

Trademark Claims Sub Team Update

Overall Status

- ⦿ Discussed five (5) Agreed Trademark Claims Charter Questions and reviewed five (5) Individual Proposals. The standard for accepting answers and proposals was whether they had gained 'wide support.'
- ⦿ Completed discussions, which took place during meetings and via discussion threads on the mailing list
- ⦿ Reviewed the draft language for proposed answers, preliminary recommendations, and proposed questions for community input
- ⦿ There was not wide support in the Sub Team for any of the individual proposals
- ⦿ In ICANN65, completed the review of the draft language and provided final input; finalized the determination on the individual proposals

Question 1	Proposed Answers
<p>Q1: <i>Is the Trademark Claims service having its intended effect?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team could determine that the service is at least “possibly” having its intended effect.</p>
<p>Q1(a): <i>Is the Trademark Claims service having its intended effect of deterring bad-faith registrations and providing Claims Notice to domain name applicants?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team could determine that the service is at least “possibly” having its intended effect. The Sub Team could not determine the extent of deterrence that occurred, if any.</p>
<p>Q1(b): <i>Is the Trademark Claims service having any unintended consequences, such as deterring good-faith domain name applications?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team generally agreed that the Trademark Claims service may possibly have unintended consequences, such as deterring good-faith domain name applications. The Sub Team could not determine the extent of deterrence that occurred, if any.</p>

Preliminary Recommendation

The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends that the language of the Trademark Claims Notice be revised, in accordance with the Implementation Guidance outlined in the Sub Team’s recommendations for Question 3 (below). This recommendation aims to help enhance the intended effect of the Trademark Claims Notice by improving the understanding of recipients, while decreasing any unintended effects of deterring good-faith domain name applications.

Question 2	Proposed Answers
<p>Q2(a): <i>Should the Claims period be extended - if so, for how long (up to permanently)?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team generally agreed that where there is a mandatory Claims period (see proposed answer to Q2(d)), it should not be extended. However, the Sub Team generally agreed that registries should have a certain degree of flexibility, based on a suitable business model, with the option to extend the Claims Period.</p>
<p>Q2(b): <i>Should the Claims period be shortened?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team generally agreed that where there is a mandatory Claims Period (see proposed answer to Q2(d)), it should not be shortened.</p>
<p>Q2(c): <i>Should the Claims period be mandatory?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team generally agreed that where there is a Claims period, it should be mandatory (see proposed answer to Q2(d)). However, the Sub Team generally agreed that registries should have a certain degree of flexibility to create a suitable business model in providing the Claims Service, provided this does not involve shortening the mandatory Claims Period.</p>

Preliminary Recommendation

The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends, in general, that the current requirement for a mandatory Claims Period be maintained, including for the minimum initial 90-day period when a TLD opens for general registration.

Question 2, Cont.	Proposed Answers
<p>Q2(d): <i>Should any TLDs be exempt from the Claims RPM and if so, which ones and why?</i></p>	<p>Some Sub Team members believe that some TLDs, not including legacy TLDs, should be exempt from the Claims RPM. The Sub Team agreed that public comment should be sought on whether there is a use case for exempting a TLD from the requirement of a mandatory Claims Period due to the particular nature of the TLD.</p>
<p>Q2(e): <i>Should the proof of use requirements for Sunrise be extended to include the issuance of TMCH notices?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team had diverging opinions on whether the proof of use requirements for Sunrise should be extended to include the issuance of TMCH notices.</p>

Proposed Questions for Community Input are currently under discussion in the Sub Team.

Question 3

Proposed Answers

Q3(a): *Does the Trademark Claims Notice to domain name applicants meet its intended purpose?*

The Sub Team generally agreed that the Trademark Claims Notice generally meets its intended purpose of notifying prospective domain name registrants that the applied-for domain name matches at least one trademark in the Trademark Clearinghouse. However, the Sub Team also recognized the inadequacies and shortcomings of the Trademark Claims Notice as set out in the proposed answers to Q3(a)(i)-(iii).

