
Multilingual Domain Names Set for Broad Implementation

2003-06-26

With two-thirds of the world's estimated 560 million Internet users non-English speakers, multilingual or internationalized domain names (IDNs) have become increasingly important in making the Internet a truly global medium. IDNs are domain names with non-Roman characters, and can be especially useful in markets where English is not the primary language. Currently, IDNs can be registered in over 350 languages, and ICANN-accredited registrars have been registering IDNs in testbeds around the world. We previously discussed multilingual domain names in our [October 21, 2000 Internet Alert](#).

Recent publication of standards for IDNs should facilitate their broader implementation. In March 2003, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) published standards for encoding IDNs, preparing IDN labels for name input and comparison, and integrating IDNs into applications (IDNA protocol). In the same month, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) passed [resolutions](#) endorsing the IETF guidelines and authorizing registration of IDNs based on those guidelines. Many IDN registrars are working on converting their systems to meet the IETF standards.

Unfortunately, the speed and low cost of registering an IDN has a perhaps unavoidable downside as well. There have already been cybersquatting cases arising from the testbed, and the anticipated expansion of IDNs will create many new opportunities for cybersquatting, and increase the likelihood of both intentional and unintentional trademark dilution and infringement.

For an updated chart detailing the registration requirements for top-level domains in 60 different countries, click [here](#).

Michael Bevilacqua
michael.bevilacqua@haledorr.com

Jorge Contreras
jorge.contreras@haledorr.com

with contributions from summer associate Andrew Sung