

Closed Generics

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Today we're going to talk about "Closed Generics," so it might help to have a little introduction to what they are and where they've been.

gTLD

What's a generic gTLD?

generic

Top

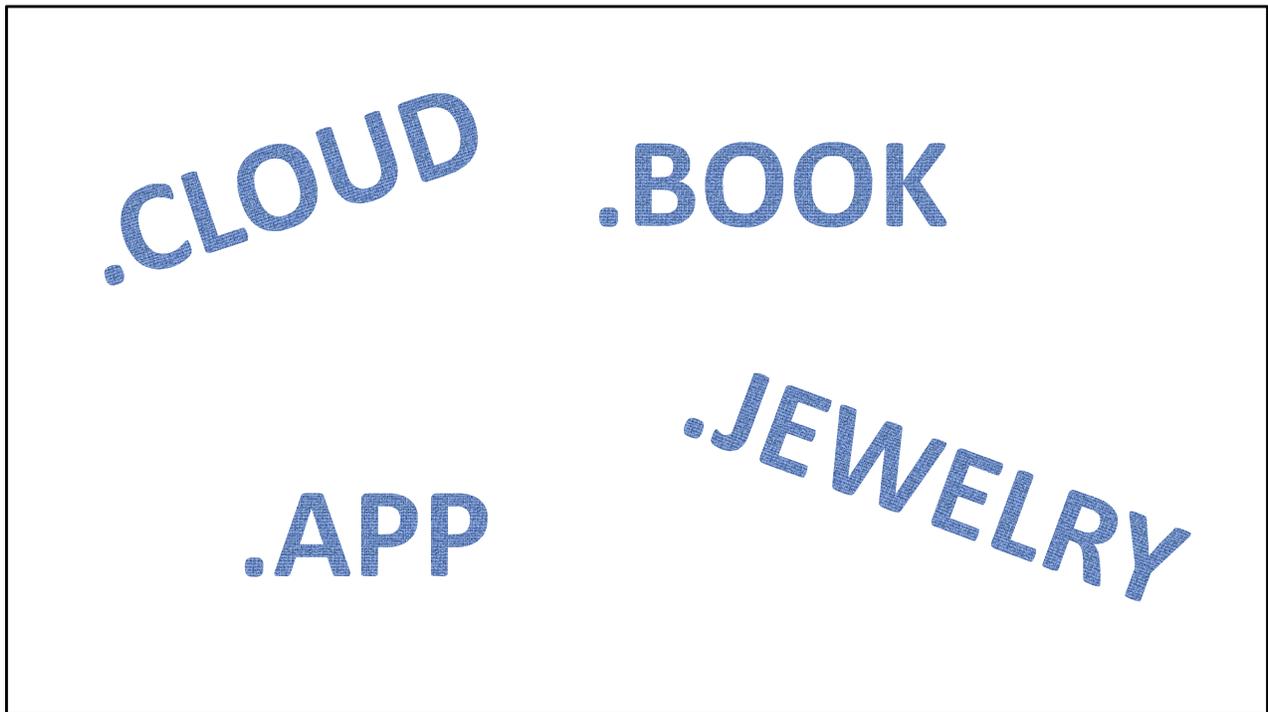
Level

Domain

The term is somewhat confusing because the little g in gTLD stands for “generic” and that’s not what we’re talking about , when we are speaking of “generic term” gTLDs

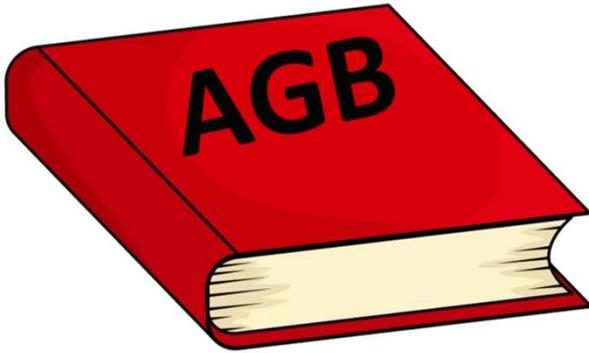


So what exactly is a “generic term” gTLD?



