

New Global Top-Level Domain Names, biz And .info

ICANN has approved the opening of seven new top-level domain names. The first two domain names to open are .biz and .info.

From May 21 through July 9, 2001, trademark and service mark owners may submit an IP claim to the new .biz registry, which is intended only for bona fide business or commercial use. When the .biz names are launched in October 2001, an IP claimant will be notified of any domain name that exactly matches the claimant's mark. Domain names which are exact matches will be placed on hold from October 1 to October 31, 2001. The applicant will be notified of the claim. Moreover, IP claimants will have 20 days from notification to resolve the matter amicably or to file an action pursuant to the Start-up Trademark Opposition Policy (STOP), which has a lower burden of proof than a UDRP proceeding. After the 20 days, an IP claimant may only challenge a name through UDRP and court proceedings. It will cost \$90 to register an IP claim directly through the .biz registry. It may cost less to register the claim through another accredited registrar.

From June 25 through September 25, 2001, trademark and service mark owners, as well as all other applicants, may submit domain name applications for .biz names to accredited registrars. The registrars will pass all applications along to the .biz registry. From September 26 through September 30, 2001, the .biz registry will randomly assign domain names based on the received applications. For the applicants who successfully register a .biz domain name, the domain names are scheduled to go live on October 1, 2001.

Unlike the .biz domain names, .info domain names will be available to anyone and will function like a second .com. There will be a Sunrise Period from June 25 through July 24, 2001 in which the owner of a trademark or service mark which has been registered on a national register prior to October 2, 2000 may pre-register .info domain names. Any preregistered domain names must exactly match the registered text elements of the mark. The domain names will be assigned in the Sunrise Period by a randomized, round-robin system. *Any* domain names successfully registered during the Sunrise Period may not be transferred for a period of six months following registration unless transferred pursuant to a challenge, UDRP or court proceeding.

From about July 25 through November 25, 2001, a third party may challenge Sunrise Period domain name registrations on certain specified grounds. If a challenge is not filed within 120 days after the close of the Sunrise Period, any challenge must be made through UDRP and court proceedings. From the middle of August through the end of August or beginning of September, anyone may apply for a .info domain name. In that period the domain names will be assigned on a randomized, round-robin basis. After the beginning of September, applications will be treated on a first come, first serve basis.