

Website address 'revolution' on hold

April 27 2012



Chief operating officer of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Akram Atallah is pictured in 2011. The Internet domain name "revolution" was on hold Friday due to a flaw that let some aspiring applicants peek at unauthorized information at the registration website.

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It remained unclear when the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers \(ICANN\)](#) would resume taking applications from those interested in running new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) online.

ICANN cancelled a Monday event at which details of who applied for which new domains were to be revealed after a system problem delayed the close of the application window. The original domain name application deadline of Thursday was extended to April 20.

"We have learned of a possible glitch in the TLD application system software that has allowed a limited number of users to view some other users' file names and user names in certain scenarios," ICANN chief operating officer Akram Atallah said in an online message posted on April 12.

"Out of an abundance of caution, we took the system offline to protect applicant data... We are examining how this issue occurred and considering appropriate steps forward."

In January, ICANN began taking applications from those interested in operating Internet domains that replace endings such as .com or .org with nearly any acceptable words, including company, organization or city names.

Outgoing ICANN president Rod Beckstrom has championed the change as a "new domain name system revolution."

The new system will allow Internet names such as .Apple or .IMF or .Paris.

ICANN says the huge expansion of the Internet, with two billion users around the world, half of them in Asia, requires the new names.

"When the application system reopens, users will be able to review their applications, including those already submitted, to assure themselves that their information remains as they intended," Atallah said Thursday in an update.

"We expect that demands on the system will be high when it reopens, and we are enhancing system performance as part of our preparations for the reopening."

More than 25 global bodies have expressed concern about the possible "misleading registration and use" of their names.

They fear it could cause confusion about their Internet presence and force them to spend huge amounts on "defensive registration" to stop cybersquatters, who buy up names and try to sell them at an inflated price, and fraudsters.

Registration costs \$185,000 with a \$25,000 annual fee after that.

ICANN insists, however, that safeguards are in place to protect names of established companies and groups.

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