

2022 Annual usTLD Stakeholder Council Report



Prepared:
January 2023

Q1 & Q2-2022 usTLD Stakeholder Meeting

Date: 9 June 2022, 12pm EDT

- I. Welcome
- II. Roll call and approval of December 2021 minutes
 - A. Attendees: Dustin Loup, Alex Deacon, Becky Burr, Bryan Britt, Tom Barrett, Michele Neylon, Judy Song-Marshall, Stacy Cheney, Doug Robinson, Sam Sokol, Bartlett Cleland
 - B. Registry Services: Crystal Peterson, Fernando Espana, Kristin Johnson, Jasmine Begg, Melissa Cohen
- III. Q1 and Q2 Marketing Update
 - A. Small Business Outreach
 1. Overview: Optimization of creative assets across paid media marketing. Targeting small business and entrepreneurs to launch their website on a .US domain.
 2. Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, SEM
 3. Q1 and Q2 Highlights:
 - a) 2.5M+ Impressions YTD
 - b) Homepage traffic up 10% year over year
 - c) Paid traffic shows a 27% increase in conversion rates from prior year and Organic traffic shows 47% increase in conversion rates from prior year.
 - d) Facebook continues to be our top platform for driving engagement and paid search drives the most conversions.
 - B. 20th Birthday.
 1. Overview: April celebrated 20 years of .US with a comprehensive integrated marketing campaign. Global activation included registrar partner promotions, flash sales, paid media awareness activities and dedicated content.
 - C. Conrad Challenge.
 1. Overview: A STEM focused annual, multi-phase innovation and entrepreneurship competition for high school students to participate in designing the future by solving global and local challenges in sustainability.
 2. Partnership continuing in 2022: Exclusive domain sponsor for global Conrad Challenge and Conrad Foundation.
 - a) .US domains + website builders are gifted to all students
 - b) Conrad Challenge Innovation Summit
 - (1) When: April 26-29, 2022
 - (2) Where: Space Center Houston & NASA's Johnson Space Center
 - (3) Who: 950 teams from across the globe!

- (a) Over 2,000 students from 45 countries and 33 U.S. states.

D. Startup Weekend.

- 1. Overview: Lead partner of Startup Weekend, providing domain names to startup founders at thousands of hackathon events around the world.
- 2. As the world opens back up, the front half of year activity has been a mixture of in-person and virtual events.
- 3. 2022 Highlights YTD:
 - a) Programs: 60
 - b) Countries: 13
 - c) Cities: 25
 - d) Impressions: 3,241

E. Content

- 1. 10 new articles posted in Q1 & Q2:
 - a) 5 Interviews and use-case highlights from .US entrepreneurs.
 - (1) Raisedby.us
 - (2) Pasquines.us
 - b) 5 Business articles, tips and tricks.
 - (1) 8 Tips for Growing Your Etsy Business
 - (2) How To Choose The Best Domain Name
- 2. Highlights:
 - a) 43% of organic traffic includes blog pageviews
 - b) Average time on blog pages 2 min 45 seconds (vs. 00:00:41)
 - c) 6% increase in total blog traffic year over year

IV. Administrator, Policy & Security Updates

A. Attending ICANN 74

- 1. ICANN74 Policy Forum will be held in The Hague, Netherlands at the World Forum The Hague, 13-16 June 2022.

