



Two-Character Labels as Second-Level Domains

May 2017

Agenda

- ⦿ Background
- ⦿ Timeline
- ⦿ GAC advice
- ⦿ Principles
- ⦿ Measures to Avoid Confusion

GNSO Recommendations – May 2007

The GNSO Reserved Names Working Group (RN-WG) issued recommendations in May 2007, which were used as input to the Final Report on Introduction of New gTLDs and the finalization of the Registry Agreement.

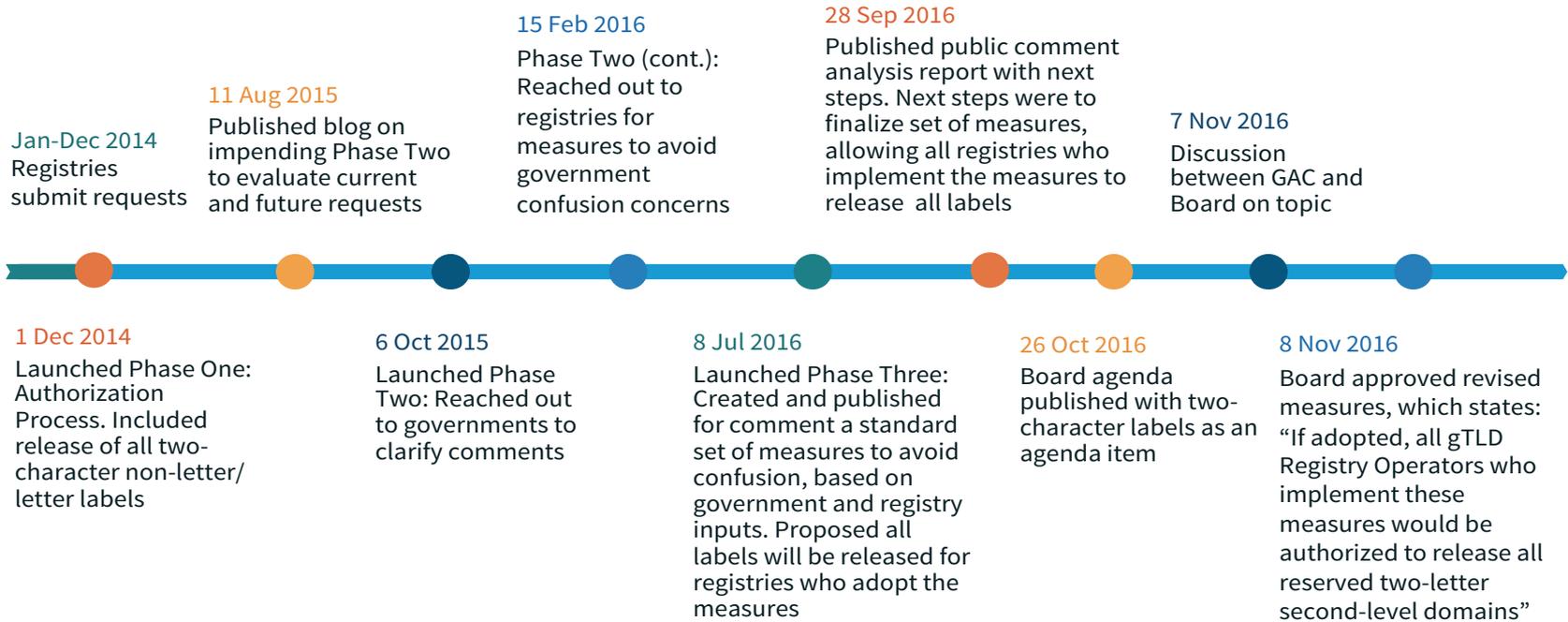
The RN-WG Report recommended:

-  Registries may propose the release of two-character labels at the second level, provided they implement measures to avoid confusion with corresponding country codes
-  Consultation with appropriate parties
-  Evaluation of registry request may involve technical analysis and opportunity for public input. Technical issues related to the release of two-character labels have been addressed by the 2006 RSTEP Report.
-  The GAC had noted the WIPO II Report statement: “If ISO 3166 alpha-2 country code elements are to be registered as domain names in the gTLDs, it is recommended that this be done in a manner that minimizes the potential for confusion with the ccTLDs.”

Registry Agreement – Updated January 2014

- ⦿ The treatment of two-character labels' reservation and release at the second level is defined by the the contract between the Registry and ICANN.
- ⦿ Specification 5, Section 2 of the Registry Agreement provides 2 paths for release of two-character ASCII labels from reservation:
 - ⦿ **PATH 1 (Government and ccTLD approval)**
Such two-character label strings may be released to the extent that Registry Operator reaches agreement with the related government and country-code manager of the string as specified in the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 standard.
 - ⦿ **PATH 2 (ICANN approval)**
The Registry Operator may also propose the release of these reservations based on its implementation of measures to avoid confusion with the corresponding country codes, subject to approval by ICANN.

TIMELINE OF AUTHORIZATION FOR TWO-CHARACTER ASCII LABELS



ICANN Approval Principles

- ⦿ Honor the language of the Registry Agreement:
 - The Registry Operator may also propose the release of these reservations based on its implementation of measures to avoid confusion with the corresponding country codes, subject to approval by ICANN.

- ⦿ Fulfill ICANN's mission of maintaining the security and stability of the DNS:
 - Technical evaluation related to the release of two-character labels was addressed in the 2006 RSTEP Report, finding the release of these labels do not have material security or stability impact on the Internet:
<https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/rstep-gnr-proposal-review-team-report-04dec06-en.pdf>

- ⦿ Implement the Board resolutions to GAC advice:
 - Create and implement an efficient procedure for the release of two-character labels, taking into consideration GAC advice.
 - Make process and system improvements, and to fully consider the comments from governments.

- ⦿ Provide Appropriate Measures to Avoid Confusion

Measures to Avoid Confusion

Pre- and post-registration measures to cover the lifecycle of two-letter domains

1. **Exclusive Availability Pre-Registration Period:** Governments and ccTLD operators may register two-character SLDs before open registration. (Note: adoption of this measure is voluntary.)
2. **Registration Policy:** Registrants may not misrepresent affiliation with a government or ccTLD operator (e.g., registrant of 'us.eat' may not falsely claim affiliation with the United States Food and Drug Administration).
3. **Post-Registration Complaint Investigation:** Registry must investigate and respond to complaints from governments and ccTLD operators about confusion (e.g., if a government reported that <be.smart> misled users to confuse the domain with the Belgian Ministry of Education, the Registry must take reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the government's complaint).

Discussion