Childrens-rights.digital

The Impact of Domain Names on Children’s Rights and Child Safety

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UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

• Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989.
• Guiding Principle: „Best interest of the child“ (Art. 3)
• Right to express his/her own views freely (Art. 12)
• Right to freedom of expression / Right to freedom of thought (Art. 13/14)
• Right to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly (Art. 15)
• Right to access to Information (Art. 17)
• Right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, (Art. 19)
• Right to protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Art. 34)
Top Level Domains

Different types of Top Level Domains - TLDs

• Country Code Top Level Domains – ccTLDs .uk
• Geographic Top Level Domains – geoTLDs: Geographical names like .swiss
• Generic Top Level Domains – gTLDs, Generic terms, like. .kids, .play or .digital

New types of Top Level Domains expand the address space of the Internet.
Domain names

Players acting in domain name procedures

- ICANN – Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers
- Registries
- Registrars
Safety issues

Risks for children’s safety result from two different areas of domain names
1. Sub domains under all TLDs they host
   • either content specifically attractive to children or attractive or
   • Content inappropriate for children.
2. Generic TLDs, that can be assumed especially attractive to children .play, .school or .kids
Safety issues

Risks for children result from:

- Dissemination of child sexual abuse imagery under domains where the purpose is obvious from the names, f.e. [www.naked-children.com](http://www.naked-children.com)
- Confrontation with inappropriate content, f.e. [www.barbie.play](http://www.barbie.play)
- Children’s data being collected by websites f.e. via moderated chats
- Contact with the purpose of sexual abuse f.e. at [www.children.play](http://www.children.play)
Potential Measures

Registries
• Contractual obligation to the registrars to implement review procedures for requests for registration of a sub domain.

Registrars
• Review of all requests for registration of sub domains under all TLDs in regard of potential misuse, f.e. by checking the words of the domain name against a list of words used in communication of paedophiles (such a check is done by NOMINET in UK on a daily base)
• Review of applicants for registration of sub domains under generic TLDs, especially attractive to children. The objective would be to ensure that, neither the applicant nor their staff have a criminal record in regard of child abuse.
Process of registering a domain

http://www.childrens-rights.digital

Right to use the sub domain childrens-rights.digital, granted by the registrar to Digital Opportunities Foundation.

gTLD .digital, awarded by ICANN to a Registry

Registry allocates the right to sell sub domains to a registrar

Registrar Company
Process of registering a domain

- **gTLD .berlin**, awarded by ICANN to a registry
- **http://www.naked-boys.berlin**
- Sub domain naked-boys.hamburg, right to use granted to reviewed customer by the registrar
- Registrar reviews the reliability of applicant and grants the right to use, potentially subject to conditions
- Registry allocates the right to sell sub domains, potentially subject to conditions
Possible Instruments for more safety I

• Self regulation: Codes of Conduct of registries und registrars
• Collaboration of the Registries handling child sensitive gTLDs in a consortium in order to create a safe domain space based on the example of the Verified Top Level Domain Consortium (.bank; .pharmacy)
The **Verified Top-Level Domains (vTLD) Consortium** was established in May 2016 as an informal, voluntary association of registry operators of generic Top-Level Domains and third-party providers that administer or support vTLDs.

- **Mission:** to **enhance public trust, online safety, and internet commerce** by promoting the unique value and increasing the awareness of verified domain name extensions as trusted channels for products, services, and communications online.

- **A vTLD requires:**
  - Verification of registrant eligibility prior to domain use
  - Registrant adherence to the vTLD’s registry standards
  - Autonomy to take back a name in the event of violations
  - Ongoing verification to ensure continued eligibility

- **vTLDs have had zero reported incidents of abuse.**

[www.vTLD.domains](http://www.vTLD.domains)
Possible Instruments for more safety II

• Obligation to perform an extended review when ICANN awards a gTLDs specifically attractive to children to a registry
• Establishing a fund to finance the extended review of applicants for child sensitive sub domains.
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