be moved to the “low risk” category, according to Neustar’s analysis.

“From this classification, registry operators, ICANN and the larger Internet community can develop focused and tailored approaches to further reduce both the likelihood and, more importantly, the consequences arising from domain name collision,” Neustar’s report states. The report also provides specific recommendations for mitigating the potential consequences of collision.

The following statement can be attributed to Neustar Deputy General Counsel Becky Burr:

“ICANN’s mitigation strategy rests entirely on the possibility of collision, not the consequences. As a result, ICANN’s plan would relegate many demonstrably low-risk TLDs to the nether world of ‘uncalculated risk’ and impose further unwarranted delay in the launch of those TLDs. ICANN’s approach goes beyond simple prudence; it unnecessarily slows down the process of rolling out TLDs, which enterprises have been working on for years. Prudence and due deliberation are always called for in a system upgrade of this magnitude, but ICANN’s ‘uncalculated risk’ category throws too many low-risk TLDs into a nightmare of uncertainty, and needs to be fixed.

“Moreover, we disagree with the need for delay to conduct additional research in order to quantify the risk associated with introduction of the vast majority of proposed new TLDs.

Rather, we believe that ICANN already has all the data and research necessary to calculate the risk and develop mitigation strategies that are carefully tailored to the specific risk associated with each TLD.”

Read Neustar’s full report and analysis [here](#).

Find an infographic explaining Neustar’s risk methodology [here](#).

About Neustar

Neustar, Inc. (NYSE: NSR) is a trusted, neutral provider of real-time information and analysis to the communications services, financial services, retail, and media and advertising sectors. Neustar applies its advanced, secure technologies to help its clients promote and protect their businesses. More information is available at www.neustar.biz.