1Q-23 usTLD Stakeholder Meeting Agenda & Minutes
February 23, 2023 | 12pm Eastern Daylight Time

February 23rd 2023

I.   Welcome

Attendees:

Registry Services, LLC: CPeterson, KJohnson, FEspana, JBegg, MCohen

Stakeholder Council: Ray King, Alex Deacon, Dustin Loup, Tom Barrett, Jared Hosid, Kenneth Merrill, Michele Neylon, Sam Sokol, Stacy Cheney, Becky Burr, Bryan Britt, Gabriel Andrews (unannounced)

II.   Roll call and approval of December 2022 minutes

Dustin moves to approve. Motion seconded. Minutes approved.

III.   Q1 Marketing Update

Creative Refresh

By regularly updating creative elements such as visuals and graphics we inject new life into .US campaigns, ensuring continued relevance and resonance with the target market.

Added new creative into rotation for 2023 leveraging learnings from 2022 performance.

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, where attention spans are short and competition is high, regularly refreshing creative content is crucial to stay top-of-mind and maintain engagement.

- Keeps brand message and visuals relevant and engaging to the target audience.
- Avoids stagnation and keeps the audience interested in the brand.
- Allows for experimentation and testing, which leads to improved performance and increased ROI.
- Demonstrates a brand's adaptability and willingness to evolve, which can enhance its credibility and reputation in the marketplace.

Brand Ambassadors

Brand ambassadors play a pivotal role in bolstering brand credibility and raising awareness. Their association with .US serves as a powerful validation, enhancing the brand's reputation and brand recognition.

- Brunch.us
- Parksproject.us
- Wagamama.us

Content

.US

Maintaining a blog and regularly posting new content to a website holds immense importance, offering a multitude of benefits for SEO, community engagement, and social activation.

- Three new articles posted in Q1:
  - 5 Marketing Resolutions to Make in 2023
  - How to Start Selling Online
  - LightenUpYourLife.us
- Highlights:
  - Organic traffic shows an almost 50% increase in average time on site and double the average page views when compared to the same time period last year. (:37s on site with 4 views per session)
  - Conversion rates for blog traffic are double sitewide average.

Paid Advertising

Paid media drives awareness building and brand recall for the .US domain. Advertising consists of direct consumer outreach targeted to up-and-coming small business owners across a variety of media platforms to reach customers across all stages of the purchasing funnel.

- Channels:
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
  - Paid Search
- Highlights:
  - Seeing good traction from remarketing campaigns on social media, bringing viewers back to the website to convert.
  - Facebook is attributed with driving the highest website conversion rates YTD. A change from paid search which typically outperforms other channels.

Partnerships

Overview: Ongoing activations with key strategic partners supports brand equity for the .US TLD with entrepreneurial, tech and STEM audiences.

- **Startup Weekend**
  - 7 Events in January
- **Major League Hacking**
  - 4 Events in January:
    - **HackNITR** - Climb aboard the spaceship for a never-ending technological adventure full of hack challenges.
    - **HackFit 2** - focus on health and wellness. Whether it's building something for your fitness regime or your mental well-being, this is the hackathon for you to bring your creative ideas to life.
    - **Hack-Commerce** – Shopping and commerce themed challenges
    - **Global Hack Week** – All are welcome to attend and participate in Global Hack Week no matter experience level and student status. Hundreds of hackers who

have never coded before attend GHW. This event is geared for folks learning to code as well as experts!

- o Notable domain registrations: rocketbunny.us, necessarily.us, usedto.us, inevitably.us, nationally.us, notepal.us, techamong.us
- **Lean Gap and Conrad Challenges** (US Students)
  - o Ongoing
  - o Conrad (Finalist round, the Innovation Summit, April 12-15)
    - ▪ Conrad Challenge to become a brand of Space Center Houston's educational programs by the 2024-2025 season.

IV. Administrator, Policy & Security Updates

POLICY & SECURITY UPDATES

ICANN – 11-16 March 2023, Cancun, Mexico

Registry Services will be attending the upcoming ICANNs. Fernando Espana will be there for ccNSO representatives.