Preliminary Recommendation

The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends that the Trademark Claims Notice be revised to reflect more specific information about the trademark(s) for which it is being issued, and to more effectively communicate the meaning and implications of the Claims Notice (e.g., outlining possible legal consequences or describing what actions potential registrants may be able to take following receipt of a notice). The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends, accordingly, that the current version of the Claims Notice be revised to maintain brevity, improve user-friendliness, and provide additional relevant information or links to multilingual external resources that can aid prospective registrants in understanding the Claims Notice and its implications. To assist the Implementation Review Team (IRT) that will be formed to implement recommendations from this PDP in redrafting the Claims Notice, the Trademark Claims Sub Team has developed the following Implementation Guidance: The Claims Notice must be clearly comprehensible to a layperson unfamiliar with trademark law; A suggestion was made that ICANN org consider partnering with external resources that have already indicated an interest in helping redraft the Claims Notice (e.g., AUIP clinic).

Question 3, Cont.

Proposed Answers

Q3(a)(i): *If not, is it intimidating, hard to understand, or otherwise inadequate? If inadequate, how can it be improved?*

The Sub Team generally agreed that for some of the actual and potential registrant respondents, the Claims Notice is intimidating, hard to understand, or otherwise inadequate. The Sub Team made preliminary recommendations to improve the Claims Notice, and also sought community input to address its inadequacy.

Q3(a)(ii): *Does it inform domain name applicants of the scope and limitations of trademark holders' rights? If not, how can it be improved?*

Some Sub Team members believe that the Claims Notice does not adequately inform domain name applicants of the scope and limitations of trademark holders' rights (e.g., lack of identifying details of the trademark, issues with figurative/design marks). The Sub Team made preliminary recommendations to improve the Claims Notice, and also sought community input to address its inadequacy.

Question 3, Cont.

Proposed Answers

Q3(a)(iii): *Are translations of the Trademark Claims Notice effective in informing domain name applicants of the scope and limitation of trademark holders' rights?*

The Sub Team generally agreed that the current requirement on translations of the Trademark Claims Notice does not seem effective in informing domain name applicants of the scope and limitation of trademark holders' rights. The current requirement states: "The Claims Notice MUST be provided by the registrar to the potential domain name registrant in English and SHOULD be provided by the registrar to the potential domain name registrant in the language of the registration agreement".

Preliminary Recommendation

The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends that delivery of the Trademark Claims Notice be both in English as well as the language of the registration agreement. In this regard, the Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends changing the relevant language in the current Trademark Clearinghouse Requirements on this topic to "...registrars MUST provide the Claims Notice in English and in the language of the registration agreement."

The Trademark Claims Sub Team also recommends that, where feasible, the Claims Notice include links on the ICANN org website to translations of the Claims Notice in all six UN languages.

Question 3, Cont.

Proposed Answers

Q3(b): *Should Claims Notifications only be sent to registrants who complete domain name registrations, as opposed to those who are attempting to register domain names that are matches to entries in the TMCH?*

The Sub Team generally agreed that when there is a Claims Period and the issuance of a Claims Notice is required (see proposed answer to Q2(d)), the Claims Notice should be sent to potential registrants, who are attempting to register domain names that are matches to entries in the TMCH, at some point before the domain name registration is completed.

Preliminary Recommendation

The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends that the current requirement for only sending the Claims Notice before a registration is completed be maintained.

The Trademark Claims Sub Team also recognizes that there may be operational issues with presenting the Claims Notice to registrants who pre-registered domain names, due to the current 48-hour expiration period of the Claims Notice.

The Trademark Claims Sub Team therefore recommends that the Implementation Review Team consider ways in which ICANN org can work with registrars to address this implementation issue.

