

ICANN offers refunds to domain name applicants

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(AP) -- The organization behind a major expansion of Internet address suffixes is offering full refunds to companies and organizations affected by a weeks-long delay in taking proposals.

Each application costs \$185,000. Applicants had been allowed to withdraw bids for a partial refund. Now, they can get all of their money back as long as they pull their bids before a deadline that hasn't yet been determined.

Last month, the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) abruptly shut down a system for letting companies and organizations propose new suffixes, after it discovered a [software glitch](#) that exposed some private data. The data in some cases offered clues about which companies were proposing what suffixes, which was supposed to be confidential.

Up to 1,000 [domain name suffixes](#) - the ".com" part of an Internet address - could be added each year in the most sweeping change to the [domain name system](#) since its creation in the 1980s.

From a technical standpoint, the names let Internet-connected computers know where to send email and locate websites. But they've come to mean much more.

The idea behind the expansion is to let Las Vegas hotels, casinos and other attractions congregate around ".Vegas," or a company such as

Canon Inc. draw customers to "cameras.Canon" or "printers.Canon." The new system would also make Chinese, Japanese and Swahili versions of ".com" possible.

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