

## Request for Information on Domain Tasting

10 August 2007

In view of the increase in domain tasting (definitions below), the GNSO Council recently considered an [Issues Report on Domain Tasting](#) and resolved to form an ad hoc group for further fact-finding on the effects of this practice. The ad hoc group has prepared these questions to assist in gathering facts and opinions, while inviting both qualitative and quantitative input. The group would especially appreciate statistical and other empirical evidence to support your responses, or references to potential sources of information. To be considered by the group, **information should be submitted no later than 15 September 2007 to <mailto:mrfi-domaintasting@icann.org>. Comments may be viewed at forum <http://forum.icann.org/lists/rfi-domaintasting/>. For further information, please see the [FAQ](#).**

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### Definitions

**Domain Tasting** – Domain tasting is a monetization practice employed by registrants to use the add-grace period to register domain names in order to test their profitability. During this period, registrants conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if the tested domain names return enough traffic to offset the annual registration fee paid to the registry over the course of the registration period (e.g., currently 6.00 USD for a .NAME domain name) and the annual transaction fee paid to ICANN (currently 0.20 USD).

**Add Grace Period (AGP)** - A Grace Period refers to a specified number of calendar days following a Registry operation in which a domain action may be reversed and a credit may be issued to a registrar. AGP is typically the five day period following the initial registration of a domain name. AGP appears as a contractual term in some, but not all gTLD registry agreements. AGP allows, among other things, for the correction of typos and other errors by registrants. Once a domain name is deleted by the registry at this stage, it is immediately available for registration by any registrant through any registrar. When a domain name is registered through an ICANN accredited registrar, that registrar may cancel the domain name at any time during the first five calendar days of the registration and receive a full credit for the registration fee from the registry and also avoid the ICANN transaction fee.

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1. Please categorize yourself (indicate all that apply):

a) Non-Commercial Internet User	b) Government	c) Intellectual Property Rights Owner
d) Registrar	e) Registry	f) Registrant
g) Intellectual Property Rights Owner Representative	h) Registrant Representative	i) Individual Internet User

2. Which of the above categories a-i may benefit from domain tasting - and in what way?
3. Which of the above categories a-i may be disadvantaged by domain tasting - and in what way?

4. Do you believe that domain tasting impacts the security and stability of the Internet - if so, in what way?
5. Have you requested the deletion of a domain name during the AGP (Add Grace Period, definition above) - if so, how many times and for what reason?
6. Have you been disadvantaged by domain tasting - if so, how?

Potential means to address the practice of domain tasting have been suggested, including:

- A) eliminating the AGP so that domain registration fees are non-refundable between registry and registrar;
- B) making the ICANN annual transaction fee (currently 0.20 USD per year) apply to names deleted during the AGP, or to a significant portion of them;
- C) imposing registry 'excess deletion fees' charged to registrars for disproportionate deletes (for example in .org, PIR registry charges 0.05 USD per deleted domain if more than 90% of domains are deleted in a given time period).

Please respond to the following questions from the perspective of your own category (see table in Question 1). Your responses on how other categories may be affected would be welcome.

7. Do you have any other suggestions in addition to A-C above?
8. Which additional disadvantages would each suggestion bring?
9. Which additional benefits would each suggestion bring?
10. Should any of these suggestions be implemented, and if so, please explain why or why not?
11. If domain registrations are offered at no cost to the registrant by a registry (outside of special promotions), would this effectively permit domain tasting?
12. Are you opposed to offering domain registrations at no cost to the registrant?
13. Should ICANN impose a minimum registration fee on domain registrations - if so, what should the minimum fee be?
14. Please provide any statistical or other factually supported information (with source or source data included for third party validation) that could be useful for analyzing domain tasting issues.

15. Please name any expert persons you know of regarding any issues raised by this RFI.
16. Please provide any other comments you may have to this RFI.

## **FAQ on the Request for Information (RFI) document about Domain Name Tasting and the Add Grace Period (AGP).**

### **Question 1**

This section is designed to help quantify what groups that a responding party represents with their submission. Please check all that apply to you or the organization you are filing on behalf of.

### **Question 2**

Using the same group of categories from question 1 above, in your opinion, please identify which of these are benefiting from domain tasting, and explain how each category of user benefits from it.

### **Question 3**

Using the same group of categories from question 1 above, please identify which of these are disadvantaged by domain tasting, and explain how each category of user is disadvantaged.

### **Question 4**

If you believe that domain tasting has an impact on internet security or undermines internet stability, please indicate yes or no, and then quantify exactly how the stability or security of the internet is impacted.

### **Question 5**

This question really applies to those that actually participate in the registration and deletion of a domain name within the 5 day grace period for refund.

Here is an example of the meaning of this question. If you, as a registrant made a typographical error in registering a domain name, did you contact your registrar to seek a correction, and they subsequently deleted the domain for credit within the add grace period?

If you have a response here, it would be “yes” or “no,” and if yes, please indicate how many times and under what circumstances the names were deleted (chargeback as a registrar, typo of desired name, wrong tld, etc). How many times did this occur related to typographical error on behalf of yourself or the registrant in the example above?

If you did add/delete a domain name or a group of domain names, please explain the reason for this activity and basis for the deletion.

### **Question 6**

In this question, identify if you have or have not been disadvantaged in some way by domain tasting. If you have, please provide a description of the way that it created disadvantage.

### **Questions 7-10**

Between questions 6 and 7 are some examples that have been suggested by ICANN staff and others to potentially address the practice of domain tasting. The response to question 7 is an opportunity to identify any additional suggestions to address the practice of domain tasting, as well as identify how the suggestions are or are not compatible with current business rules. Please label each new suggestion continuing in the alphabet from D as you respond if you are providing more than one suggestion.

The answers to questions 8-10 will reference these letters, and it will help reduce confusion on behalf of the reviewers if you can then use the letter of the specific suggestion you're commenting on in those responses.

**Question 8**

For each of the different suggestions (A-C) or others that you might identify (D, etc.), comment on which of the groups from question 1 are disadvantaged, identifying them using the example below so that the reviewers can quantify the responses.

An example response (but please choose your own or one that suits your response) could be that if you believed that the suggestion (B) making the ICANN fee apply to names deleted during the AGP would adversely impact (1d) registrars and (1h) registrant representatives, but positively impact (1c) intellectual property rights owner and (1g) intellectual property rights owner representatives.

**Question 9**

Please respond in a similar manner to the instructions in question 8 about the suggestions and to which groups that might see some benefit from them.

**Question 10**

Use this response to identify which of the suggestions (or any that you might make) should be implemented or not implemented, and why.

**Question 11**

If domain registrations were offered at no cost to the registrant, would this effectively permit domain tasting?

**Question 12**

Should ICANN prohibit domain registrations at no cost to the registrant?

**Question 13**

Do you think that there should be a minimum fee imposed by ICANN, that must be charged on domain registrations? If you think a minimum fee should be imposed, what should that fee be?

**Question 14**

Many of the areas in the RFI are fairly subjective, so this is a particular opportunity to provide statistical information to support any of your previous answers. Please provide sources (source data and origin wherever possible) and indicate formulas or rounding used in illustrating statistics so that the data can be verified as accurate.

**Question 15**

Use this area to identify experts who could add more information on the issues raised, along with their contact information and why they should be contacted about this matter.

**Question 16**

This is somewhat free form, an opportunity to comment in general on the RFI or provide information not otherwise covered in the questions above. Please, out of respect for the reviewers of the responses, keep it brief and related to the subject matter of the add grace period.