Issues and Challenges of managing country code top level domain name in South Asia

THE .AF (AFGHANISTAN) CASE

SAID ZAZAI

PRESIDENT
NATIONAL IT PROFESSIONALS
ASSOCIATION OF AFGHANISTAN
(NITPAA)

Afghanistan

- Population: 31,000,000.

- Least connected country in Asia Pacific.

- ICT access global ranking is 149.

- Less than 5% households have internet access.

- In year 2013, Fixed broadband prices are 38.6% of GNI per capita, ranking 5th most expensive in Asia Pacific.

.AF History and Structure

- Previously owned by an individual based in the UK.

- In 2003 Afghanistan Network Information Center (AFGNIC) was incorporated.

- A state owned registry.

- .af, .com.af, .net.af, .org.af, .edu.af, .gov.af

- In 2009, MOU was signed with COCCA registry.

.af Fee Structure

- Two different fee structures.

- Billing is done based on the international fee, but nationals pay in local currency as per the policy.

	International	National
.af	$50	Af 2,850 ($47.5)
.com.af	$20	Af 1,150 ($19.16)
.net.af	$20	Af 1,150 ($19.16)
.edu.af	$20	Af 1,150 ($19.16)
.org.af	$20	Af 1,150 ($19.16)
.gov.af	$20	Af 1,150 ($19.16)

Registration Process & Whois

- Manual registration process.

- No online payment.

- No Whois server until a couple months ago.

- Pay more at COCCA registry if you want to register and pay online. i.e. $20 of .com.af will cost you $90.

Step 1 — Downloadable PDF form

Step 2 — Fill up and email

Step 3 — Pay in Cash or bank deposit

Registration Policy

- 1. If the registrant wants to register a domain name ending in ".com.af"
  a. Trade license / Business authorization or approval from the Ministry of Commerce

- 2. If the registrant wants to register a domain name ending in ".org.af"
  a. Approval of registration documents from the ministry of planning.

- *Bypass these restrictions by registering with COCCA registry online.*

.AF ccTLD after 12 years

- No registrar & 250 reseller accounts.

- 7000+ domain registrations under 6 zones, June 2015.

- A government owned entity with poor representation of its local internet community.

Challenges

- A state owned entity;
  - leading to financial conflicts with Ministry of Finance.
  - .af is treated as a national symbol not as a business opportunity.
- Vague and sometimes rigid policies.
- Poor marketing and awareness o f the brand.
  - Low community engagement and participation to grow awareness about .af.
  - The value and role of .af domain name is unknown to people.
- Authoritarian administration;
  - Focus is on the control of the domain names rather than setting programs and policies for its growth.

Challenges (Cont'd)

- Costs are high.

- Low technical skills and capacity.

- Lower technical infrastructure;

  - Access to stable and reliable internet connectivity.

  - No Internet Exchange point or root server nodes.

  - Registry automation software.

Causes

- National economy is dependent on foreign aid and investments.

- Low internet penetration.

- Low administrative capacity of the leadership.

- No International marketing strategy.

- Fees are high.

Conclusion

- There is need for;
  - Information on the features and services of AFGNIC, i.e. Whois, Dispute resolution etc.

  - Technological Resources: To overcome the infrastructure barriers, i.e. IXP, Root server node etc.

  - Human Resources: To administer operations and develop policies, i.e. ICANN and IGF engagement, and technical capacity building workshops.

  - Coordination with local community and cooperation with regional players.

Thank you

مننه

تشکر