

For Immediate Release:
December 8, 2011

Contact: David McGuire
(202) 463-0013 x210
david.mcguire@463.com

NetChoice Supports Plan to Expand Internet Name Space
ICANN should go forward, with improvements and contingency plans

The introduction of a significant number of new top-level Internet domains should go forward as planned, even as Internet stakeholders from around the world continue their work to improve the program, NetChoice Executive Director Steve DelBianco said today.

At a hearing of the Senate Commerce Committee today, witnesses representing a brand owners are expected to demand that the US government intervene to force ICANN to delay its long-awaited expansion of the Internet's top-level domains. DelBianco warned that heeding those requests would represent a backward step for the Internet governance model that has worked for the Internet so far.

"While not perfect, ICANN's plan to expand the domain space is a critical step forward for the Internet," DelBianco said. "Managed properly, the new gTLD program should increase competition, expand user choice, and make the Internet far more useful to hundreds of millions of users worldwide who read and write in alphabets other than Latin."

One of the most highly anticipated aspects of the new gTLD program is the expected introduction of a large number of "internationalized" domain names (IDNs) in scripts like Hindi, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, etc. For many global citizens, the new gTLD program will finally allow access to Internet domains using their own language.

"We cannot continue growing the Internet – especially in the developing world – if we halt the growth of the Domain Name System," DelBianco said. "Participants in the ICANN process have worked hard to design an expansion that minimizes defensive registration costs and risks of abuse."

NetChoice is continuing to work through the ICANN process to improve the gTLD program even further, by urging stronger enforcement of contracts and rights protection measures.

"If the new rights protection measures are not effective against cybersquatting and fraud, ICANN should be ready to make quick adjustments as the expansion unfolds."