

New Names Advisory Panel

GEOGRAPHIC 2LDS - state/territory.au

Recommendations to the auDA Board, November 2002

Introduction

In October 2002, the Panel advised the auDA Board that it intended to recommend that auDA proceed to implement a geographic system of 2LDs (state/territory.au) as proposed by the One City One Site (OCOS) working party (and generally supported by cBallarat Ltd). An overview of the OCOS proposal is at Appendix A. The full OCOS proposal is available at <http://www.auda.org.au/policy/panel-newname-2002/>

The Panel agreed to bring this matter before the Board ahead of its consideration of other new 2LD proposals, for these reasons:

- (a) the Board has previously emphasised the importance of giving priority to proposals that focus on community use of geographic domain names;
- (b) the issues raised in the proposal have previously been canvassed by the earlier Name Policy Advisory Panel; and
- (c) there seems no reason for delaying implementation of the proposal, which at any rate will take some time to implement.

Public consultation outcomes

The auDA Board asked the Panel to undertake one more formal public consultation before submitting its final recommendations with respect to the OCOS proposal. The Board was concerned to ensure that the Australian Internet community had advance notice of, and opportunity to comment on, what will amount to a significant change to the Australian DNS. The Panel published its proposed recommendations and invited public comment.

Three submissions were received, all in favour of the state/territory.au naming system. The Panel notes that the OCOS proposal has been a work-in-progress since November 2000, and people have been able to view the proposal and make comments to the working party and auDA via the website <http://www.onecityonesite.org>. All public comments received to date are archived on the auDA website; an overwhelming majority have demonstrated strong support for the proposal.

Two submissions (from the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia and the ACT Government) argued against the Panel's proposed recommendation (e), "A majority of the Panel believes that, once a system for community use of geographic domain names is implemented, there is no longer good reason to maintain the restriction on the use of geographic names in com.au and net.au." Consequently, the Panel has decided to withdraw this recommendation for the time being and reconsider the issue at its next meeting.

Evaluation of OCOS proposal

The Panel believes that the OCOS proposal meets the selection criteria set by the Board in its Call for Proposals.

1. The 2LDs are robust, sustainable and viable. There is a clear, long-term commitment from the Geographic Names Board, the Online Council and the NSW Government.

2. The 2LDs will serve the needs of users, or a community of users, that are not well served by the existing 2LDs. The user group is geographic communities (ie. the residents of a geographic area), and the needs of these communities are not well served by any of the existing 2LDs (because a community is not a commercial entity, association, organisation, individual, government or educational body).
3. There is clear support for the 2LDs, in particular among the users it is intended to serve, and in general terms from the wider community. Strong evidence of this support has been provided (several letters of support, and a resolution of the Online Council). There is evidence that user community support is broadly representative of that community. There have been no reasonable objections to the creation of the 2LDs from the wider community.
4. The 2LDs will widen the choice of domain names available to users of the Australian DNS. The proposed 2LDs do not duplicate, or form a sub-set, of an existing 2LD.

Recommendations

The Panel commends the proposal to create eight new second level domains, and in doing so makes the following recommendations to the Board.

- (a) auDA should create the eight new 2LDs (act.au, nsw.au, nt.au, qld.au, sa.au, tas.au, vic.au, wa.au) and conduct a commercial tender process for the registry operations, in accordance with auDA's competition model.
- (b) All geographic names should be registered as 3LDs (eg. carlton.vic.au, not carlton.melbourne.vic.au). The Panel notes that there are some duplicated geographic names, but does not consider it desirable to introduce a system of 4LDs to deal with exceptions to the rule.
- (c) Operational processes, including provision of registrar services and the development of policy rules, will need to be determined by the National Reference Group in conjunction with auDA. Some operational processes will need to be further developed and tested through progressive implementation of the 2LDs.
- (d) The progressive implementation should commence with NSW (in line with the stated commitment of the NSW Government to undertake pilot testing), but other states should be permitted to participate at an early stage if they have the available resources.

APPENDIX A

Overview of One City One Site (OCOS) Model

The core purpose of the OCOS model is to preserve geographic domain names for use by the relevant community.

The domain structure is: placename.state/territory.au. Domain names must be an exact match with the place name; no variations are allowed.

Use of domain names will be restricted to community website portals that reflect community interests such as local business, tourism, historical information, culture, special interest groups, events, news and media. Only applicants that meet the "community website committee" requirements will be eligible to license a domain name.

There will be an OCOS Management Authority (OMA) in each state and territory, responsible for managing the allocation and use of domain names. The OMAs will also be responsible for marketing and promoting the 2LD to local communities, and assisting communities with the application process.

Applications for domain names will be received and initially assessed by the relevant OMA, then forwarded to an Independent Assessment Panel (comprising representatives from community interest groups, local government and the Geographic Names Board) for final ruling.

The OMAs will be coordinated nationally by a National Reference Group (NRG), responsible for ensuring national uniformity of the OCOS model. The NRG will be accountable to auDA and the community for management of the 2LDs.

The full OCOS proposal is available at <http://www.auda.org.au/policy/panel-newname-2002/>