Accountable Access to usTLD Registration Data:

- Accountable WHOIS in the usTLD Namespace – in the works, public comments are being assessed for provision of a RFC (Request for Comment) from NTIA.
- Background:
  - o A secure WHOIS gateway system.
  - o Not a privacy or proxy service.
  - o Fully compliant with our usTLD WHOIS contract.
  - o Return results in real time except for "other" cases.
  - o It uses an authenticated RDAP model for law enforcement and other legitimate parties

RKing: Said there were many one-star reviews because, currently, registrant data is not protected and open to anonymous lookups. Registrants don't seem to read the verbiage that says their WHOIS information is fully public information. Ray said he'd share the information and screenshots of these complaints as evidence of harm of anonymous access to WHOIS data.

MNeylon: Said we used to get those complaints all the time before GDPR.

CPeterson: There are some similarities from anonymous action online with GDPR. We have gTLDs that have privacy and proxy services. While privacy and proxy services can hinder public access to data, we have developed an option to help preserve WHOIS data from unfettered (anonymous) and potentially harmful access. At the same time, we want to meet our contractual requirements. This proposal is driving towards that end. We need to know how we can share information for legitimate and accountable use without violating our agreement.

ADeacon: How will usTLD registration data will change?

CPeterson: Registry Services would still be managing and maintaining the central registrant database. Users would request access via a web interface. There would be a comprehensive menu of use for access to data. Upon approval, the unredacted data would then be provided via email to a working email address. If the requestor requests access as "Other", then this would require explanation of why they need the data. If approved, data would be provided within two (2) business days. If there are non-legitimate reasons provided, then that would be rejected.

How does this meet the contractual requirements?

- Section C.5.1 (vi)(b) of the existing contract between Registry Services, LLC and the US Department of Commerce (the usTLD Contract) prohibits the use of privacy/proxy services and requires the operator to maintain a publicly accessible, accurate, and up-to-date WHOIS database

CPeterson: We continue to prohibit the use of privacy/proxy services. It would be using the same central database that we have today.

SSokol: Can you go back to very first slide. What does bullet: Allows but does not mandate use for the system on a registrant-by-registrant basis.

ADeacon: Does not mandate who?

CPeterson: Part of the policy is that registrants accept submitting correct contact data.

BBritt: People lie, what happens when they call all these people and market to them?

CPeterson: You do have to provide a working email. Today, this happens consistently with no accountability. If a user says their request is for security or IP performance and we get a complaint, then we do have reporting and reviews to be able to drive towards accountability – unlike today's options.

BBritt: are we limiting how much information they get?

CPeterson: There is rate-limiting implemented in the web interface.

ADeacon: would there be unauthenticated RDAP access? He wants to read the slides when we're finished with the presentation.

CPeterson: We would be implementing RDAP to provide this service. Authenticated access would be granted upon approval.   "Unauthenticated RDAP access" is the use of the accountability request and feature to receive queries by email based on legitimate purpose.

"Public" & "Publicly Accessible" NOT "Anonymous"& "Unaccountable"

- In many familiar cases, registration is required to access "public" or "publicly accessible" information

ADeacon: What does the anonymous view versus what we're proposing in the email.

CPeterson: Provide contact requirements and a message that a requestor can go to in order to request full data. The domain name, sponsoring RR, abuse contact and there are a couple of other fields for

anonymous lookups. Whois.us will have an anonymous view of that data. Or you can request full access to unredacted data.

Why Accountable WHOIS?

Anonymous, unaccountable access to usTLD WHOIS data harms registrants and limits the growth and vibrancy of America's namespace. The usTLD operator currently lacks effective tools to hold WHOIS users accountable for misuse of registrant data.

- We just topped 2 million domain names

- We were hoping we could grow and move on from this

- How to grow and get to that next level

ADeacon: Can we assume that the accountability feature will available to registrants and not legal entities? What is our approach? Assume all will be natural citizens (registrants). We'll see how this works later, how the policy will be implemented and implemented.

CPeterson: From a standpoint from anonymous access, the system does not differentiate between legal and individual.

