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STATUS: Pending Ratification

AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALAC Statement on Release for Registration one .COM Domain Name with a Single-Character Label: O.COM

Introduction

Jonathan Zuck, Member of the North American Regional At-Large Organization (NARALO), developed an initial draft of the Statement on behalf of the ALAC.

On 17 May 2018, the first draft of the Statement was posted on its [At-Large workspace](#).

On that same date, ICANN Policy Staff in support of the At-Large Community sent a Call for Comments on the Statement to the At-Large Community via the ALAC Work mailing list.

On 25 May 2018, the final draft was posted to the workspace for comment. On 29 May 2018, the ALAC Chair requested that Staff open an ALAC ratification vote.

On 05 June 2018, Staff confirmed that the online vote results in the ALAC endorsing the Statement with 15 votes in favor, 0 vote against, and 0 abstention. Please note 100% (15) of the 15 ALAC Members participated in the poll. The ALAC Members who participated in the poll are (alphabetical order by first name): Alan Greenberg, Alberto Soto, Andrei Kolesnikov, Bartlett Morgan, Bastiaan Goslings, Hadia Elminiawi, Holly Raiche, Javier Rua-Jovet, John Laprise, Kaili Kan, Maureen Hilyard, Ricardo Holmquist, Sebastien Bachollet, Seun Ojedeji and Tijani Ben Jemaa.

You may view the result independently under:

<https://www.bigpulse.com/pollresults?code=838760yZGXvwDCg3ss4iEpZHxX>

On 20 June 2018, a supplement to the Statement was submitted by Jonathan Zuck. In the interest of time, the ALAC Chair requested that the Statement be transmitted to the ICANN public comment process on with a note that the Statement is pending ALAC ratification.

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The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) provides its input on Verisign, Inc.'s (Verisign's) proposed amendment within its Registry Request Service (RSEP) for ICANN to release for registration the "[O.com](#)" single character domain name (SCDN).^[1] We support this proposition provided it offers the proceeds to charities that serve the public interest. As ICANN is aware, SCDNs have extraordinary value and prospects because of their simplicity and scarcity. We applaud ICANN for opening up a forum to discuss this important issue.

With that said, the ALAC proffers the following suggestions:

ICANN Should Permit the Release of [O.com](#) and Allow Verisign to Conduct a Third-Party Auction

As stated above, the ALAC supports ICANN releasing [O.com](#). ICANN's Generic Names Supporting Organization's Reserved Names Working Group's report demonstrates rather convincingly that there exists no real issues with SCDNs' ability to function online. Additionally, the potential for the release of SCDN seemingly have no anticompetitive concerns.^[2] Therefore, the ALAC suggests that Verisign conduct a third-party auction to ensure that transparency and fairness in the process are in place, because, as we explain in more detail below, it could yield benefits should Verisign invest into ventures that serve the public interest.

Third-Party Auction Service Providers Should Screen Candidates for Auction

Verisign should require the third-party auction service provider to pre-qualify potential registrants for participation in the auction. Additionally, the prospective registrants should submit documents that demonstrate and describe how they plan to use [O.com](#), their ability to pay, and any and all relevant information that could assist the third-party auctioneer to ensure ICANN's mission to serve the public interest (e.g., increasing digital literacy) is fulfilled. The ALAC strongly support the notion that [O.com](#) be registered by an entity determined to use the domain rather than profit from its resale.

Verisign Should Forfeit the Auction's Proceeds and Renewals to Non-Profit Entity

Irrespective of the auction's format, the ALAC recommends that all proceeds from the [O.com](#) auction and renewals that follow go to a nonprofit organization(s) that will use the funds toward areas of public good of the Internet community. ALAC members have long supported this position. For example:

- Avri Doria submitted the idea of an SCDN auction with the "proceeds going to the public good" given their rarity.^[3] She recommended that single-letter domain names at second level auctions "should be contingent on [] establishing a separate fund for a benevolent foundation that would receive all of the income above costs from these auctions."
- Olivier MJ Crepin-Leblond suggested that "[i]f single letter domains are so expensive because of their scarcity, why not make them as expensive as 3G licenses and pay the premium fee towards network development & training in developing countries? Any other use of any premium funds paid is just another gift to registries."^[4]

The ALAC believes that Verisign's plan as articulated in its RSEP furthers this goal. However, given that many of the listed charities are redacted, the ALAC wishes Verisign to provide the ALAC with a comprehensive list of all potential charities to ensure full transparency in this process.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views on this matter. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration on this important issue.

[1] Verisign's Registry Request (Ticket ID: B6H5U-2X7N1)
at <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/rsep-2017038-com-request-30nov17-en.pdf>.

[2] 14-Dec-2017 DoJ Letter, at <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/hoag-to-jeffrey-14dec17-en.pdf>

[3] See. <https://forum.icann.org/lists/allocationmethods/msg00007.html>.

[4] See. <https://forum.icann.org/lists/allocationmethods/msg00023.html>.