

Overview of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs)

Satish Babu
ALAC Team Member, EPDP on IDNs

Overview

- What's an EPDP?
 - An innovation over the “traditional” PDP for efficiency and speed
 - Based on GNSO EPDP Manual and Consensus Playbook
 - Has a representational model (Member, Participant, Liaison, Staff)
- What are IDNs?
 - Domain names in non-Latin scripts
 - Available since the 2012 round (gTLDs) and from 2010 for ccTLDs
 - IDN variants not available
 - No consistent definition of variants
 - IDN Implementation Guidelines v 4.0 not accepted for implementation (for second level)
- Why is the EPDP on IDNs important for ICANN?
 - The ICANN community would like to put in place a comprehensive IDN policy for the top-level before the next round of gTLDs

Core topics

- What are IDN variants?
 - Two labels that mean the same thing for language communities (for some languages)
 - Eg., “Color” and “Colour”, “strasse” and “straße”
 - End-users expect variants to behave identically
 - However, for the DNS these are independent, completely different labels. The challenge is how to make them behave similarly
 - Also, a label may have multiple variants, and the entire process from application to delegation to post-delegation (eg., transfer policy) has to treat the group as a “variant set”
- How to consistently define variants
 - The Root Zone Label Generation Rules (RZ-LGR) is a mechanism to determine valid IDN TLDs and their variant labels, for stable and secure operation of the DNS Root Zone
 - Each language community (“Generation Panel”) defines its valid and blocked labels, and a single group (“Integration Panel”) combines all the different languages into a single RZ-LGR
 - There are tools that will list all variants of a given label with their dispositions (ie., allocatable or blocked)
 - The EPDP has decided that the RZ-LGR will be the only authoritative source for variants

Variants

- 4 scripts have no variant labels (Georgian, Gujarati, Lao and Thai)
- 14 scripts have no allocatable variant labels (Armenian, Cyrillic, Devanagari, Ethiopic, Gurmukhi, Hebrew, Japanese, Kannada, Khmer, Korean, Malayalam, Oriya, Sinhala, Telugu)
- 7 scripts have allocatable variant labels (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Greek, Latin, Myanmar, Tamil)
- SSAC strongly recommends a conservative approach, where variants must be only permitted “...if the TLD applicant clearly demonstrates the necessity for activating the string. Variants that are not necessary, but are desired, must not be allocated and activated”
- Script communities provide safeguards to minimize the number of variants to guard against too many variant combinations

The work of the EPDP

- Charter Questions are Grouped into 7 categories:
 - A. Consistent definition and technical utilization of RZ-LGR
 - B. “Same entity” at the top-level
 - C. “Same entity” at the second-level
 - D. Adjustments in registry agreement, registry service, registry transition process, and other processes/procedures related to the domain name lifecycle
 - E. Adjustments to objection process, string similarity review, string contention resolution, reserved strings, and other policies and procedures
 - F. Adjustments in registration dispute resolution procedures and trademark protection mechanisms
 - G. Process to update the IDN Implementation Guidelines

Timeline

- The EPDP started in July 2021
- Weekly 90-minute calls at 13:30 UTC. Today's call is the 62nd meeting.
- Most likely will go up to 120 minutes from Jan 2023 given the amount of work
- The report to be released in two phases
 - Phase 1, which clubs together all CQs pertaining to the top level. Target date of completion: April 2023
 - Phase 2, with all the remaining CQs may take until 2025

Thank you!