

## CCT-RT DISCUSSION PAPER WORKSHEET

### HIGH LEVEL QUESTION:

Do consumers trust new gTLDs?<sup>1</sup>

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### SUB-QUESTIONS:

1. Why do consumers visit TLDs?
  - a. Do consumers visit new gTLDs as much as legacy gTLDs?
2. Do consumers trust new gTLDs as much as legacy gTLDs?
  - a. Do consumers trust certain specified gTLDs?
3. Do consumers provide sensitive information (*e.g.*, personally identifiable; financial or health information) to new gTLDs?
  - a. Compared to legacy gTLDs?
4. Do consumers trust new gTLDs that offer domain names to:
  - a. Take precautions regarding who gets a domain name
  - b. Give consumers what they think they're getting
  - c. Screen individuals/companies who register for certain special domain names
5. Do restrictions on who can purchase domain names contribute to consumer trust?
  - a. Do consumers expect restrictions on who can purchase new gTLDs?
  - b. Do consumers expect restrictions on who can purchase legacy gTLDs?
6. Do consumers expect certain restrictions to be enforced?
7. What makes a gTLD trustworthy [text box]?
8. Why do consumers avoid unfamiliar gTLDs [text box]?

### FINDINGS:

1. Why do consumers visit TLDs?
  - a. Consumers visit gTLDs based upon relevance of gTLD to the information they seek
  - b. Familiarity with site also plays a role

Source: Nielsen, Phase 1, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.8, 18, 36

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<sup>1</sup> The CCT Review Team defined Consumer to include both internet users and registrants. As a result, this discussion paper includes information from both Nielsen's ICANN Global Consumer Research Studies and Nielsen's Global Registrant Survey. For clarity, the term "Consumer" refers to consumer survey responders from Nielsen's Consumer Survey. The term "Registrant" refers to registrant survey responders from Nielsen's Registrant Survey.

1A. Do consumers visit new gTLDs as much as legacy gTLDs?

- c. No.
  - i. 2015: 71% legacy gTLDs have high visitation rates vs. 15% of new gTLDs having high visitation rates.
  - ii. 2016: 81% legacy gTLDs have high visitation rates vs. 12% of new gTLDs having high visitation rates; 15% for added gTLDs.

Source, Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.7

d. **Note: NCC Group Study, Trust in the Internet Survey 2016<sup>2</sup> indicates significant discomfort visiting websites ending in new domains:**

- i. 2015: 51% feel extremely, very, or somewhat comfortable (11% extremely/very); 49% feel not very or not at all comfortable (13% not at all comfortable)
- ii. 2016: 48% feel extremely, very, or somewhat comfortable (9% extremely/very); 52% feel not very or not at all comfortable (11% not at all comfortable)

Source: 2016 NCC Group Trust in the Internet Survey at p.3

2. Do consumers trust new gTLDs as much as legacy gTLDs?

- a. No. Significantly lower levels of trust for new gTLDs compared to legacy gTLDs
  - i. 2015 90% find legacy gTLDs very/somewhat trustworthy
  - ii. 2015 49% find new gTLDs very/somewhat trustworthy
  - iii. 2016 91% find legacy gTLDs very/somewhat trustworthy
  - iv. 2016 45% find new gTLDs very/somewhat trustworthy; 52% for added gTLDs

Source: 2015: Nielsen, Phase 1, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p. 9, 40  
2016: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p. 9

2A. Do consumers trust certain specified gTLDs?

b. **New gTLDs**

Registrants' perception of new gTLDs as "Trustworthy" increased slightly in 2016 (association of terms with new gTLDs):

- i. 2015 58%
- ii. 2016 60%

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<sup>2</sup> We lack information regarding how this study was conducted, including what specific questions were posed. In addition, it appears this study was commissioned by an entity that has a business interest in marketing both cyber security products and the .trust domain.

