

Extension '.vip' becomes important
International - Hogan Lovells

International procedures
Domain names

June 15 2017

The extension '.vip' was opened up to general availability at the stroke of midnight, China Standard Time, on May 18 2017. Since then, the extension has quickly become one of the most popular of all the new generic top-level domains (gTLDs). It now lies in sixth place in the new gTLD popularity stakes with over 800,000 registrations, just behind '.club', '.win', '.loan', and '.top', with '.xyz' being the outright leader.

Minds + Machines Group (MMX) recently announced that it had received orders for 200,000 additional '.vip' domain names, accounting for the recent substantial increase in the number of '.vip' domain names registered. MMX operates as a registry for more than 20 new gTLDs and was a major participant in the new gTLD application process. According to MMX, the 200,000 new registrations have been registered for a number of years, meaning that the domain name count for the extension will remain high over the coming years.

MMX has stated that it is confident it will hit its goal of 1 million '.vip' registrations by the end of 2017.

The TLD '.xyz', however, remains by far the most popular of the new gTLDs with nearly 6 million registered domain names. Back in 2015, when '.xyz' reached the 1.5 million mark, it was suggested that the high number of registrations was boosted by Google's decision to use 'abc.xyz' for its corporate (Alphabet Inc) website as well as the domain name registrar Network Solutions giving away possibly hundreds of thousands of names by placing them into customer accounts on an opt-out basis. In 2017 '.xyz' remains firmly in top place even though recent moves by the Chinese government could result in a temporary halt in its growth.

It seems that the China Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) instructed domain name registrars in China to stop selling '.xyz' domain names as of May 4 2017 until CentralNic, XYZ's registry provider, has updated the Real Names Verification (RNV) providers for selling '.xyz' domain names in China. Daniel Negari, XYZ chief executive officer, said:

"CentralNic is updating RNV providers to ensure there is stability in the RNV process and do our best to stop fraudulent registrations and abuse. We remain committed to a zero tolerance policy on abuse and I think we are on the right track to maintain that."

According to NameStat.org, over half of '.xyz' domain names are registered to people in China. However, many of these domain names are registered with non-Chinese domain name registrars which are not affected by the MIIT.

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