Question 4	Proposed Answers
<p>Q4: <i>Is the exact match requirement for Trademark Claims serving the intended purposes of the Trademark Claims RPM? In conducting this analysis, recall that IDNs and Latin-based words with accents and umlauts are currently not serviced or recognized by many registries.</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team had widely diverging opinions on whether the exact match requirement is serving the intended purposes of the Trademark Claims RPM.</p>
<p>Q4(a): <i>What is the evidence of harm under the existing system?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team had widely diverging opinions on whether there is evidence of harm under the existing system of exact match.</p>
<p>Q4(b): <i>Should the matching criteria for Notices be expanded?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team had widely diverging opinions on whether the matching criteria for the Claims Notice should be expanded.</p>
<p>Q4(b)(i): <i>Should the marks in the TMCH be the basis for an expansion of matches for the purpose of providing a broader range of claims notices?</i></p>	<p>The Sub Team generally agreed that if the matching criteria for the Claims Notice were to be expanded, the marks in the TMCH should be the basis for an expansion of matches for the purpose of providing a broader range of Claims Notice.</p>

Question 4, Cont.

Summary of Proposed Answers

Q4(b)(ii): *What results (including unintended consequences) might each suggested form of expansion of matching criteria have?*

The Sub Team had diverging opinions on the need to expand the matching criteria, the suggested forms of expansion were not examined in detail and as such, the Sub Team did not flush out the possible results of such suggestions.

Q4(b)(iii): *What balance should be adhered to in striving to deter bad-faith registrations but not good-faith domain name applications?*

The Sub Team believes that the exact match criteria has already struck the current balance of deterring bad-faith registrations but not good-faith domain name applications.

The Sub Team believes that the current balance can be enhanced by a well-crafted Claims Notice that appropriately notifies prospective registrants about a potential problem with their chosen domain name, employs clear/concise/informative language, and avoids a potential overflow of false positives.

Question 4, Cont.	Proposed Answers
Q4(b)(iv): <i>What is the resulting list of non-exact match criteria recommended by the WG, if any?</i>	The Sub Team did not recommended the concept much less developed a proposed list of non-exact match criteria.
Q4(c): <i>What is the feasibility of implementation for each form of expanded matches?</i>	The Sub Team team had diverging opinions on the advisability much less the feasibility of implementing expanded matches.
Q4(d)(i): <i>If an expansion of matches solution were to be implemented, should the existing TM Claims Notice be amended? If so, how?</i>	Since the Sub Team did not agree on the expansion of matches, the Sub Team did not consider this question in detail.
Q4(d)(ii): <i>If an expansion of matches solution were to be implemented, should the Claim period differ for exact matches versus non-exact matches?</i>	Since the Sub Team did not agree on the expansion of matches, the Sub Team did not consider this question in detail.

Proposed Questions for Community Input

The Sub Team does not recommend expanding the matching criteria for the Claims Notice due to diverging opinions among its members. Nevertheless, the Sub Team recommends that public comment be sought on the following questions:

1. Should the matching criteria for the Claims Notice be expanded?
2. If so, what should the non-exact match criteria consist of? Please provide specific proposals with detailed rationale and supporting evidence/data. In the absence of clear evidence/data to make a change to the matching criteria, the status quo of exact match shall be maintained.

Question 5

Proposed Answers

Q5: *Should the Trademark Claims period continue to be uniform for all types of gTLDs in subsequent rounds?*

The Sub Team generally agreed that where the Registry Operator has not obtained an exception (see proposed answer to Q2(d)), the Trademark Claims period, including for the minimum initial 90-day period when a TLD opens for general registration, should continue to be uniform for all types of gTLDs in subsequent rounds. In addition, the Sub Team generally agreed that registries should have a certain degree of flexibility, based on a suitable business model, with the option to extend the Claims Period.

Preliminary Recommendation

The Trademark Claims Sub Team recommends that where the Registry Operator has not obtained an exemption (see proposed answer to Q2(d)), the current requirement for a mandatory Claims Period should continue to be uniform for all types of gTLDs in subsequent rounds, including for the minimum initial 90-day period when a TLD opens for general registration.

Thank You and Questions