



DIGITAL BRAND SERVICES
CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY

We'll show you the way

How to **make the most of new gTLDs** without committing excess time and budget

Making the most of New gTLDs

"It's complicated enough handling my current domains. How can I possibly cope with 600+?" With hundreds of new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) due for launch in 2014, this is the kind of question many brand owners are asking. How can they make the most of new gTLDs without committing excess time and budget? In our conversation with him, CSC's

Director of Global Brand Advisory, Vincent D'Angelo, shares the advice his team gives to clients.

Interviewer: For many brand holders, the New gTLD program is a headache. Some find it hard enough to look after their existing digital brands in today's relatively simple world of country and top-level domains like .de and .com. They are asking what they need to do to keep their brands safe—and what opportunities they might be missing

out on. Where do you suggest they start?

Vincent D'Angelo: There's no question that new gTLDs are daunting for brand holders, especially companies that have many different brands and operate in different areas. Say you have a global hair care brand: do you need to register for .salon as well as .hair? Will you have a ".brand" domain? Is .amsterdam an important market for you?

Like any big problem, the best way to approach it is to break it down. At CSC we recommend that our clients start by working out which gTLDs they need to be thinking about. And the best way to do this is by looking at the data. First, find out how people search for your brands. For example, if they use the word “salon” as a keyword, then this is probably a new gTLD you should prioritize. Then, take a look at your entire domain portfolio and find which, if any, match the new gTLDs. If you’ve got a domain name that includes the word “app,” for example, it’s possible that cybersquatters might go after “yourbrand.app,” causing problems for you when this new domain goes live.

We also recommend that people look at industry sectors. If you’re in the financial sector, for instance, then .bank may be a no-brainer. Finally, rights owners need to consider whether their brands—or the new gTLD terms they are interested in—have been involved in disputes. Are they

popular, or frequently targeted by cybersquatters?

Once a brand holder has done this exercise, they will have created a prioritized list of new gTLDs from the hundreds available and will be able to look at them in order of relevance.

INT: That sounds like a great start. At this point, are brand holders all set to start registering their priority domains?

“ If you have any significant online presence, the biggest risk from the New gTLD program is ignoring it. Because if you don’t get the new domains, your competitors—or worse, cybercriminals—will. ”

VD: Not quite. Although this is usable, quantifiable data, clients can take further, qualitative steps to make sure there are no gaps in their strategy. Looking at gTLDs which others have expressed an interest in is important, because that’s where there will be competition for online real estate: “.app” is a

good example of this. While we’re on the subject of popularity, there’s no getting away from adult and “gripe” domains (like .porn or .sucks), which may merit defensive registration. Domains relevant to your corporate presence should be considered, for example .careers or .news. And geographic gTLDs—whether, say, the Chinese version of .com or the domain of a city where a brand makes great sales—shouldn’t be overlooked, either.

Once we’ve applied this analysis to a client’s priority list of new gTLDs, then we feel ready to start with a registration and blocking strategy.

INT: Is it just new gTLDs or is there more to it?

VD: New gTLDs shouldn’t be treated in isolation. As you prepare your new gTLD game plan, it’s also important to look at how your brands are represented in the current digital landscape of TLDs like .com and .net and country domains like .cn or .fr. This may mean simply assessing your key .com typos, country-code domains and social media handles, or could involve establishing more advanced monitoring and enforcement programs to remove malicious web properties that are diverting traffic and business and causing other harm to your brand and consumers. Taking a holistic approach ensures that your brand presence is optimized as you begin to invest in new domains.

INT: What’s the real benefit of all this analysis?

VD: Three words: focus, opportunity and security. We’ve run exercises like this for more than 100 clients, and, on average, only 14 out of approximately 600 unique new

gTLDs were included in the “very high” risk/opportunity category. Even when we add the qualitative assessment, the average is 40 TLDs. Whether clients choose one or both analyses, we’re helping them focus on the top 10% of the new gTLDs that will impact their brands the most. This ultimately translates into cost savings by heading off future infringement issues while avoiding misguided registration and blocking strategies.

