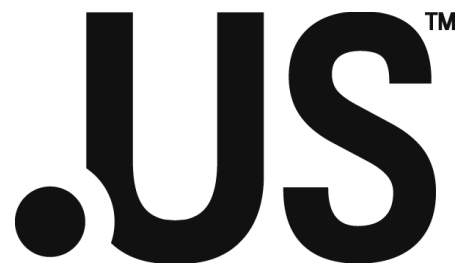


**4Q-25 usTLD Stakeholder Meeting Minutes  
December 11, 2025 | 12pm Eastern Daylight Time**



*December 11<sup>th</sup> 2025*

I. Welcome

II. Roll call and approval of September 2025 minutes

**Attendees:**

- **Stakeholder Council:** Dustin Loop, Brian Britt, Ray King, Tom Barrett, Lauren Price, Shane Layman
- **Registry Services:** Crystal Peterson, Kristin Johnson, Fernando España
- **NTIA:** Stacey Cheney

**DLoup:** Motions to approve 3Q meeting minutes. Seconded by Ray King. No objections. Minutes approved.

**DLoup:** Moves to Stakeholder updates.

III. Stakeholder & Administrator Updates

*2026 Meeting Calendar Proposed*

- Quarterly meeting dates submitted for council review and approval:
  - **Proposed Calendar:**
    - **Q1:** February 5, 2026 at 12:00 pm Eastern Time
    - **Q2:** May 14, 2026 at 12:00 pm Eastern Time
    - **Q3:** September 10, 2026 at 12:00 pm Eastern Time
    - **Q4:** December 10, 2026 at 12:00 pm Eastern Time
  - **Town Hall:** November 5, 2026 @ 12:00 pm Eastern
- No immediate objections or conflicts. DLoup proposes emailing dates for those unable to attend the meeting. Council Secretariat to follow-up with broader council post-meeting to finalize 2026 schedule.

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### Subcommittee Updates

- **Premium Names Subcommittee:** Members - Brian Britt, Ray King, Becky Burr. Facilitated by Dustin Loop with Crystal Peterson supporting.
- Final draft circulated <GOOGLE DOC> attached at end of doc (*exhibit 1.*)

**DLoup:** Motions to approve subcommittee Premium Names recommendations. Seconded by Ray King. No objections. Premium Name council recommendations approved to move forward to public comment.

**CPeterson:** Expected to be posted prior to next Stakeholder meeting. If any issues arise we will report out to the council.

### IGS (Innovation, Governance and Security Council Subcommittee) Subcommittee

- Reviewed possible focus areas:
  - Innovation (new services/features such as IDNs, emerging technologies).
  - Governance (policy oversight, accountability, transparency).
  - Cybersecurity (proactive measures, coordination with U.S. government and industry standards).
  - Abuse Mitigation (spam, fraud, phishing, child safety, DNS abuse).
  - Security & Stability (DNS resilience, critical infrastructure considerations).
- **Membership:** Mix of Council members, external experts, government representatives, and broader public stakeholders.
- **Operations:** Meets in person annually, provides structured updates to the Stakeholder Council throughout the year.
- **Role:** Deep-dive advisory body providing *specialized oversight* and subject-matter recommendations, supplementing the Council's broader policy discussions.

**CPeterson:** Will follow-up with next steps for timing and potential to move this forward.

### DNS Abuses & Mitigation

- YoY DNS Abuse Metrics (Reactive Investigations)
  - -52% YoY decrease in abusive alerts YTD thru 31 August
  - Internal analysis continues to refine metrics for registration to abusive use, type of abuse, and others
  - Compromised domains represent only <5% of abusive activity – Procedures revamped to make faster decisions for action for malicious domains
- Registry Threat Management Service (RTMS)
  - GoDaddy Registry has designed and operates the Registry Threat Management Service (RTMS)

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- The RTMS platform helps protect the usTLD through a centralized domain abuse threat detection, blocking, investigation and reporting system. Once threat activity is identified, alerts are generated within the platform
- Each alert is investigated and/or actioned using the platform and supporting systems
- The progress and results of which are tracked through the platform, with detailed audit logs
- Alerts are also archived for future retrieval and review
- RTMS proactively scans and receives feeds from trusted industry security organizations to help keep malicious actors out of the registry namespace (e.g. Spamhaus/SURBL/Netcraft/and more)
- RTMS analysts also review and process threat reports from third parties
- Proactive Domain Abuse Blocking
  - Implementing capabilities to shift between reactive and proactive abuse prevention through AI-powered threat intelligence and cross-TLD pattern recognition.
  - Proactive Intelligence-Driven Prevention: Temporarily block domains identified as potential for malicious intent before registration using cross-TLD abuse patterns, AI analysis, and real-time threat intelligence to prevent DNS abuse with a TLD and protect the broader DNS ecosystem.
  - Key Success Indicators:
    - Disruption of cross-TLD abuse migration
    - Improved TLD reputation metrics
    - Reduced downstream harm to users and brands
    - Enhanced confidence with industry partners in abuse prevention within the TLD
- Reactive Abuse Efforts
  - The Registry Trust & Safety (RTMS) teams review registration data to determine ‘associated domains’ by matching a confirmed abusive domain’s Registrant contact data to other registered domains within the database.
  - The usTLD Registry is in a unique position to be able to review WHOIS contact data to support DNS Abuse mitigation efforts because the registry holds the authoritative database of all data points of registered domain names including contact data.
    - *.US does not allow Privacy/Proxy services, and does require Data Accuracy Verifications by Registrars, similar to gTLDs.*
  - Once the associated domains are identified, those domains are investigated for any abusive activities. If bad activity is found, then those associated domains are also managed in the same way as the initial domain name from investigation to communication to action. If no abusive activity is found, then the domain names are left alone and remain active.
  - The registry only communicates and/or takes action on confirmed abusive domain names -- whether that domain name is a “parent” or “associated domain”.

