

Internet agency approves domains in native scripts

March 24 2010, By ANICK JESDANUN , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Four countries and two territories have won preliminary approval to have Internet addresses written entirely in their native scripts as early as this summer.

However, proposals for Internet addresses that would say "China" and "Taiwan" in Chinese will require a few more months of technical review. The delay is not over political disputes, but rather because the Chinese language can be written in two ways - using simplified and traditional scripts. Rules are being developed to make sure that addresses in either script go to the same Web sites.

Since their creation in the 1980s, Internet domain names such as those that end in ".com" have been limited to 37 characters: the 10 numerals, the hyphen and the 26 letters in the Latin alphabet used in English. Technical tricks have been used to allow portions of the [Internet address](#) to use other scripts, but until now, the suffix had to use those 37 characters.

With the addition of non-Latin suffixes, [Internet users](#) with little or no knowledge of English would no longer have to type [Latin characters](#) to access Web pages targeting Chinese, Arabic and other speakers.

In January, the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#), known as [ICANN](#), paved the way for an entire domain name to appear in Cyrillic for Russia and Arabic for Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Added to the list this week are suffixes in Chinese for Hong Kong; Sinhalese and Tamil for Sri Lanka; Thai for Thailand and Arabic for Qatar, Tunisia and the Palestinian territories.

Hong Kong, a territory of China, didn't have to go through a further review as China and Taiwan did because "Hong Kong" appears the same in both simplified and traditional Chinese.

More information: Chart on approved applications:
<http://bit.ly/4Fso2T>

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