

**Comments by Connecting.nyc Inc. on ICANN's
DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN for JULY 2011 – JUNE 2014**

January 25, 2011

Connecting.nyc Inc. is a New York State not-for-profit created to educate New Yorkers about the use of the .nyc TLD as a public interest resource. We trace our existence to the Internet Empowerment Resolution passed by a New York City Community Board in 2001. While our focus is on the .nyc TLD, we've come to see that the fruition of .nyc requires collaboration between cities. As such, a goal for 2011 is to engage in a city-TLD awareness and standardization campaign. We offer the following comments to that end, in the hope that we might contribute to the ICANN Strategic Plan for July 2011 – June 2014 as it pertains to global cities.

When New York City's Queens Community Board 3 passed its Internet Empowerment Resolution on April 19, 2001, it did so primarily in the hope of improving local communication. To help make a point about the desperate need for improved local communication, I often compare the communication resources of our Community District with those of Terre Haute, Indiana, where I spent a couple of my college years. Terre Haute has 2 TV stations, 8 radio stations, and a daily newspaper to serve its residents needs. Community District 3, with nearly twice the residents, doesn't have a single TV station, not a single radio station, nor a daily newspaper.

Local Communication Resource Comparison

	Terre Haute, Indiana	Community District 3
Population	105,000	170,000
Television Stations	2	0
Daily Newspapers	1	0
Radio Stations	8	0

New York City communicates with and to the world in a superlative manner, but it is severely challenged when it comes to intra-city communication. Too frequently it's only disaster that attracts the globally focused local media.

So when we saw the prospect of our neighborhoods, civic organizations, schools, artists, local retailers, churches, mosques, synagogues, and government having the opportunity to address the complexities of city life with the full DNS-empowered Internet, we jumped at the prospect. That was 10 years ago.

I've been an observer and/or participant in developing a process for issuing new TLDs since ICANN's birth and understand the difficulties it has faced. It's been a fascinating evolution to watch and I commend the thousands who have contributed to its maturation over the years. But in reading over the draft Strategic Plan, I note a lacuna in the document – the treatment of cities.

Cities are our most complex institutions and they remain TLD-less. With the DNS developed during the heyday of suburbia, I understand the original omission. But I find it disconcerting that the Draft Strategic Plan continues the neglect them. Some might say “Hey, cities are eligible for TLDs.” And that's correct. But are they prepared?

Today the organizations that operate the machines that facilitate the registration and sale of domain

names are leading the drive for the development of city-TLDs. It's as if the city decided to build a football stadium and in making its plans it only spoke to the construction company - not to the fans, the team management and coaches, the players, the surrounding community, the architect, the financiers, the marketers... How has it come to this?

However, I've seen positive signs over the past months, particularly the strong ICANN participation at the City-TLD Governance and Best Practices workshop at the recent Internet Governance Forum in Vilnius, which I had the honor of moderating. With ICANN's Chair Peter Dengate Thrush actively participating in the conversation, and with two future ICANN board members workshop panelists (Bonjour), I'm hopeful that the needs of cities will be addressed in the completed Strategic Plan.

To that end I offer the following suggestions proffered at the IGF's City-TLD Workshop for consideration in formulating a city element for inclusion in the final Strategic Plan.

- City-TLD proponents should prepare a preliminary definition of public interest TLDs, using resources such as the [Paris Understanding](#).
- An organization of proponents of public interest city-TLDs should be formed.
- Literature should be prepared to inform mayors of the world of the utility of city-TLDs, and that it be distributed through their best practices organizations.
- Via petition and other mechanisms, the advantages of a thoughtful and rapid approval process for city-TLDs should be presented to the ICANN.
- Such petition to the ICANN should note that the operation of city government, the quality of city life, and the sustainability of cities (and perhaps the planet) will be improved by the thoughtful issuance and development of city-TLDs.
- Such petition should also note the unsuitability of the proposed filing fees, technology requirements, and registry/registrar separation for city-TLDs proposed in the Draft Application Guidebook, especially for cities in less developed areas.
- The petition should note that the acceptance of city-TLDs as a distinct category of TLDs, governed under the existing laws of nation-states; unencumbered by traditional concerns about trademark stress; and governed by responsible entities will free the ICANN to focus on more problematic TLD categories.
- That nation-states be contacted through the members of the ICANN's Government Advisory Committee (GAC) and other channels and requested to assemble a list of cities with an existing interest in TLDs.
- That a list of cities proposing public interest TLDs be submitted to ICANN.
- That a dedicated unit within ICANN be created to process public interest city-TLD applications.
- That cities on such a list be processed and approved in an expedited manner.
- That the city-TLD advocacy organization create city-to-city processes and communication channels to share best practices.

