

Internet domain name expansion comes under fire

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The [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers \(ICANN\)](#), the global body which manages the [Domain Name System](#) that forms the technical backbone of the Web, will begin taking applications in January for new generic top-level domains (gTLDs), the suffixes such as .com, .net or .org.

ICANN's plan would allow for the creation of hundreds of new gTLDs,

letting companies such as Apple, Toyota and BMW, for example, apply for domain names ending in .apple, .toyota or .bmw.

Esther Dyson, a former ICANN chairman, told a hearing of the [Senate Commerce Committee](#) the expansion of gTLDs was unnecessary and would lead to a "profusion of domain names" that would only serve to confuse Internet users.

"Creating a whole set of redundant names isn't useful," Dyson said.

"This whole idea is fundamentally misguided," she said. "I hope ICANN will go back and reconsider."

Daniel Jaffe, executive vice president of the Association of National Advertisers, said ICANN's plan is "fundamentally flawed."

"Companies are going to have to buy their name back to protect themselves," Jaffe said. "Even big companies will be facing very large expenses."



President and CEO of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, Rod Beckstrom (R), and Peter Dengate (L), chairman of the board, take part in an ICANN meeting in Singapore in June 2011. A plan to expand the number of Internet domain names came under fire in the US Congress on

Thursday, a day after the head of the Federal Trade Commission said it could potentially be a "disaster."

Angela Williams, general counsel for the YMCA, said the new gTLD program will impose excessive costs on non-profit organizations like her youth group.

"The new gTLD program compromises use of the Internet by increasing the risk of fraud, [cybersquatting](#), and [trademark infringement](#) and by significantly escalating the cost to protect against such unlawful activities," she said.

"The ultimate cost in proceeding through the entire application process alone could reach several hundred thousands of dollars," Williams said.

ICANN plans to charge a \$185,000 application fee for a new gTLD.

The criticism of the gTLD expansion came a day after Jon Leibowitz, the chairman of the [Federal Trade Commission](#), expressed concern about the plan during testimony before another congressional committee.

"We are very, very concerned that this roll out of new gTLDs has the potential to be a disaster for consumers and for businesses," he said.

"Businesses will have to defensively register all of their names," Leibowitz said. "Our sense is it's burdensome to businesses. We see enormous cost here to consumers and businesses and not a lot of benefit."

ICANN senior vice president Kurt Pritz, testifying before the Senate Commerce Committee, said ICANN takes Leibowitz's comments "very,

very seriously" but staunchly defended the planned domain name expansion.

"It is the product of well thought out, thoroughly debated policies that are designed to benefit the billions of Internet users through increased competition, choice and innovation," Pritz said.

He said the planned expansion was the result of a six-year consultation by a wide variety of stake-holders and opposition to the plan was a "PR campaign driven by industry groups" using "revisionist history."

"They are now forum shopping and asking Congress to give them another bite at the apple," he said.

ICANN, a California-based non-profit corporation, approved the expansion of gTLDs in June. While applications for new [domain names](#) are being accepted in January the first new gTLDs are not expected until next year.

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