B. Accountable WHOIS in the usTLD Namespace

V. AOB & Closing

Q3-2022 usTLD Stakeholder Meeting

Date: 8 September 2022, 12pm EDT

- I. Welcome
- II. Roll call and approval of June 2022 minutes
 - A. Attendees: Ray King, Jared Hosid, Becky Burr, Doug Robinson, Dustin Loup, Judy Song-Marshall, Sam Sokol, Tom Barrett, Fernando Espana, Crystal Peterson, Kristin Johnson, Melissa Cohen
 - B. Dustin moves to approve June 2022 minutes. Sam Sokol seconds.
- III. Q3 Marketing Update
 - A. July 4 Promos
 - 1. Overview: new ads created for Independence Day
 - 2. Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, SEM
 - 3. Q3 Highlights:
 - a) Traffic up 33% YoY
 - b) Pageviews increased 50% with a 25% decrease in bounce rate
 - c) Youtube video campaign showing strong CTR and viewer engagement
 - d) Paid search continues to drive bottom-of-funnel conversions
 - B. Brand Ambassadors
 - 1. Americanmademotorcycles.us – Design shop that customizes motorcycles
 - 2. Truckingnews.us – Operated by American Freight Trucking to provide news and resources for truckers
 - 3. Bocaloca.us – Keto butter that’s been featured on news networks and garnered a fan following for it’s delicious taste
 - 4. Battlemaps.us – Veteran owned and family operated business passionate about showcasing antique charts and historical maps from around the world
 - 5. Abystyle.us – Merch ecommerce site featuring fantasy, anime and sci-fi custom products
 - 6. Blueskyconsulting.us – B2B consulting company for employee training and engagement
- IV. Startup Weekend
 - A. Overview: lead partner of startup weekend provides domain names to startup founders at thousands of hackathon events around the world.
 - B. In-person events continue to reinvigorate local communities
 - C. July highlights:
 - 1. 20 events

2. 10 countries
 3. 19 cities
 4. 1405 impressions
- V. Conrad Challenge
- A. Overview: A stem-focused annual, multi-phase innovation and entrepreneurship competition for high school students to participate in designing the future by solving global and local challenges in sustainability.
- VI. Content
- A. Three new articles posted in Q3
 1. How the .US domain disrupted the internet for entrepreneurs
 2. Why Americans love small businesses now more than ever
 3. 16 key legal requirements for launching a small business
 - B. Highlights:
 1. Average session duration is 51 seconds for blog traffic
 2. 12% of blog users are returning visitors with double engagement rates for key metrics including average 4 pages per session and 3 minutes and 20 seconds on site.
- VII. IGFUSA
- A. Dates July 21, 2022
 - B. Total attendees were 1480
 - C. Cold brew, kombucha, IGFUSA was in person after years of being virtual.
 - D. We had about 200 in person and the rest were virtual.
 - E. Branding included:
 1. Mention in closing remarks
 2. Logo displayed on break slide and on signage throughout venue
 3. Logo on event agenda website
 4. Logo in emails before and after the conference log on coffee break materials
- VIII. Administrator, Policy & Security Updates
- A. Accountable WHOIS in the usTLD Namespace
 1. Not many updates with covid waning and travel picking up, there has been less activity from our administrator.
 2. We are in continued discussions with the NTIAA to move forward with the accountable WHOIS in the usTLD namespace.
 3. We are waiting on feedback and will be scheduling a meeting after ICANN which is this month

- IX. Town Hall
 - A. November 17, 2022 at 12pm ET
 - B. [About.us/townhall](https://about.us/townhall)
 - C. Agenda
 - 1. State of the domain
 - 2. Marketing
 - 3. US brand use-case feature
 - 4. Admin updates
 - 5. Stakeholder council updates
 - 6. Q&A
 - D. Dustin spoke to new proposed section of Town Hall to feature .US user.
 - E. Ray King: This date is the same date as an ICANN meeting so we might need to change the date
 - F. Crystal: This is true, we'll get back to the team with an updated date
- X. AOB & Closing
 - A. Doug Robinson gives update on .gov adoption and impact.
 - B. Dustin follows up on definitions for "local government" and what that includes (i.e. water districts, fire districts, regional planning districts, etc.)