## IV. Q4 Marketing Update

- 2025 Town Hall recap
  - Guest Speaker: Graeme Bunton, Executive Director at NetBeacon
  - NEW paid outreach via LinkedIn (target: internet policy professionals + domain industry stakeholders)
  - Facebook and X dedicated posts
  - Featured article on Circle ID
  - Targeted email to previous attendees
- Social and Content Efforts
  - Content: 5x articles published (*as of 12/10/25*)
    - Voice Search Optimization: Preparing Your Website for Alexa, Siri, and Beyond
    - What is Entrepreneurship? The Complete Guide for Entrepreneurs & Business Strategies
    - What Is a Sales Funnel, and How Do You Build One That Works for Your Business?
    - How to Become an Entrepreneur: 7 Steps to Start a Successful Business
    - The Power of Email Drip Campaigns and How to Set Yours Up
  - Brand Highlights:
    - Foto360.us
    - MindSparks.us
    - FuseDigital.us
    - ThirteenthFloor.us
    - GlobalHolidays.us
    - BestBusinesses.us
- Paid Advertising
  - Q4 marketing continued to build momentum with a focus on data-driven channel optimization and valuable, locally relevant content. Efforts centered on amplifying user stories and expanding the reach of helpful, community-oriented content. Our evolving paid media mix, now fully powered by Google's new AI Max for Search, demonstrated meaningful gains in both click-thru rates and cost efficiency, reinforcing the impact of continuous innovation.
  - Channels:
    - Performance Max
    - Paid Search / AI Max
    - Facebook
    - Instagram

## V. AOB & Closing

Exhibit 1: Premium Names Subcommittee Council recommendations circulated for review.

## Recommendations from the .US Subcommittee on Premium Names

### Key Questions Considered

The subcommittee was tasked with evaluating the impact of introducing registry premium tiers in the .US namespace. Specifically, we addressed the following:

1. **Will the launch of registry premium tiers devalue the utility of the .US namespace?**
2. **Will it affect the stable management of the .US TLD?**
3. **Will it negatively impact the renewals of existing .US domain holders?**

### Findings & Recommendations

#### 1. Impact on the Utility of the .US Namespace

To assess “devaluation,” we considered different perspectives:

- **Registry Value (Revenue & Market Perception):** Introducing premium tiers, if implemented with reasonable policies (TBD), is unlikely to harm the overall value of the .US namespace and will likely also increase revenue.
- **End Users & Domain Investors:** We concluded that a structured premium model would not diminish the perceived health or prestige of the .US TLD, especially given its long-standing presence.

#### 2. Effect on Stable Management of .US

Based on precedent from many new TLDs (nTLDs) that successfully operate under similar premium models, we do not believe this will compromise stability.

- The key distinction is that .US has been publicly available for 23 years, whereas most nTLDs implement premium pricing from launch.
- While retrofitting a tiered pricing model onto an existing namespace presents challenges, these can be addressed with clear and consistent policies.

#### 3. Impact on Existing Registrants’ Renewals

- Our proposed implementation ensures that existing domain holders are not affected.

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- Premium pricing would only apply to currently unregistered names or those that become available upon deletion.
- This approach maintains fairness while optimizing the namespace's value.

### Additional Considerations

#### High-High vs. High-Low Pricing Model

We discussed different premium pricing strategies:

- **High-High Model:** More suitable for niche (vertical) TLDs – Premium names that are priced higher both at registration and at renewal. For example, a name might cost \$500 to register and \$500 per year to renew. This model is commonly used in some newer TLDs where long-term value is tied directly to ongoing premium pricing.
- **High-Low Model:** Preferred for .US, as it operates closer to a generic rather than a niche TLD – Premium names have a higher initial registration fee but then renew at the standard general availability (GA) rate (e.g., \$500 to register, then \$10–\$15 per year to renew).

#### Scope of Premium Names

- The list of potential premium names should remain strictly confidential until officially accepted and reserved. This should include the list of any currently registered domains selected to be reserved upon expiration.

#### Two-Letter Domains & Future State/Territory Expansion

- **Reserving ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 Lists:** Given the possibility of the U.S. adding new states or territories, we recommend keeping all two-letter “AA” (Alpha Alpha) names reserved rather than implementing a recall mechanism.
- **Avoiding Recalls:** A reclaim policy would create uncertainty, potential inconsistencies, and fine print clauses that might be overlooked.

#### Modifying the Existing Reserve List

- Certain government-related names (e.g., FBI.us, FTC.us) should remain reserved.
- Other names, such as RonaldReagan.us, could potentially be released, aligning with past decisions where names like Obama.us and Trump.us were not made premium.

#### Implementation Flexibility

The stakeholder council also emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility in implementation: requesting approval for multiple pricing tiers, ensuring registrars do not see premium designations until

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names drop, and keeping the premium name list confidential. The group agreed that while the volume of potential premium names may be large, ongoing management and repricing flexibility will allow the registry to adapt over time.

### Closing Thoughts

In previous rounds, tiered premium models were not widely used across registries, and .US primarily focused on 1-2 character names. However, given the success of premium tiers in other nTLDs, we believe expanding a well-structured tiered premium model for .US is a viable and beneficial strategy moving forward.

### Key Takeaways:

- A premium pricing model will not devalue .US if implemented properly.
- Stability will not be impacted, based on successful models in other TLDs.
- Existing registrants will not be affected, as premium pricing applies only to unregistered and dropped domains.
- Two-letter domains should remain reserved for potential future U.S. state/territory additions.