

Internet Society Proposal to Operate .ORG Approved by ICANN

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Reston, VA — Today, the Internet Society (ISOC) announced that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has selected its proposal to operate the .ORG registry. ISOC has established a new not-for-profit organization - the Public Interest Registry (PIR) - which will succeed VeriSign Global Registry Services, Inc. (NASDAQ: VRSN) as the registry operator for .ORG when its contract with ICANN expires on December 31, 2002.

"We are thrilled to have this opportunity to serve the worldwide .ORG community and are dedicated to making .ORG a truly global home that will serve the unique interests of non-commercial organizations on the Internet," said Lynn St. Amour, ISOC President and CEO.

Afilias Limited, a global domain name registry services provider and current registry operator of the .INFO top-level domain (TLD), will provide PIR with a full range of back-end registry services to support .ORG.

"Afilias congratulates ISOC and looks forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead," said Hal Lubsen, Chief Executive Officer of Afilias. "Afilias is fully prepared to support ISOC and PIR in the modernization of the .ORG domain including upgrading the registry system to support the new, faster EPP protocol and reducing registration-to-resolution time from hours to minutes."

PIR will introduce new services designed to meet the unique needs of noncommercial organizations including: name locking, site linking, a directory, and ID certification. In addition, PIR will establish a .ORG Advisory Council to be made up of noncommercial community leaders.

"We are pleased to have been selected from among 11 excellent proposals. ISOC's legacy of responsible stewardship in matters relating to the welfare of the Internet coupled with Afilias' track record of operating a large-scale registry underscores ICANN's confidence in our ability to preserve and further enhance the .ORG registry," said St. Amour. "We look forward to building upon the solid base established by VeriSign and to working closely with them to ensure a smooth transition for all .ORG users."

ISOC and Afilias have already begun planning for the technical transition and expect that it will be virtually invisible to .ORG users. Existing .ORG domain name holders will simply renew their name on their regular schedule, and new registrations will be accepted just as they are today. Domain name registrars, the retailers of .ORG domain names, should also experience an easy cutover due to the special processes being developed for this transition.

In addition to transition planning, the establishment of the new registry operator - PIR - is also well underway. PIR has completed incorporation as a not-for-profit in the state of Pennsylvania and will have its principle operations near ISOC's Reston, VA headquarters. PIR's Board of Directors has recently been selected and is made up of technology savvy experts in a variety of areas from around the globe who share ISOC's vision of setting a new standard for registry services. In addition, PIR's Board of Directors will guide the organization in the remainder of its

staffing and administrative tasks, as well as in the completion of its contract with ICANN.

On June 18, 2002, ISOC and 10 other organizations submitted proposals to ICANN to be considered as the next registry operator for the .ORG domain. The ICANN Evaluation Team posted its final recommendation to the ICANN Board on September 23, 2002. Today, the ICANN Board resolved to enter into negotiations with PIR and ISOC to formalize the operator agreement. This agreement is expected to be completed in late October 2002.

About .ORG

The .ORG domain, which has come to be associated with noncommercial activities, is the Internet's third largest "generic" or non-country specific top-level domain (behind .COM and .NET), housing over 2.7 million domain names worldwide. Late last year, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Board of Directors selected ISOC's proposal from among 11 organizations bidding to operate the .ORG top-level domain. VeriSign Global Registry Services' contract as registry operator for .ORG expired on December 31, 2002. PIR assumed control of the registry on January 1, 2003.

About PIR

Public Interest Registry (www.pir.org) is a not-for-profit corporation created by the Internet Society to manage the .ORG domain. PIR's mission is to manage the .ORG domain in a way that supports the continuing evolution of the Internet as a research, education and communications infrastructure, and educates and empowers the noncommercial community to most effectively utilize the Internet. PIR is based in Reston, Virginia.

PIR was created by the Internet Society (www.ISOC.org). ISOC is a not-for-profit, open membership organization founded in 1991 and is dedicated to ensuring the open evolution, development and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people. It provides leadership in addressing issues that confront the future of the Internet, and is the organizational home for many of the groups responsible for Internet standards.

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