2022 Annual Town Hall

Date: 17 November 2022, 12pm EST

- I. State of the Domain
 - A. usTLD Locality
 - 1. Steady growth YoY from 2020 of 1-2%
 - 2. 12.5K Total Domains (Oct 2022)
 - 3. 268 Delegated Managers
 - B. Second Level (.US)
 - 1. 1.99M Total Domains (as of Oct 2022)
 - 2. +10.6% Year over Year Growth
 - C. .US Fun Facts
 - 1. Zoom.us is the 37th ranked domain in the world
- II. Marketing Review
 - A. www.about.us Website Relaunch
 - 1. Fully rebranded website: Updated color palette, New photography, Revised branding elements
 - 2. Accessibility upgrades: Increased contrast, Added image alt text, Linked images, Language identification, Structural elements, Headings, Navigation
 - B. Customer Photoshoots: Raisedby.us
 - C. Partnerships
 - 1. Conrad Challenge
 - 2. Major League Hacking
 - 3. Startup Weekend
 - 4. NASA International Space Apps Challenge
 - a) Largest in history!
 - b) Oct. 1-2
 - c) An international hackathon for coders, scientists, designers, storytellers, makers, builders, technologists, and others in cities around the world.
 - D. Paid Advertising: Paid platforms: Facebook, Instagram, SEM, YouTube
 - E. July 4 Promos: Global retail channel activation
 - F. Brand Ambassadors
 - 1. Dedicated outreach efforts to the .US community for brand ambassador features.
 - 2. Includes written interviews published to the blog and social media features on Facebook and Twitter
 - G. Content Engine: High-quality SEO friendly topical SMB articles
- III. Guest Speaker: Molly Pyle, Center on Rural Innovation (www.ruralinnovation.us)
- IV. Stakeholder Council Updates
 - A. Welcome Judy Song-Marshall
- V. Administrator Updates
 - A. ccNSO Participation
 - B. DNS Abuse working group

- C. The ccNSO DNS Abuse Standing Committee (DASC) is intended to maintain a dedicated forum for ccTLD Managers to discuss the important topic of DNS Abuse and to share information, insights, and practices.
 - D. Accountable WHOIS
 - E. What is Accountable WHOIS?
 - F. Unredacted WHOIS data served via email in response to a usTLD WHOIS query
 - G. Accountable WHOIS is not a privacy or proxy service
 - H. Why Accountable WHOIS?
 - I. Ensure timely access to registrant data while reducing risk of registrant harm
 - J. Preserve the authoritative usTLD registrant database
 - K. Encourage growth of the usTLD namespace
- VI. Q & A

Q: Will this video be made available after?

A: We will post the meeting minutes and presentation 7 business days following the event.

Q: You should enable closed captions in Zoom for these .US webinars

A: Great idea. We will seek solutions to incorporate in future meetings.

Q: .US seems to be the only ccTLD forcing to publish the registrant's phone number - which leads to receiving many spam calls from eg foreign web design companies. Are you considering to improve the level of privacy?

A: Registry Services' Accountable WHOIS program through the Secure WHOIS Gateway seeks to help alleviate that challenge.

Q4-2022 usTLD Stakeholder Meeting

Date: 15 December 2022, 12:00pm EST

- I. Welcome
 - A. Attendees:
 - B. Registry Services, LLC: Kristin Johnson, Crystal Peterson, Melissa Cohen, Fernando Espana
 - C. Stakeholder Council: Ray King, Dustin Loup, Tom Barrett, Bryan Britt, Stacy Cheney, Doug Robinson, Jared Hosid, Becky Burr, Alex Deacon, Sam Sokol
- II. Roll call and approval of September 2022 minutes
 - A. Meeting minutes were approved
- III. Q4 Marketing Update
- IV. NASA SpaceApps Challenge
 - A. .US and Registry Services were proud to sponsor another year of the international Space Apps challenge and 2022 was the biggest Challenge in the Space Apps history!
 - B. SpaceApps is an international hackathon for coders, scientists, designers, storytellers, makers, builders, technologists, and others in cities around the world.
 - C. When: Oct. 1-2, 2022
 - D. Participation:
 - 1. 31,500+ registered participants
 - 2. 162 countries and territories
 - 3. 5,327 Teams
 - 4. 755M Social mentions reach
 - E. Activation:
 - 1. Domain scholarship for participants
 - 2. Social media promotion
 - 3. Organic activation from local organizers
- V. Partnerships
 - 1. Ongoing activations with key strategic partners supports brand equity for the .US TLD with entrepreneurial, tech and STEM audiences.
 - B. Startup Weekend
 - 1. 120 events in Oct and November
 - 2. 120 cities across the world
 - 3. 5,500+ participants
 - C. Major League Hacking
 - 1. 19 events
 - 2. 500+ students
- VI. About.us website relaunch:
 - A. Fully rebranded website:
 - 1. Updated color palette

