



geoTLD.group



Promoting local digital Identities

for Cities, Regions, Languages
and Cultures on the Internet

Who we are

The geoTLD.group is an international not-for-profit membership association. We represent the interests of geographic top-level domains identifying a city, region, language or culture. Our members and observers include government entities, companies and associations.

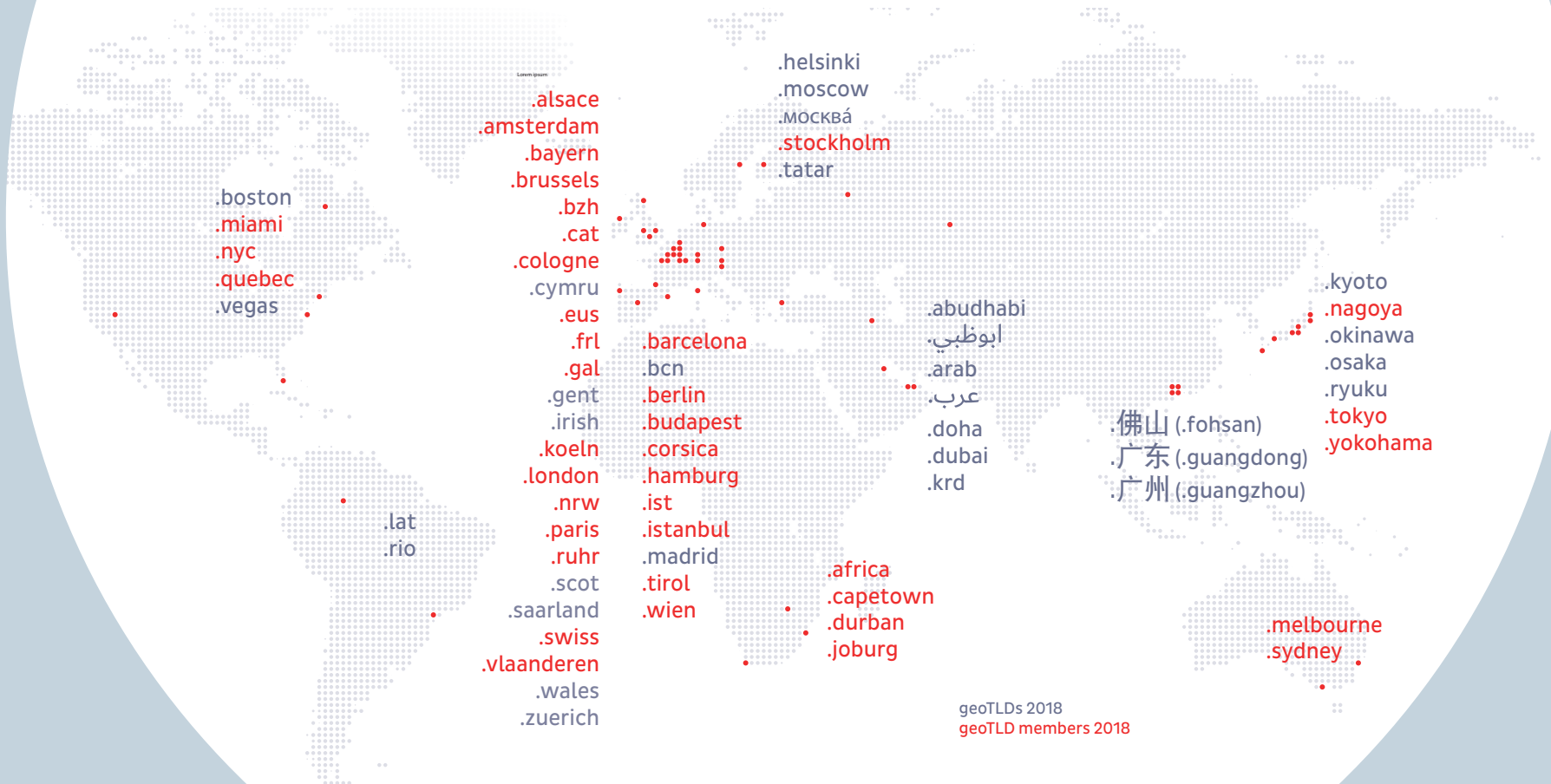
The mission of the geoTLD.group is to promote and connect those engaged in the advocacy, promotion, governance, and development of geoTLDs within their communities and to all their stakeholders.



Our Vision

geoTLDs are shaping tomorrow's Internet and creating digital identities for places and communities.

The geoTLD.group represents all geographic top-level domains and stands as their rallying point. The group strives to develop geoTLDs' potential for the benefit of their cities, regions, cultures and languages.