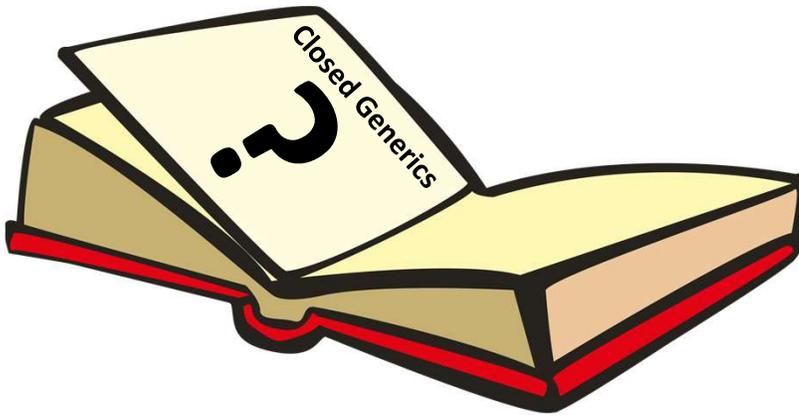
It's a TLD where the string is a "generic" word, in every day use is meant to be controlled by a single applicant who would determine who could register a second level domain, under that string and, in most cases, act as the registrar for that registration.

2012

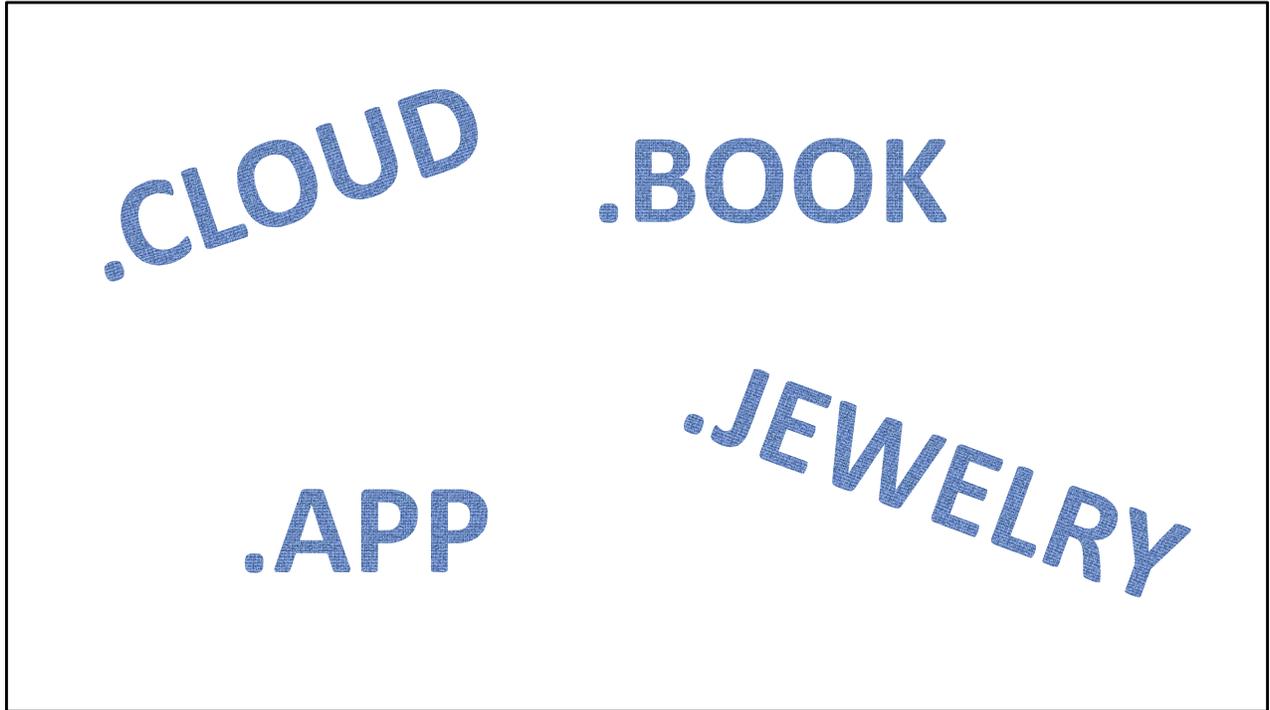


In front of the 2012 round, a lot of work went into the creation of the Applicant Guide Book (AGB), a kind of manual or book of guidelines for those applying for new strings.

