

Public Interest Registry Assumes Control of .ORG Domain Name Registry in Historic Transition

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Largest domain redelegation in the history of the Internet commences.

Reston, VA — The Public Interest Registry (PIR) today announced that it has assumed the role of registry operator for the .ORG top-level domain in a smooth handoff from former operator VeriSign Global Registry Services. This historic transition, which commenced yesterday when PIR officially assumed control of registry operations, marks the beginning of the largest transfer of data from one registry to another in the history of the Internet.

"We are pleased to begin the transition process," said David Maher, chairman of the PIR board. "We have put together a solid transition team and are working together toward a smooth, stable transition resulting in no interruption of service for .ORG registrants."

In order to minimize disruption, a 25-day phase-in period has begun during which VeriSign will still provide back-end technical services. This will allow those that sell .ORG domain names more time to prepare for the transition. On January 25, 2003, the technical services for the registry will be cutover from VeriSign to Afilias Limited, PIR's chosen back-end service provider.

The .ORG domain, which has come to be associated with noncommercial organizations, is the Internet's fifth largest top-level domain, housing over 2.4 million domain names worldwide. PIR was created to manage the .ORG registry by the Internet Society (ISOC), and is committed to setting a new standard for registry services in its management of .ORG that will meet the unique needs and interests of noncommercial organizations around the world.

Earlier this year, the Board of Directors of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) selected ISOC's proposal from among 11 organizations bidding to operate the .ORG top-level domain. VeriSign's contract as registry operator for .ORG expired on December 31, 2002. As such, it is relinquishing .ORG to comply with an agreement entered into with the ICANN and the U.S. Department of Commerce in May 2001.

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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