ADeacon: What is the process? It appears there are technical details that need review.

BBurr: It really is simply the way you request data and how you receive data. You're going into a database and will get an email with data. They did discuss this with the council a while ago. The proposal did go to NTIA. It is fundamentally the same proposal, but it had been confused with a previous proposal submitted years ago.

ADeacon: I want to know how it will work for the users. I'd like to see the proposal as shared with NTIA, redacted anything needed.

MNeylon: I'm the one who is going to take the opposing view to ADeacon. There should be no reason why someone cannot use this. The entire legal versus natural, it has to be nuanced. It's not that simple. But some people would like to characterize it that way. This is a Becky question: Have you been looking at the NIS2? There is something stuck around data maintenance.

BBurr: The mandate for publicly assessable data remains in place. We are not changing, the data will be publicly available. As long as they are for non-marketing purposes. We're quite mindful of the provision. All of the requirements here should not result in a collection of data. There are odd bits in there and we haven't gone through them all yet.

MNeylon: I don't know how they will transfer the information.

BBurr: Registries might have to push down requirements on registrars. That might be a discussion we'll have to have.

Secure WHOIS Gateway Proposal Highlights

- Using the Secure WHOIS Gateway System, Registry Services will:

- o Remain the authoritative database source for all true-registrant information in the usTLD as directed by the Scope of Work, Contract Number 1331L519C13350044 (the ".US Contract"), Section C.4.2 (iv), Core Registry Functions
- o Give usTLD registrants the opportunity(as part of the domain registration purchase path) to prevent anonymous access to personal information contained in a registration record while ensuring that such data remains free and readily accessible to the public, including law enforcement (the LEA), intellectual property rights holders, and other third parties upon request.
- o Continue to work with the LEA and others to ensure that any unique user-type needs (e.g., law enforcement confidentiality) with respect to access and confidentiality are fully met with the authenticated Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP).

Secure WHOIS Gateway Technical Highlight

- • Registrants are given the opportunity to elect (or choose to expose), through their sponsoring registrar or reseller, to protect personal data elements from anonymous query and non-personal data would remain available to all queries.

ADeacon: Are Registrants allowed to opt out of the system? It covers that everyone is registered with a .us domain.

CPeterson: Yes, Registrants will be able to opt-in or opt-out of showing their WHOIS details to anonymous lookups. The current development view is that data defaults to opt-in to having accountability measures. Registrants will be able to change/update that option with their provider to opt-out and showcase their data to anonymous lookups.

Secure WHOIS Gateway Reporting & Audits

- • The usTLD Administrator would maintain auditable records of its receipt of and response to WHOIS access requests for personal data.
- • The usTLD Administrator would maintain records to audit complaints of technical abuse or against the usTLD Acceptable Use Policy. These records would be available in fully de-identified and aggregated form for analysis, enabling additional data driven policy development informed by the usTLD community via usTLD Stakeholder Council initiatives.
- • This data could be used to facilitate NTIA's compliance with Congressional mandates related to WHOIS data.*

BBritt: The law firm, police access. Do they need a warrant or what is required to get them access to the data.

CPeterson: From a standpoint of one-by-one requests that can and would be very similar to any request. It would be a working email and a legitimate reason that would be provided. The authenticated access that would be provided to certain agencies of users. Today, a law enforcement agent can go to whois.us and doesn't have to have a warrant, within this scope they will have to have a legitimate purpose, but we are not expecting to collect actual warrant information.

BBurr: Verifying their agency and authentication as long. They will be careful about who gets that access, for example – China LEA would not be granted authenticated access.

CPeterson: Next steps from here, we will make this presentation available to the council. CP will add the technical review of what does the anonymous lookup look like. As well as redacted view, via email and etc. that will be in the index.

CPeterson: The council won't have access to see the proposal until after any RFC has been by NTIA for public comment on the policy. Due to the length of time, it may seem that there may be some confusion. This has taken a long time but it's a meaty topic.

ADeacon: I look forward to reading the proposal when it's available.

V.   AOB & Closing