

World Trademark Review Daily

Telnic to release short domain names
International - Hogan Lovells

Domain names

May 17 2011

Telnic Limited, the UK-based registry of the '.tel' generic top-level domain, has announced the upcoming release of short '.tel' domain names, namely those containing only two characters (eg, 'ab.tel' and 'a2.tel') or numeric-only strings of between two and seven digits, with or without hyphens (eg, '1234.tel' and '123-456.tel').

The '.tel' extension was launched in December 2008 and is essentially intended to be a universal text naming and navigation system for contact information and related content accessed from internet-enabled communications devices. In short, internet users are able to initiate communication with, or access the services of, an individual or company with a '.tel' domain name simply by inputting that individual or company's name into their web browser, followed by '.tel'. The corresponding webpage groups together all that individual's or company's contact information (eg, phone, fax numbers and email addresses) in one place. The contact information can be anything from simple telephone numbers and addresses to more detailed information, such as geographical co-ordinates and links through to social networking sites. The domain name holder decides who has access to what information.

'.tel' domain names differ substantially from other domain names in terms of their technical set up. All contact information to be displayed is actually held in the domain name server where the domain name is hosted, rather than being stored in web servers. '.tel' registrants are therefore able to have an online presence without the need for a website.

The release of short and numeric '.tel' domain names will take place in two phases. First there will be a two-week landrush phase starting on June 1 2011 which will allow any individual or business to secure a short or numeric-only '.tel' domain name at what the registry is referring to as a 'premium' registration price. Prices will vary depending on the registrar and have not yet been widely publicised, but given the rarity value of short and numeric domain names, it is assumed that they will be relatively high. Landrush will be followed by a general availability phase starting on June 14 2011.

The following will not be available for registration during the two registration phases:

- all one-letter domain names, from 'a.tel' through to 'z.tel' (presumably, the registry is holding these back and intends to release them at a later date, given their high value);
- all two-character country-code top-level domain names, such as 'uk.tel' (prohibited by the '['.tel' Registry Agreement](#) with the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#)); and
- Combinations of digits and/or digit and hyphen strings that contain eight or more characters.

All domain name registrations will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. It is unfortunate for brand owners that the registry is not planning to operate a sunrise period giving priority to trademark holders under certain conditions. When the registry for '.uk' domain names ([Nominet](#)) decided to allow registration of short domain names, it gave brand owners the opportunity to register in priority (for further details please see "[Registry to release one and two-character domain names](#)"). The end result was that most of the 99 domain names registered during the first sunrise period were registered to major brand owners for genuine use, as opposed to domainers or cybersquatters with a view to a lucrative onward sale.

Brand owners who subsequently find their domain name under '.tel' has been taken by a cybersquatter will therefore be glad to learn that the '.tel' registry has adopted the [Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy](#), which means that it is possible to file a complaint with an accredited body such as the [World Intellectual Property Organisation](#) asking for the transfer of the domain name under certain conditions.

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World Trademark Review *Daily*

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