- c. **Specified New gTLDs:** Consumers divided and response varies by region. (approx.. 50% rate .news; .photography, .email, .realtor as trustworthy with .news as most trustworthy)  
*\*\*\*\* Were all of these actually in use at time of survey?*

Source: 2016: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p. 55

### Registrants

- d. Registrants also divided and response varies by region. (.news, .email, .online, .website, .photography, .link, .site all scored above 50% as vey/somewhat trustworthy in 2016. Generally speaking, Registrants express higher trust levels than consumers.
- e. **Legacy gTLDs:**  
 Registrants' perception of legacy gTLDs as "Trustworthy" decreased in 2016 (association of terms with new gTLDs):
  - i. 2015 83%
  - ii. 2016 79%
- f. **Comparison:** Shows that Registrants associate the term "trustworthy" with legacy gTLDs more than new gTLDs.
  - i. 2015 legacy 83% vs new gTLD 58%
  - ii. 2016 legacy 79% vs. new gTLD 60%

Source: 2016: Nielsen, Wave 2, ICANN Global Registrant Survey p. 64, 66, 27.

- 3. Do consumers feel "somewhat comfortable" providing sensitive information (e.g., personally identifiable; financial or health information to new gTLDs? Compared to legacy gTLDs? Type of info:
  - a. email address:
    - i. .com 92%
    - ii. New gTLD 48%
  - b. Home address:
    - i. .com 83%
    - ii. New gTLD 44%
  - c. Phone number:
    - i. .com 75%
    - ii. New gTLD 40%
  - d. Financial Info
    - i. .com 62%
    - ii. New gTLD 36%

- e. ID number
  - i. .com 59%
  - ii. New gTLD 34%
- f. Healthcare info
  - i. .com 68%
  - ii. New gTLD 40%

Source: 2016: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.90

4. Do consumers trust new gTLDs that offer domain names to: a. Take precautions regarding who gets a domain name; b. Give consumers what they think they're getting; c. Screen individuals/companies who register for certain special domain names.
  - a. Overall consumers trust the domain industry to perform these functions.
    - i. 73% overall: Take precautions regarding who gets a domain name
    - ii. 71% overall: Give consumers what they think they're getting
    - iii. 71% overall: Screen individuals/companies who register for certain special domain names
  - b. *Whether the domain industry actually performs these functions is a separate but important issue.*

Source: Nielsen, Phase 1, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.9-10, 49

- c. Regarding giving the consumers what they think they're getting:
  - i. 55% expect that websites registered under domains should reflect "a very clear relationship" to the gTLD under which it's registered
  - ii. Only 6% expect that the websites could be used by "any company"
  - iii. 15% have no expectations

Source: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.9, 50

5. Do restrictions on who can purchase domain names contribute to consumer trust?
  - a. 2015 Yes 56% for all gTLDs (though many of those surveyed also oppose restrictions in general)
  - b. 2016 Yes 70% for all gTLDs
  - c. For Registrants: Generally yes.

5A. Do consumers expect restrictions on who can purchase new gTLDs?

- a. 2015 67% expect restrictions on new gTLDs.
- b. 2016 73% expect restrictions on new gTLDs.
- c. Overall, Registrants also favor strict or some purchase restrictions

- i. 2015 between 65% for .realtor at high end and 56% for .xyz at low end [2015 survey did not include .builder, .bank, and .pharmacy]
- ii. 2016 between 81% for .bank at the high end and 56% for .xyz for the low end

d. Overall Registrants are more opposed to restrictions than consumers. However, when put in context of validating certain characteristics that are in keeping with the intended or implied use of the gTLD, approval of restrictions is over 3/4s.

5b. Do consumers expect restrictions on who can purchase legacy gTLDs? Overall, yes.

- a. 2015 63%
- b. 2016 72%
- c. Overall, Registrants also favor strict or some purchase restrictions
  - i. 2015 68% for .org at the high end and 58% for .com at the low end.
  - ii. 2016 between 72% for .org at the high end and 63% for .com and .info at the low end.

Source: Nielsen, Phase 1, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.9-10, 25-26, 44  
 Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.9, 13, 26, 60  
 2016: Nielsen, Wave 2, ICANN Global Registrant Survey p. 14, 18, 29, 67.

**Note:** This issue relates to another question posed by Nielsen: Why websites have different extensions?

d. Majority of Registrants believe websites have different extensions to “properly identify the purpose or owner or to give an indication of content or function.”