So today we have Abidjan, Accra, Adana, Ad-Dammām, Ad-Dawḥah, Adelaide, Adis Abeba, Āgra, Ahmadābād, Ahvāz, Al-Baṣrah, Al-Iskandarīyah, Al-Khartūm, Al-Kuwayt, Allahābād, Al-Madīnah, Al-Manāmah, Almaty, Al-Mawṣil, Al-Qāhirah, 'Ammān, Amritsar, Amsterdam, Ankara, Anshan, Antananarivo, Ar-Riyād, Asansol, Aṣḡabat, Ash-Shāriqah, Asunción, Athīnai, Atlanta, Auckland, Austin, Baghdād, Bakī, Bamako, Bandung, Baoding, Baotou, Barcelona, Barquisimeto, Barranquilla,

Batam, Bayrūt, Beijing, Belém, Belo Horizonte, Bengaluru, Benin City, Beograd, Berlin, Bhilai, Bhopāl, Bhubaneswar, Birmingham, Birmingham, Bogotá, Boston, Brasília, Brazzaville, Brisbane, Bruxelles, Bucaramanga, București, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Buffalo, Bursa, Busan, Calgary, Cali, Campinas, Cape Town, Caracas, Cartagena, Casablanca, Cebu, Čel'abinsk, Chandīgarh, Changchun, Changsha, Changzhou, Charkiv, Charlotte, Chengdu, Chennai, Chicago, Chittagong, Chongqing, Cincinnati, Ciudad de Guatemala, Ciudad de México, Ciudad de Panamá, Ciudad Juárez, Cixi, Cleveland, Cochabamba, oimatore, Colombo, Columbus, Conakry, Córdoba, Cotonou, Curitiba, Daegu, Daejeon, Dakar, Dalian, Dallas, Daqing, Dar es Salaam, Datong, Davao, Delhi, Denver, Detroit, Dhaka, Dhanbād, Dimashq, Dnipropétrovs'k, Donèc'k, Douala, Dubayy, Dublin, Durban, Düsseldorf, Edmonton, El Djazair, Eşfahān, Faisalabad, Fès, Florianópolis, Fortaleza, Frankfurt, Freetown, Fresno, Fukuoka, Fuzhou, Gaoxiong, Gaziantep, George Town, Ghazzah, Glasgow, Goiânia, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, Greenville, Guadalajara, Guangzhou, Guayaquil, Guilin, Guiyang, Gujrānwāla, Guwāhātī, Gwalior, Gwangju, Haikou, Ḥalab, Hamamatsu, Hamburg, Hangzhou, Ha Noi, Harare, Harbin, Hartford, Hefei, Helsinki, Himeji, Hiroshima, Hohhot, Hong Kong, Houston, Huai'an, Huainan, Huizhou, Hyderābād, Hyderābād, Ibadan, Indianapolis, Indore, İstanbul, İzmir, Jabalpur, Jacksonville, Jaipur, Jakarta, Jamshedpur, Jekaterinburg, Jiddah, Jilin, Jinan, Jining, Jixi, João Pessoa, Jodhpur, Johannesburg, Joinville, Kābol, Kaduna, Kampala, Kano, Kānpur, Kansas City, Karāchi, Kāṭhmāṇḍau, Katowice, Kazan', Khulna, Kinshasa, Kitakyūshū, Klang, København, Kochi, Kolhāpur, Kolkata, Köln, Konya, Kozhikode, Krasnojarsk, Krung Thep, Kuala Lumpur, Kumamoto, Kumasi, Kunming, Kyiv, Lagos, La Habana, Lahore, Lanzhou, La Paz, Las Vegas, Leeds, León, Lille, Lima, Linyi, Lisboa, Liuzhou, Liverpool, Lomé, London, Los Angeles, Louisville, Luanda, Lubumbashi, Lucknow, Ludhiāna, Luoyang, Lusaka, Lyon, Maceió, Madrid, Madurai, Maiduguri, Makassar, Makkah, Managua, Manaus, Manchester, Mandalay, Manila, Mannheim, Maputo, Maracaibo, Maracay, Marseille, Mashhad, Mbuji-Mayi, Medan, Medellín, Meerut, Melbourne, Memphis, Mérida, Miami, Milano, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Minsk, Monrovia, Monterrey, Montevideo, Montréal, Moskva, Mudanjiang, Multān, Mumbai, München, Muqdisho, Nagoya, Nāgpur, Naha, Nairobi, Nanchang, Nanjing, Nanning, Napoli, Nāshik, Nashville, Natal, Ndjamena, Newcastle upon Tyne, New Orleans, my favorite, New York and 165 other cities with 1,000,000 plus populations anticipating access to their TLDs. But are they aware of the possibilities? (See City Populations at <http://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html> for the full list.)

I don't know about these other cities, but I'm certain that New York City will make productive use of the TLD as my organization's years of advocacy have begun to unbundle and present the intricacies of the opportunity before us. However, I must note that one of the goals of the Internet Governance Forum's City TLD Workshop was that it be a gathering place for cities to begin a collaboration on the development of their TLDs. In this regard the workshop was a failure as no city representatives participated. And to this day, to my knowledge, no cities attend or participate in the ICANN meetings.

So who patches the lacuna and presents the case for the potential of city-TLDs? This is surely an ICANN responsibility. One can not treat the .paris TLD the same as .shop! I've also suggested that my government has much to gain from participating in the patching of this wondrous tool it had provided to humanity. Indeed, with the present administration advocating for an urban policy that crosses departmental silos, what better way to empower U.S. cities with TLDs, enabling them to rethink the ways we address the breadth of human needs from the vantage point of a DNS empowered Internet.

We at Connecting.nyc Inc. stand ready to assist ICANN in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Thomas Lowenhaupt

Thomas Lowenhaupt, Founder & Chair
Connecting.nyc Inc.

tom@connectingnyc.org
Jackson Hts., NYC 11372
718 639 4222

web: <http://connectingnyc.org>
wiki: <http://bit.ly/OurWiki>
blog: <http://bit.ly/OurBlog>