And taking this kind of comprehensive look at a client’s digital real estate means we’re minimizing the risk of cybercrime and reputational damage while making sure they take advantage of the opportunities new gTLDs present.

Every corporation has its own view on risk and opportunity, and varying resources to meet them. So some of our clients opt for a proactive registration/blocking strategy, while others use monitoring and URS/UDRP enforcement services. The key is to understand which approach is right for you.

There’s one final reason for taking a careful, analytical look at new gTLDs: avoiding scams. As with any “goldrush”-type situation, disreputable companies will try to exploit people’s incomplete knowledge. In this case, they’ll do it by offering spurious pre-registration programs and suggesting that people take immediate action without having the time to think about it. Yes, there’s urgency around new gTLDs—but it pays to take a measured look before you leap.

INT: Whether or not a brand owner goes it alone or gets help with new gTLDs, there is still time and expense involved. Is it worth it? What are the risks and the benefits?



Biography: Vincent D'Angelo

Vincent D'Angelo is the Director of Global Brand Advisory at CSC Digital Brand Services, where he assists large brand owners in mitigating risk and maximizing traffic to their web properties by sharing best practices and strategy related to Domain Names, New gTLDs, Social Media URL coverage, Paid Search, Search Engine Optimization, Social Media Marketing, Mobile Apps and QR Codes. Vincent has 14 years of experience in the Brand Protection and Management industry.

Vincent was also named inventor in a Domain and Brand Risk Assessment patent. His team continues to perform research to further quantify the value of digital assets and their impact on direct navigation, search engines, social media and mobile app marketplaces.

VD: If you have any significant online presence, the biggest risk from the New gTLD program is ignoring it. Because if you don’t get the new domains, your competitors—or worse, cybercriminals—will. Yes, it’s going to cost you money and give you more digital properties to worry about, but as we’ve seen in this conversation, with some careful analysis this can be turned into a manageable and affordable project.

And the benefits make the effort worthwhile. Your .brand domain

gives you more flexibility and reassures customers that they have entered a trusted, compliant space. You can target marketing and navigation more precisely, for example: buy.brand, search.brand, or download.brand. And with generic TLDs, there are opportunities to make your brand stand out (e.g., brand.movie), to own categories (brand.app), build communities (brand.nyc) and target international communities (like brand.дети – “kids” in Russian).



“ Overall, I’d say that the New gTLD program offers excellent opportunities for brands that far outweigh the risks and hassles of implementation. ”

Search will almost certainly evolve once new gTLDs make it useful to search within, say, .boston or .cars. It’s already possible to do an advanced search for web content related to a specific TLD within search engines, for example. And this could be a precursor of things to come.

Additionally, search engines like the new search .xxx could become the norm when consumers need to find quality web content related to an industry sector (search.movie, etc.).

Overall, I’d say that the New gTLD program offers excellent opportunities for brands that far outweigh the risks and hassles of implementation. The key is to take a systematic and measured approach. And most importantly, to start thinking about it right now, so you don’t miss the new domain launches. This is a very time-critical program.

CSC and the New gTLD program

CSC Digital Brand Services works with trademark owners around the world to help them optimize their brands in the entire digital space, including new gTLDs. As an authorized agent for the Trademark Clearinghouse, we advise clients on which trademarks to file and how and when to file them. Our Brand Advisory Team, available to all CSC clients, is dedicated to helping our clients develop and implement successful Internet and domain name strategies.



About CSC Digital Brand Services

CSC® Digital Brand Services helps businesses thrive online. One of the world’s largest corporate domain name registrars, CSC is also the leading provider of services related to ICANN’s New gTLD Program, representing more than one third of all “.brand” domain applicants. CSC offers SSL certificates for safe online transactions; enterprise DNS services; social media username services; trademark search and monitoring services; and a broad range of Internet monitoring and enforcement tools designed to assert intellectual property rights. CSC’s award-winning customer support and superior technological assets enable companies to maximize the value of their brands, expand into new markets, and counter emerging online threats. Visit www.cscglobal.com to learn more.