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Internet Domains, Digital Heritage, Knowledge Societies and Cultural Diversity

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Domain names

- An organization conducting activity on the Internet identifies itself by its domain name:
 - mailme@famousmuseum.ru
 - www.famousmuseum.org
- A born-digital organization is identified by Internet users solely by its domain name.

Who's who?

- icom.com
- icom.net
- icom.org
- icom.jp
- icom.museum

Web Deception

- A deliberately deceptive Web document can contain misleading content, including correspondingly misleading metadata.
- The authenticity of such material cannot be determined solely on the basis of the data it contains.
- Internationalized domain names can be particularly confusing and easily exploited.
- Some means for external verification are necessary.

TLD Deception

- A name in an unrestricted top-level domain may be acquired by anyone for any purpose.
- There are tens of thousands of domain names that contain the letter sequence "museum", of which only a fraction designate genuine museums, with many operated without regard for the interests of the museum community.

.museum

- In November 2000, ICANN introduced seven new top-level domains.
- One of these was **.museum**, specifically to enable Internet users immediately to recognize genuine museums on the basis of their domain names.

One of a kind

.museum was the only one of the new domains explicitly associated with cultural activity.

Who cares?

- A well-branded museum expects to be recognized regardless of the platform on which it appears, has probably invested a good deal in establishing its Internet identity, and may not care about the availability of .museum.
- The same museum may, however, have a great deal of concern with freely-available domains using names that are deliberately confusing corruptions of its own.

Who else cares?

- A museum that does not have a domain name with which it is clearly and easily associated.
- A museum that uses the domain name of an unrelated organization that provides it with a host platform.
- A digital-only museum with no other mode of association with museum activity.

A cultural sector on the Internet

- The pilot venture is .museum.
- Subsequent TLDs might include:
 - .library
 - .archive
 - .monuments
- There can be multiple benefits in the coordinated operation of a "cluster" of cultural TLDs.

Conclusion 1

- The creation of .museum was a truly innovative event in the development of the DNS.
 - Its success can open the door to a broad cultural sector on the Internet.
 - Its failure can as easily ensure the opposite result.

Conclusion 2

A recognizable cultural sector in the Internet "name space" can provide fertile ground for:

- the Net-wide dissemination of intangible heritage

and

- the inclusion of cultural communities that do not yet have direct access to the Internet.

Further info

- <http://about.museum>
- <http://icom.museum>