



QVC, Inc.'s Public Comment in Support of Specification 13 for .Brand TLDs

QVC, Inc. ("QVC"), the owner of Application No. 1-877-83686 for .qvc, submits this public comment in support of Specification 13 for the gTLD Registry Agreement, which would be available for qualifying ".Brand TLDs". QVC appreciates the invitation to comment on this encouraging development, and QVC believes that it is appropriate—and necessary—to classify certain TLDs as ".Brand TLDs."

Modifications like those in Specification 13 must be adopted for two primary reasons. First, such modifications will help to foster and maintain consumer trust in .Brand TLDs because consumers will expect the content of a .Brand site to emanate from or be affiliated with the particular brand. Second, .Brand TLD applicants must be able to control the use of their brands in the new TLD space to preserve the source-identifying function of their trademarks.

Like many other applicants, QVC explained in its application that it intends to operate the .qvc TLD as a single-user, single-registrant brand registry. Indeed, QVC *must* operate the registry in this exclusive manner since its applied-for string is identical to its core brand, which is registered around the world. QVC expends considerable time and resources to protect the source-identifying value of its brands, and allowing unaffiliated or unlicensed third parties to register .qvc domain names would undo that work and destroy the value of the QVC brand, all to the detriment of QVC and the consuming public. Accordingly, by recognizing the unique needs of .Brand TLDs, ICANN can prevent consumer confusion and protect the trademark rights of brand applicants.

Furthermore, by adopting measures to address the needs of .Brand applicants, ICANN will encourage future applications for .Brand TLDs in subsequent rounds. In fact, future application rounds could benefit from offering a separate type of application for TLDs that qualify as .Brand TLDs at the outset. Otherwise, a one-size-fits-all model will deter future applications from brand companies considering TLD applications as a way to grow their brands and promote consumer trust.

In conclusion, QVC supports Specification 13 because its proposed modifications to the gTLD Registry Agreement are necessary to protect both brands and the public trust. Nevertheless, while Specification 13 is a positive first step, it does not resolve all issues relevant to .Brand TLDs. Therefore, QVC urges ICANN to continue its efforts to collaborate with the Brand Registry Group and the community to further improve the .Brand TLD model.