- 2. New photography
 - 3. Revised branding elements
 - B. Accessibility upgrades:
 - 1. Increased contrast
 - 2. Added image alt text
 - 3. Linked images
 - 4. Language identification
 - 5. Structural elements
 - 6. Headings
 - 7. Navigation
- VII. Customer photoshoots
 - A. Produced NYC local photoshoot to capture images of .US business, Raisedby.us. Photos to be used for .US brand activations and marketing.
- VIII. Paid Advertising
 - A. Paid media drives awareness building and brand recall for the .US domain. Advertising consists of direct consumer outreach targeted to up-and-coming small business owners across a variety of media platforms to reach customers across all stages of the purchasing funnel.
 - B. Channels:
 - 1. Facebook
 - 2. Instagram
 - 3. YouTube
 - 4. Paid Search
 - C. Highlights:
 - 1. Paid search is the highest converting marketing channel as it reaches customer during in-the-moment searches when they are looking to register a domain.
 - 2. Facebook is attributed with the most assisted conversions, meaning paid Facebook ads drive interest for potential customers who research, leave the site and then come back to ultimately register a domain
- IX. Content
 - A. Three new articles posted in Q4:
 - 1. Checklist for Starting Your E-Commerce Business
 - 2. Town Hall Announcement
 - 3. How to Pick the Right Domain Name: A Guide for Small Businesses
 - B. Highlights:
 - 1. Organic traffic up 57% over same time last year
 - 2. Blog views account for 12% of overall website traffic
 - 3. Average Session Duration 1 minute
 - 4. Most viewed blog in 2022, “How to Identify a Trustworthy Website”
- X. Administrator, Policy & Security Updates

Accountable WHOIS in the usTLD Namespace – Working with NTIA, as soon as we have information to share, we will share with the Stakeholder Council. The process has been lengthy.

FAQs:

ADeacon: Has not seen any draft document that has been drafted by NTIA and the GD team. Has the council been updated on it?

CPeterson: The proposal itself has not been shared because it is a document to be shared between NTIA and GD registry. However, all of the work of the security sub-committee had been documented through our minutes that are approved and posted to the about.us website. We also shared an overview during last year's Town Hall as well as an update this year. A copy of the presentation is available at www.about.us/townhall.

ADeacon: Will we be able to see the proposal?

CPeterson: What I can suggest, in our next meeting, we can do a full council briefing to go over what is in the proposal.

ADeacon: There needs to be more transparency here. Please share with the council. The minutes should reflect that the council hasn't seen the proposal.

CPeterson: We understand you want to see more on the policy. We can bring forward where we have been sharing and we will check through our contract to share what can be shared and will be shared. There have been many public comments about a privacy service.

SSokol: I've missed meetings too. Can we have where the development of the process sits? Can we get more clarity on the process. I would just add that we are briefed on things like this policy, we're not being asked to approve it, but we do have some oversight here. This conversation has been confusing because this begs to ask, what is our role in respect to our policy? I want to understand what is happening too.

BBurr: Based on this conversation, we need to do a catch-up briefing based on where things stand.

XI. 2023 Meeting Schedule

Dustin moves to approve. 2023 Meeting schedule is approved.

XII. AOB & Closing