

# World Trademark Review Daily

**'pw' to be relaunched as the 'professional web' extension International - Hogan Lovells International LLP**

**Domain names**

December 11 2012

'pw', the country-code top-level domain (ccTLD) for Palau, an island nation that forms part of Micronesia (in the western Pacific Ocean), is soon to be relaunched - but this time it will be marketed differently in an attempt to attract a larger public.

'pw' was first launched in 2004 and, at the time, it was marketed as short for 'personal web'. 'pw' was then targeted more at customers who wished to purchase an email address, as opposed to a domain name resolving to a website. The registry had thus reserved the entire second level of '.pw' (ie, anyone.pw) for shared use - to obtain an email address, customers could choose a second-level domain, such as a hobby, a surname or a school, and then whatever they wished to go before the @ sign, for example davidtaylor@football.pw. Domain name registration was therefore only possible at the third level. Back then, the registry envisaged that the 'personal web' extension could lead to the creation of dedicated online communities, such as '.smith.pw' or '.irish.pw'. Unfortunately, the '.pw' extension failed to arouse people's interest and the number of registrations remained low.

However, things may change as '.pw' is now run by a new registry, [Directi](#), a large internet products and services provider. Directi is going to relaunch '.pw' as a generic and unrestricted extension standing for 'professional web', thus now targeting "professionals and businesses looking to showcase their presence online" (see [press release](#)). It is however worth noting that the extension will not be restricted to certified professionals like '.pro', but will be open for registration to everyone without restrictions.

In addition to the lack of registration requirements, Directi is banking on the availability of quality domain names in the almost virgin '.pw' namespace (as opposed to the saturation of many generic TLDs such as '.com'), as well as a low registry fee, to arouse interest in the 'new' ccTLD. As Directi's CEO Bhavin Turakhia said:

*"The top generics are running in a depleted state. In over 70% of the cases, consumers are unable to obtain a name of first choice, and must settle for longer, less memorable names. Moreover, for these unattractive names, they will pay more and more each year as incumbent gTLDs continue to raise prices. '.pw' aims to meet the global demand for shorter, first choice names at a reasonable price."*

The launch of '.pw' will take place as follows:

- Sunrise period - December 3 2012 to February 8 2013. During this phase, holders of any trademark registered before December 1 2012 will be able to apply for '.pw' domain names that are an exact or close match to their trademark. By close match, the registry means that domain names consisting of (a) a term that is a common misspelling or abbreviation of a trademark, or (b) a term that includes the addition of keywords as a prefix or suffix to the trademark, will be accepted, which is rather unusual in the context of a sunrise period. Domain names that receive multiple applications will go to auction and will be allocated to the highest bidder.
- Landrush - February 18 to March 18 2013. During the landrush period, anyone will be able to apply for a '.pw' domain name. However, where multiple applications for the same domain name are received, an auction will take place and the domain name will be allocated to the highest bidder.
- General availability - from March 25 2013. As from this date, '.pw' domain names will be available to everyone on a first-come, first-served basis.

Subsequent disputes in relation to domain names registered under '.pw' will be governed by the [Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy](#).

'pw' will not be the first ccTLD to be run as a 'generic' TLD with a given meaning, rather than a mere 'national' TLD - undoubtedly because this makes those ccTLDs more attractive to internet users in search of meaningful domain names. The most successful examples include '.tv' (Tuvalu), '.me' (Montenegro) and '.co' (Colombia). Time will tell if this new marketing strategy pays off for '.pw' too.

*David Taylor and Laetitia Arrault, Hogan Lovells LLP, Paris*

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