

# Will the dotcom kingdom collapse?

 By [Naseem Javed](#)

15 Mar 2011

Once ICANN approves the new super-powered gTLD domain names, what will happen to the some 200-million-strong dotcom domain name kingdom? Will the new gTLDs and their massive sub-domain traffic of unlimited brand extensions create global cyber identity chaos? Will global trademark wars erupt on several legal fronts? Will cyber-squatting hit the fan? Relax, no such thing.

Surely the sudden influx of 1000 new powerful gTLDs will create the biggest buzz, as overnight hyper-visibility and marketing coups of various old and new brands will steal the show? Currently, a regular dotcom costs US\$10, but this new gTLD about US\$500 000 each. However, the markets will face some serious questions about this new style of hyper-cyber-branding poised for global market domination.

After all, on the one hand, the new gTLDs are never supposed to be for everyone, as they can only be custom-fitted to very special type of business ventures with very specific features and combinations. On the other hand, the fanfare of massive influx gTLDs will further infuse renewed interest in global cyber branding expansion, enticing new ventures, putting higher demands for regular domain registrations.

## Drama of gTLD approval will unfold

The dotcom kingdom will shine even more. The drama of gTLD approval will unfold, making front-page stories around famous and unknown name identities incubated to their overnight meteoric successes showcasing their smart strategies; equally, some failures will also provide disastrous experiences and separate the winners and losers.

The other primal fear of dotcoms losing their power is based on the structural differences between the two types of domain names. Current a US\$10 dollar domain such as Sony.com is a suffix-based name, while a US\$500 000 GTLD, is a suffix-less, domain root such as dotSony.

No need to worry as the global markets will learn very quickly as they did in differentiating the @ symbol for email [*now also for Twitter handles - managing ed*] and the .com as a suffix of a URL. A good educational campaign from ICANN is anticipated to educate the global audience - how and why the usability of this new type domain will bring revolutionary powers to a brand, huge savings of costs and image expansion time, while changing the future of the Internet, requires a very special knowledge.

Nevertheless, the gTLD game is sophisticated and requires a strong qualified team to play. Branding industry and trademark professionals, over and above their special craft, should consider acquiring world-class nomenclature skills to

manage name usability, suitability and marketability issues with deeper understanding of global naming in order to have any authoritative say in this competitive arena.

### **The trembling trademark owners**

Why is so much fear being created against the gTLD in the name of protecting global trademark owners? Say, if ICANN, somehow, allowed a third party a gTLD called .panasonic, will the sky fall? No, not at all, as Panasonic, the true and rightful trademark holder, will hit the unauthorised gTLD with a club and no judge would oppose issuing a cease-and-desist order.

So are there enough empty-headed candidates to apply for such globally recognised and protected names? No, why would someone spend US\$500 000 and months to get such a name approved?

The problem is not here; it is on the other side of the trademark spectrum, where weak and deadbeat trademarks based on diluted names, but protected in narrow classification in search of a global presence, are clashing with each other all over the world.

When ICANN issues a third party a gTLD 'dot united', will all of the 113 647 existing large and small businesses worldwide using 'united' name panic? No, they cannot.

Exclusive global ownership of the word "united" was never their cup of tea in the first place. It was always 'disclaimed' in each and every one's trademark application for being a dictionary word. They knew all along that there are over 100 000 identical names floating in the market place: United Airlines, United Bank, United Church, United Way, United Trust, United Bakeries, United Taxis, United Trucks, and United Logistics.

### **Protect basic turf**

Why will they hit the ceiling in rage now? They will not. Coy they will be, and embarrassed as they are, aware of the high dilution of their name, they will stay mum. They will simply protect their own basic turf, under their specific classifications of trademark 'wares'; they simply cannot declare war and stop anyone using the name 'united'.

This is how the majority of the business names are. Open any trade directory in any city and the proof is right there. Somehow, the senior management always buries the name-weakness issues under the rug and keeps pushing the brand name, even if it means losing its exclusive ownership in the long run. So long as you can open a hotdog stand in the lobby of United Airlines, called United Doggies, as United Airlines has no exclusive ownership to the name 'united' such as ironclad exclusive marks Rolex, Panasonic or Sony, diluted names become a joke and a total waste of branding budgets.

So of the 100 thousand major businesses using United, who will end up owning dot-United gTLD and what will the other 99% do for their long-term image expansion on the global front? This poses some very serious questions. The answer may not be forthcoming as the management of these organisations were always convinced that they have been the true 'united' name brand leaders, whether they exclusively own the name or not.

Currently, 94% businesses around the world have such dysfunctional names and their branding agencies and law firms both have some serious responsibilities and challenges to find them the right strategies

### **Showrooms, not garages**

If ICANN creates a gTLD garage, agencies should create cyber showrooms.

ICANN, rightfully from its inception, is a very superior technical organisation, surrounded by teams of highly intelligent people working on the long-term integrity of the Internet. Like a real high-tech garage full of engineers and mechanics designing high speed luxury cars, it is rolling out the great new gTLD program.

But what the image brokers and ad agencies now need are not garages but rather showrooms, where prospective customers could comfortably see the finished models, smell the interiors and take the cyber vehicles for the test drive.

There are two serious lingering questions: first, how to approach it with all the special prerequisite necessary to articulate such topics and what to recommend with solid and proven strategies to complete the full circle and close the deals?

It's all about this colossal shift of the old methods of branding and marketing communication to a globally accessible, instantly scalable and almost free digital medium, where the domination of globally workable, world-class, cyber name identities provide the spearhead and hyper-visibility.

To play the modern games of massive new customer acquisition, it's about, eat-sleep-work-local and think-market-play-global. Unfortunately, 99% businesses names are not capable of expanding globally. This creates a major opportunity to educate the corporate leadership on this new global reality and bring in positive changes.

### **Professional name evaluation reports needed**

Therefore, as a starter, the global corporate landscape urgently needs professional Name Evaluation Reports to professionally lay out senior-level discussion contents and openly tackle the name identity issues.

What better way for branding agencies to bring in a massive re-organisation of the corporate nomenclature on a grand scale and start helping clients with new vigour and power, and assist them professionally with right world-class tools to win the next layers of global wars of image and name identity domination?

## **ABOUT NASEEM JAVED**

Naseem Javed is recognised as a world authority on global naming complexities. He is currently helping corporations on ICANN's new gTLD cyber-platforms and lecturing on corporate nomenclature frontiers and global cyber-branding. Naseem is also conducting series of exclusive webinars on how to achieve iconic name status worldwide ([www.abcnamebank.com](http://www.abcnamebank.com)). Email him at [nj@njabc.com](mailto:nj@njabc.com).

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