Why join geoTLD.group?

If you currently run a geographic top level domain, or if you are considering applying to run one in the future, you will benefit immediately from joining geoTLD.group.

Operating a top level domain (TLD) for a city or region, or even a language or cultural group, it can seem as if no one else understands the unique pressures and opportunities you face.

- » **How to responsibly steward** your part of the global Internet infrastructure while making sure you reflect the needs of your many stakeholders
- » **How to meet your public interest goals** while running a cost-effective operation
- » **How to understand what you need to** about the organisation administering your registry contract, ICANN, and how to balance ICANN's requirements with national laws

Although the geoTLD.group was launched in 2016, our founders have worked on these issues for over a decade. We made sure that the specific needs of geographic TLDs were reflected in the process ICANN launched to create these names, in 2012. Looking forward, we are helping to shape ICANN decision-making on policy issues that affect our members and also on future new TLDs. With a membership you will get:

We are the only association that connects and represents geoTLD managers around the world.

- » **Access to a network of peers** challenges other geoTLDs are facing, but in their own geographic area – online and at face to face meetings
- » **Shared and confidential insights** into operations, marketing and legal challenges that other GeoTLDs are facing
- » **A way to efficiently amplify your voice** to ensure that future policy or contractual issues at ICANN are resolved in a way that supports you

Why a geoTLD?

In an increasingly complex and divided world, people are searching for a positive and pro-active sense of identity. More and more, we look to the city or region we live in, or the community we belong to, to understand and communicate who we really are.



While national identities can sometimes seem distant or contested, we don't think twice when we hear someone say "I love Tokyo" or "Alsace is where my heart really is". Our cities and regions already have personalities that we recognise and have strong, positive feelings for. Now, the Internet is beginning to reflect this.

A geoTLD recreates in the digital world our intuitive sense of place and belonging in the physical world. It builds on that identity to create new social, cultural, economic and educational opportunities. Cities, regions and communities now use top level Internet names such as **.sydney**, the city, or **.vlaanderen**, the Flemish region, or **.bzh**, for Breton language speakers. These geoTLDs are a powerful platform for people and organisations to express and promote their loyalties, both at home and abroad.

What does a geoTLD bring?

A geoTLD expresses identity in a positive way, building on civic pride to provide a platform that brings people together around shared experiences.

A geoTLD provides a common platform to promote everything a place or community has to offer.

Meaning

It is a way for those charged with developing and promoting a city, region or community to showcase everything that is best about their home. For example, the Scottish Government, the devolved government for Scotland, has migrated its entire web presence to **www.gov.scot**. Scotland has embraced **.scot** as central to the government's online identity, and also to renew and sustain Scotland's strong connections with its global diaspora.

Opportunity

It is intuitively easy to grasp, for example, that **www.hotels.london**, is a one-stop site for accommodation in London, UK. Services like hotels.london, supported by London + Partners, the city's promotional body, have an authority and a focus that wouldn't be possible with an typical, generic name. A geoTLD lets local businesses target customers while reaching out to the world. **www.kvb.koeln** is a primary information source on getting around in Cologne, Germany, whether by public transport or by bicycle.





Branding and Identity

When one clicks on www.goto.capetown, you know straight away what you are going to get; a one-stop shop of useful information about visiting Capetown, South Africa. A place or community with its own top level domain creates a common platform to promote tourism, one-off and ongoing events, and educational, business and cultural establishments. A geoTLD will build and amplify your core brand values by helping to ensure that the activities and businesses found on it are relevant and up to date. www.mozart.wien is a multi-lingual website with a simple and memorable address that builds on visitors' interest in the world-famous composer to provide up to date information about Vienna-based concerts, tours and more.

A geoTLD is fast becoming a key part of place and community-based branding and communications.

Trust

A geoTLD is a reliable way to digitally deliver trustworthy public services to residents. Municipalities and regional government bodies use their geoTLD to ensure that residents, businesses and other organisations accessing services can trust who they are doing business with. www.archives.nyc is the official address of New York City's public archive, the Department of Records & Information Service. It provides a valuable and ongoing service of making the city's archival records available, allowing anyone to share in and build on New York's rich, historic legacy. geoTLDs are intuitive. Internet users immediately grasp what www.musical.berlin is for. So do search engines, which can help with search rankings and drive relevant traffic. As the Internet becomes fragmented and distributed across a range of devices and formats, geoTLDs help users to find and have confidence in the specific content and services they are looking for.



Small to medium enterprises, the engines of job creation, are often crowded out of existing top level domains because their names are already registered.

