

*Keep The Core Neutral - Media Release  
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**KTCN Action Alert: Public Comments Open on gTLD Policy at ICANN  
Netizens Encouraged to Weigh-In on Free Expression Concerns**

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(San Francisco) – ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, announced Friday that a 21-day comment period has opened for the public to submit comments regarding ICANN’s proposed policy for approving new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) on the Internet. The Keep The Core Neutral coalition (KTCN) has created a new Action Alert to guide supporters in submitting comments to ICANN. The Action Alert web page can be found at <http://www.keep-the-core-neutral.org/action1> and KTCN appeals to all supporters of free expression to participate in this public action.

KTCN is concerned with policy recommendations for ICANN to reject domain names that others find to be offensive or immoral. KTCN calls on ICANN to refrain from making general policy decisions and to stick to its technical mission. KTCN launched in June 2007 and now has over 200 organizational and individual members from around the world. All coalition members have signed a petition urging ICANN to refrain from using non-technical criteria for approving applications for new gTLDs and to create a policy driven by the protection freedom of expression and innovation on the Internet.

The KTCN Action Alert addresses remaining flaws in the latest report from ICANN’s Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and provides sample text to suggest changes that would correct those flaws. The public comment period will close at 4 pm on 30 August 2007, and a complete summary and analysis of community feedback will be made available by ICANN shortly thereafter. That summary will be considered by the

GNSO Council, which will vote on the report on 6 September 2007. If the Council accepts the policy recommendations, the ICANN Board will then consider it as early as the end of October 2007.

ICANN, a private non-profit corporation operating under a Joint Project Agreement with the U.S. government, currently accredits 15 gTLDs operating on the Internet, including familiar ones such as ".com" and ".net" as well as several less well-known such as ".biz" and ".info". ICANN is currently considering policy that would allow it to reject applications for new gTLDs if they violate some undefined standard of "morality or public order." But the existence of globally agreed cultural or legal standards is doubtful, opening up a sizable potential for nations with restrictions on expression to impose them on the whole world. Setting such precedents for generalized public governance at ICANN would be dangerous, as it does not have a governance structure that is effectively accountable to the general public. This policy also establishes a subjective process for challenging gTLD applications that raises costs for domain name applicants and encourages self-censorship.

In addition to the current Action Alert, KTCN will continue to accept additional members and signatures on its petition, which will be delivered to the ICANN Board as it prepares to vote on this policy. The coalition encourages sympathetic individuals and organizations to join and sign the petition, found on its web site at:

<http://www.keep-the-core-neutral.org/>

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