

Statement to ICANN48 Buenos Aires public forum – November 2013

Brand
Registry
Group

My name is Martin Sutton, I represent new gTLD applicant HSBC. I am also a member of the BC, and interim President of the Brand Registry Group.

Many community members are recognizing the importance of bringing new voices and new, innovative business models, to ICANN. A group of applicants representing .brands - applications corresponding to an existing registered trademark - have been in discussions with ICANN for most of this year concerning the ICANN Registry Agreement. We are grateful for the work ICANN has undertaken to move forward with us, particularly this week. And we are pleased to see the ICANN community recognizing that in many ways, the introduction of trusted .brand spaces will be a rising tide to lift the new gTLD Program.

Historically, much of the ICANN community's focus has revolved around sales of more traditional open domain spaces. Although many of these domain names have brought opportunities to individuals and businesses around the world, they have also given rise to fraudulent activity and online counterfeiting continues to be a serious problem for many brands. But, more importantly, the sale of domain names is not the only future online model.

This is why a group of applicants representing hundreds of brands that have applied to partner with ICANN in reshaping the DNS have been discussing three minor changes to the standard ICANN Registry Agreement to better reflect the nature of .brands as new entrants in this space. It is a piece of the puzzle, with a different shape, that emerged from ICANN's invitation to organisations to apply for new gTLDs.

These proposed RA changes are subject to an applicant meeting the definition of a ".brand", which we have worked carefully on with ICANN over the course of this year. This would be achieved through a new proposed contract Specification 13, which we are pleased to say has ICANN's support, and which we expect to be posted for public comment early next week.

These changes will allow brands to better maintain their trusted online spaces, to the benefit of consumers and governments worldwide. They also reflect the stated intentions of .brand applicants in their applications which were posted for public comment.

These changes will also help ICANN to fit this piece of the puzzle into the larger picture, which will improve the perception of companies wanting and willing to partner with ICANN, predictably and effectively.

Again, we are pleased to be part of the new ICANN, and to be partnering with you. And we simply wanted to publicly acknowledge ICANN's hard work to reflect its new .brands partners.