Source: 2016: Nielsen, Wave 2, ICANN Global Registrant Survey p. 25-26

6. Do consumers expect certain restrictions to be enforced? Yes (3/4)
- a. Validation that person/company registering site meets intended parameters: 82%
  - b. Requirements for validated credentials related to gTLD: 80%
  - c. Requirements for use of name to be consistent w/meaning of gTLD: 79%

Source: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.27

6A. Do Consumers and Registrants trust that restrictions will be enforced?

d. Majority 7/10 have high or moderate trust that restrictions will actually be enforced.

Source:  
 2016: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.65

Nielsen, Wave 2, ICANN Global Registrant Survey p. 68.

7. What makes domain extensions trustworthy [textbox]?  
a. Reputation and familiarity

Source: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.19-20 [see also p.56-57: What makes an unfamiliar domain extension feel trustworthy? P56-57: relevance and appeal of info ranks high]

**Related Findings on Factors that Increase Confidence in New Domains**

- b. Brand/company clearly communicates the steps to take to secure your personal information within the website  
i. 2015 45%  
ii. 2016 50%
- c. Website has branded logo indicating it's a safe site  
i. 2015 42%  
ii. 2016 46%
- d. Evident to visitors that website adheres to a standard of security regulations  
i. 2015 41%  
ii. 2016 44%
- e. I would not be less likely to visit site with new GTLD  
i. 2015 23%  
ii. 2016 19%
- f. If online community made up of secure/safe websites, where only verified brands could operate I would. . .  
i. Feel safer doing business with brands/companies in this community than those that are not  
1. 2015 71%  
2. 2016 76%  
ii. \*\*\* those using internet to manage investments and healthcare most likely to appreciate and feel more secure with this type of online community

Source: 2016 NCC Group Trust in the Internet Survey at p.5-6

8. What are the reasons for avoiding unfamiliar domain extensions? [text box]  
a. Security and lack of familiarity rank high

Source: Nielsen, Phase 2, ICANN Global Consumer Research Study p.40-41

**Note related NCC Findings on Internet Security Concerns:**

- b. Reflects 2015-16 increase in concerns regarding stolen credit card/financial information; online security; protection and security of credit card and personal information

Source: 2016 NCC Group Trust in the Internet Survey at p.2

**CAUSES:**

1. Trust seems tied to familiarity with gTLD (reputation and usage identified when asked as an open ended question Phase 2 (19-20, 35, 56-57))
2. Familiarity with gTLD likely depends on visitation. Relevance to information sought is highly relevant factor for visitation.
  - a. Consider whether new gTLDs are sufficiently “relevant” to what consumers want to find information about
3. Consumers and Registrants expect that there will be some type of restrictions on the sale of gTLDs. This expectation increased in 2016 for both legacy and new gTLDs.

**PRIORITY TO ADDRESS:** High priority and should be addressed to in the short term and certainly prior to subsequent rounds.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** *[recommendations to ICANN. For each, specify: 1. Target of recommendation (i.e. Staff, Board, SubProc PDP); 2. Nature of recommendation; 3. Implementation details, exceptional costs, etc.]*

1. Consider how to select gTLDs that are relevant to what the public seeks information about
  - a. Board/Staff recommendation
  - b. Likely requires research data
2. Consider restrictions on who can purchase gTLDs to ensure that user expectations are met regarding: a. relationship of content of gTLD to name of gTLD; b. implied messages of trust conveyed by names of gTLDs (particularly in sensitive or regulated industries as advised by GAC); and c. safety and security of sensitive information (especially health and financial information).
  - a. Board/Staff recommendation
  - b. Would require changes in standard contracts and could increase compliance costs

**REVIEW:**

1. Repeat selected parts of Nielsen study and look for increase in familiarity with new gTLDs; visitation of new gTLDs; perceived trustworthiness of new gTLDs.
2. Consider collecting data on registration restrictions to compare consumer trust levels between new gTLDs with varying degrees of registration restrictions.
3. Review in two years to assess and recommend changes if an increase in trust is not observed.