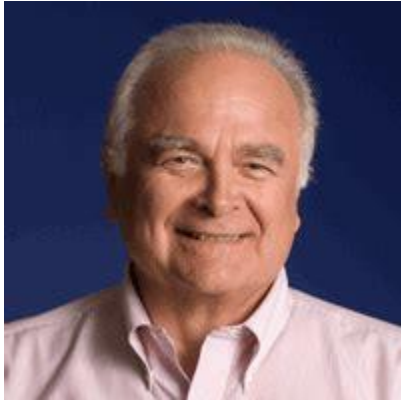


Henry “Hal” Lubsen (1942-2023)



Hal Lubsen, former CEO of Afilias, passed away peacefully on February 7, 2023.

Hal was an American entrepreneur and a visionary leader who managed and grew successful companies. He had a special impact in the domain name industry, where he founded domain retailer DomainBank and, in 2000, domain registry, Afilias. Hal grew Afilias into an industry leader and was also instrumental in founding Public Interest Registry (PIR), the non-profit that manages the .org domain.

Born in 1942 in Newton, New Jersey, Hal lived in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania. Following his psychology degree from Muhlenberg College, he went on to start, buy and run several businesses in various fields. In the late 1990s, he began focusing on the then-fledgling Internet domain name industry. In 2000, Hal founded and was appointed CEO of Afilias. Under his leadership, Afilias grew from 3 people in a small office to become one of the largest and most successful companies in the industry, prior to its acquisition by Identity Digital (fka Donuts, Inc) in 2020.

Known for his strategic thinking and innovative approach to solving complex problems, Hal promoted Afilias' strong advocacy and involvement in the Internet space and built a culture of doing the right thing for the future of the Internet. Members of his management team and his Board made active and long-lasting contributions to ICANN, the coordinator of domain names worldwide; to ISOC, the non-profit focused on an open internet; to the IETF, the internet standards making body; to PIR, the steward of .org; to SSAC, the security and stability committee; and to the IGF, the United Nations' Internet Governance Forum. Afilias became known for its long-term focus, its ethics, and its strong commitment to public service.

Several of his contemporaries shared their tributes:

Lynn St. Amour, former CEO, Internet Society: I have known Hal for over 20 years, having first worked with him during the Internet Society's bid to manage the .ORG domain. Hal was a person of high integrity and always dealt with matters straight-up. He and the Afilias team so clearly shared the values of the Internet Society, and our hopes for the .ORG domain, that choosing Hal and Afilias as our partner was an easy decision. Hal was a real friend and I respected and trusted his views and advice. He is missed.

Steve Crocker, former Chair, ICANN: Hal was a father figure and consummate businessman. He shaped the domain name industry. I thoroughly enjoyed working with him.

Akram Atallah, CEO, Identity Digital: Hal built Afilias from a single idea into an industry leader. Identity Digital is grateful to carry forward his legacy of building a vibrant and successful business in the domain name space. We extend our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

David Maher, former General Counsel, Public Interest Registry: Hal was a man with a vision, and his Afilias colleagues shared that vision; there would not be a PIR without Afilias.

Ram Mohan, former COO, Afilias: Hal was one of the smartest people I have ever worked with. I will miss his incisive presence and will always cherish the great, 20-year experience of building a billion-dollar enterprise with him, while still doing the right thing for the internet.

Philipp Grabensee, former Chair, Afilias: Hal was a fatherly friend, mentor, and business partner. We traveled to ICANN meetings around the world, made Afilias grow and partied at great restaurants. Afterwards we went to the Buchinger Clinic together. I learned a lot from Hal and owe him much.

Hal is survived by his wife, 2 daughters and a son. The Lubsen family asks for privacy at this time, and requests well-wishers to make contributions to the World Wide Fund for Nature (www.worldwildlife.org).