Competition and Choice Topics

Competition

1. Has the expansion of gTLDs been effective at promoting price competition between TLD operators?
   a. Consider data on retail and wholesale prices
      ▪ Have wholesale prices from registries
      ▪ Have limited retail prices: 69 observations on gTLD prices (MAY NEED MORE RETAIL DATA)
      ▪ Premium prices: registry premium data (list of names, price for each); related: registry reserved lists
      ▪ Segmentation based on geography or language (who is the TLD targeted at?)
   b. Consider secondary markets
      ▪ Contacted Sedo for Transaction-level data
      ▪ Changes to listing prices
      ▪ Look at resale price in new gTLDs vs. legacy gTLDs
   c. Prices in ccTLD vs. legacy gTLDs vs. new gTLDs
      ▪ No response from ccTLDs
   d. Effects of price caps
      ▪ What were the historical/current price caps?
   e. First mover advantage?
      ▪ Launch dates
   f. DATA: Bundled services pricing

2. Has the expansion of gTLDs been effective at promoting non-price competition between TLD operators?
   a. If the competition is not founded on price, what services should be identified for competition?
      ▪ What additional registry services are offered for each TLD?
      ▪ Do registrars offer custom services for specific TLDs?
   b. First mover advantage?
   c. DATA: Are registrants buying new gTLDs when the same string was available in another TLD? (Availability in various TLDs intersected with registration data)
   d. DATA: Are registrants choosing to register in new gTLDs because of the policies of the TLD?
   e. DATA: Are registrants choosing to register a new gTLD?
   f. DATA: Compare prices of equivalent words across different languages
   g. PROJECT: Why are prices different in different new gTLDs?

3. What are reasonable definitions of relevant markets that we might use to analyze competition?
a. Consider non-domain identifiers/navigation (As more and more apps go directly to service providers, e.g. facebook, etc., the impact to the market for domain names and implications)
   ▪ How to approach this? Twitter? Facebook?
   ▪ Maybe this is a separate track?
   ▪ Maybe a good survey.
b. Community vs. Standard vs. Brand vs. Geo
c. Single TLD vs. portfolio registry
d. How do we evaluate the success of TLDs that are targeted for small consumer segments?
   ▪ DATA: Renewal rates
e. To what extent have new gTLDs displaced legacy gTLDs/ccTLDs and is this good for competition/price?
   ▪ DATA: New registrations versus renewals
   ▪ DATA: Are registrants replacing previous TLD registrations with new ones?
   ▪ DATA: ccTLD registration volumes/annual renewal figures
   ▪ DATA: CENTR HHI data
f. Impact of competition of (new) GTLD’s in areas where uptake of ccTLD’s is low?
g. Impact of alternate roots
h. Bare domain versus bundle of functionality (including, e.g. hosting)
   ▪ DATA: Analysis Group looking at add-on services
   ▪ DATA: “Standard Shopping basket” to look at the service
i. Do specific sectors or clusters of topically related TLDs form a market?
   ▪ DATA: Analysis group did some of this in their initial report
j. DATA: parked vs. not
k. DATA: Traffic information
4. Have different types of TLDs been able to provide effective alternatives to other TLDs?
   a. Community vs. Standard vs. Brand vs. Geo
   b. Single TLD vs. portfolio registry
5. How has the introduction of the new TLD’s affected competition among registrars and/or resellers?
   a. Impact on # of registrars?
      ▪ DATA: # of registrars
      ▪ DATA: # of registrars per TLD
      ▪ DATA: # of registrars per geo
   b. Effects of vertical integration
      ▪ PROJECT: Compare market shares of registrars in TLDs with vertically integrated registrars; followup: look at prices in TLDs with vertically integrated registrars
      ▪ DATA: Identify registrars that are vertically integrated with registries
   c. DATA: Can we look at # of registrars versus (retail vs. wholesale) prices and does it lower prices?
      ▪ # of registrars per TLD
   d. DATA: Can ICANN identify information about resold domains
6. Are consumers sufficiently aware to allow for competition?
a. Who is responsible to promote GTLD’s?
b. Are registrars aware of the Program?
7. Are domain names being allocated more efficiently to registrants who will use them well?

Consumer Choice
8. Is further segmentation and regulation of the namespace valuable to consumers navigating the name space?
   a. Do internet users expect different TLDs to have different types of registrants? (Should this sub-question be covered by safeguards & trust group?)
9. Has the benefits of the increase in choice outweighed the potential for the cost of confusion?
   a. Can registrants get “better” domains in the new TLD’s?
10. Do consumers have expanded choices in different...
    a. Regions
    b. Languages / Scripts
    c. ...and do they have options to purchase domains? (are there available registrars/resellers in their language/region/etc.)
11. Is a new TLD a valid choice for a registrant if there isn’t universal acceptance of it?
   a. Special effects on IDNs?

Related Considerations
12. (3.4) What is the minimum viable scale for a TLD registry?
    a. Cost and cost structure (fixed v. variable) for providing registry/registrar service
    b. Are there registry operators willing to operate a TLD regardless of profitability?
13. What is the effect of exogenous influences of new technologies on the introduction of new gTLDs?
14. Is it too soon to accurately consider these issues?