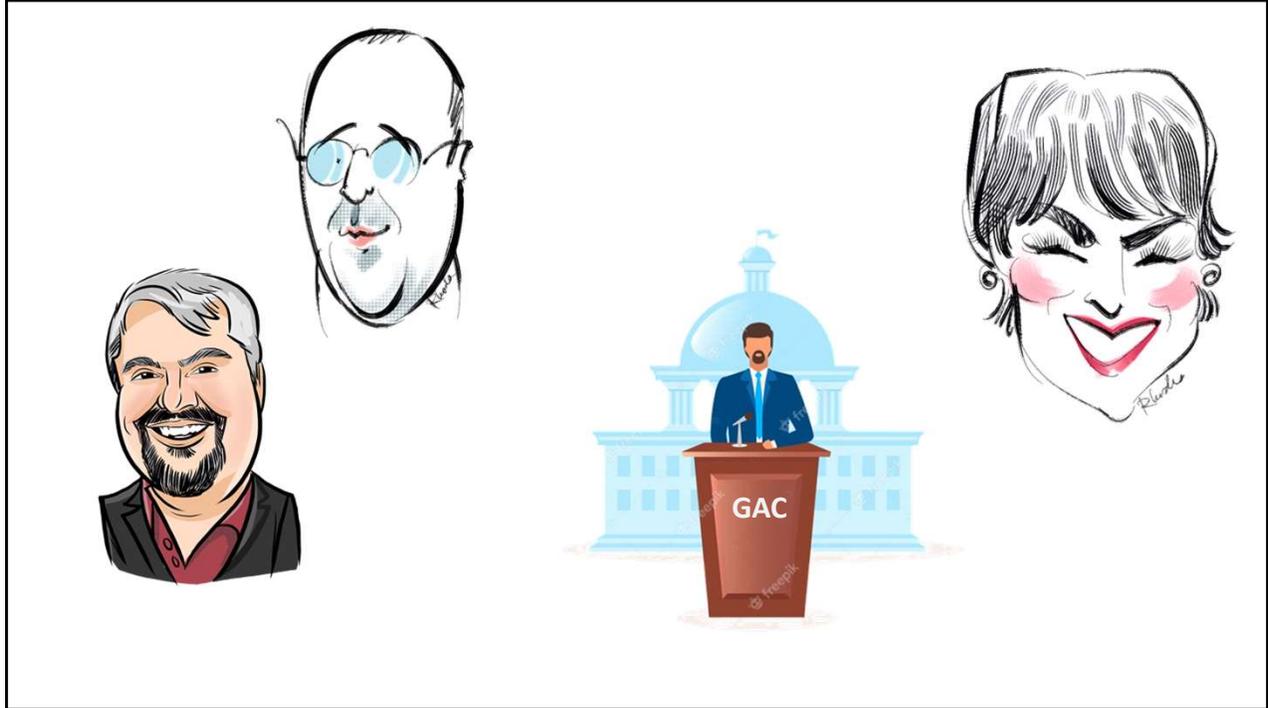
2012



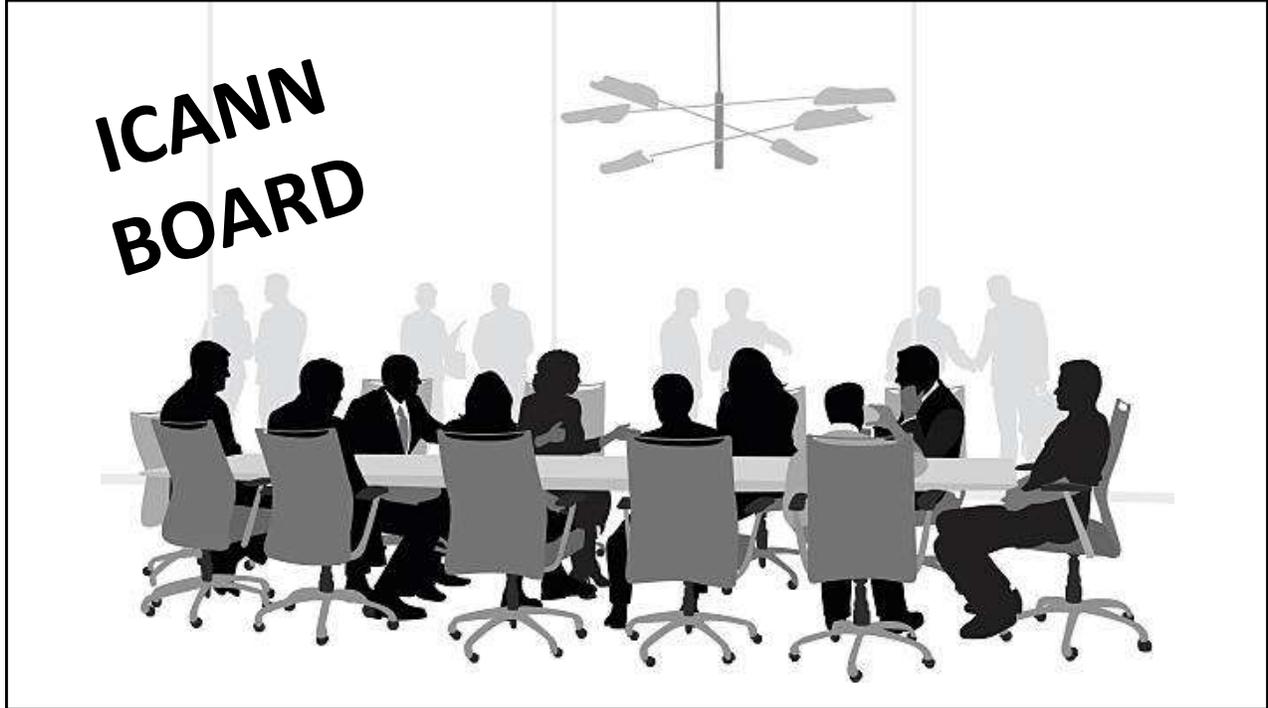
Unfortunately, despite some conversations, the AGB was silent on the topic of “closed generics,” leaving various parties with different impressions as to what the guidelines actually were.



Consequently, there were quite a few applications for generic word TLDs, including CLOUD, BOOK, JEWELRY, INSURANCE and APP



And plenty of objections from the GAC, Michele Neylon, et. Al, Kathy Kleinman and even me, in my former role as the President of ACT|The App Association. While there are several arguments to lay out, the big argument against these so-called “closed generics” was that it meant a single entity would control a particular word, potentially confusing consumers who would believe it was open and suppress competition by preventing some from registering names. On it’s face, these applications appeared to fly in the face of the intentions laid out in the AGB, which called for non-discrimination and preservation of the public interest.



The ICANN Board took it all under advisement, ran a public comment and ended up concluding that such closed generics would be prohibited for the 2012 round and the matter would be pushed back to the community to address further. The net result was many of these applications being withdrawn or converted to “open” gTLD proposals.



So, as directed by the ICANN Board, the Subsequent Procedures Working Group took up the issue of Closed Generics and entertained a number of proposals for compromise but were unable to reach consensus, which is why we're having this discussion. We wanted to air at least SOME of these arguments to a wider audience, especially as both the GAC and ALAC consider additional advice on this issue to the Board.

4 Board Scenarios

- Allow all Closed Generics
- Prohibit all Closed Generics
- Public Interest Exception
- Push back to the community

So the board essentially had 4 choices. Allow all closed generics, prohibit all closed generics, create their own public interest exception or push it back to the community. They chose to push it back to the community, asking the GNSO and GAC to find a compromise.