Usability

With a geoTLD, every organisation can use its name in a domain name that is both memorable and relevant to customers. Once a pioneer in engineering and now on the Internet, the Eiffel Tower communicates with the address www.toureiffel.paris. Other local companies successfully use a catchy name with great SEO performances, such as www.realestate.paris to attract customers from all over the world, or www.escapegame.paris to support the development of this trendy entertainment within the Parisian region.



geoTLDs forge the link between geographic and community affiliation to new and meaningful identities in the digital world.

Community

www.eitb.eus celebrates the identity and global availability of the regional Basque television channel, providing regional news and programming in the Basque language. As cities and regions now compete for skills, investment and tourism, geoTLDs help them to use their best assets – the energy, pride and distinctive qualities of their people, companies and cultural institutions – to present themselves to the world.

What are geoTLDs?

A geoTLD is a type of Top-Level Domain (TLD). What's a TLD? A TLD is a domain at the highest level of the Domain Name System of the Internet. The TLD 'string' comes at the end of the address, for example, .com whose string is "com", or .info whose string is "info". Generic top-level domains (gTLDs) are TLDs that do not represent a country or official territory. In 2012, ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) began a process to create new gTLDs, including geoTLDs. geoTLDs are a type of gTLD. They include:

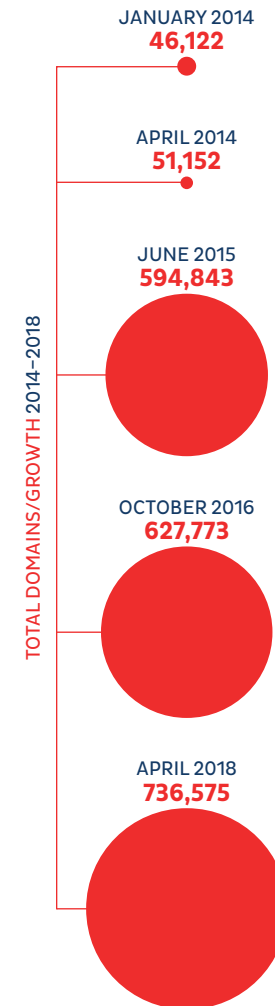
- » Geographic names such as .berlin, .corsica, .barcelona or .africa
- » Geographic identifiers such as .nyc (New York) or .ist (Istanbul)
- » Names of geographic origin such as .irish or .gal (Galicia)

geoTLDs are intended to serve a geographic place, language or culture. They also include Internationalized Domain Names (IDN), that allow different languages to use their own character sets. For example, geoTLDs now include .Москва (Moscow) and .广东 (Guangdong Province, China).

How are geoTLDs doing?

Since the launch of the first geoTLD, in March 2014, the geoTLD domain names have become popular in their place. The domain names are frequently being used by the government, institutions, companies and private persons.

With the latest developments geoTLDs have become enablers for the digitalisation and the smart city development. geoTLDs are seen as a part of the public Internet infrastructure.





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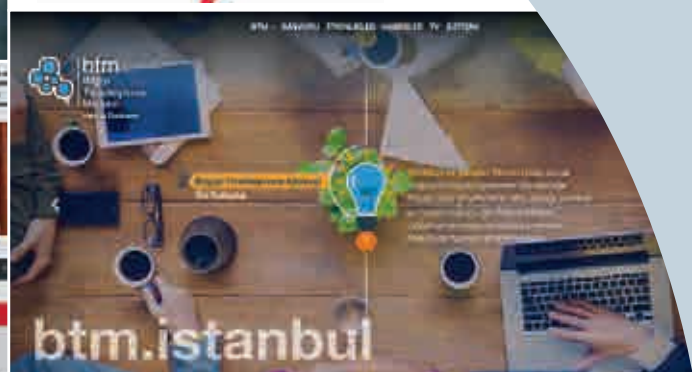
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geoTLD Domain Names used by Authorities and Governments

Launched in 2006, .cat was the first geoTLD. It was created to help the Catalan-speaking community raise the profile of the Catalan identity and normalize the use of Catalan on the Internet. Supporting the .cat top-level domain, the Catalan government quickly adopted .cat as the preferred address for official websites, including its main website www.gencat.cat.

Today, there are more than eight million websites with content of the government of Catalonia listed at Google, turning .cat into a role model for the skillful use of a geographic top-level domain. Although the city of Barcelona later launched its own TLD with .barcelona, the main website's name still is www.barcelona.cat. Following .cat, the Spanish regions of the Basque country and Galicia changed their internet addresses to www.euskadi.eus and www.xunta.gal.

Using a geographic top-level domain has several advantages for governments. The gTLD expresses the distinction and self-esteem of a city or region. It is a unique destination proposition in the fierce global competition for attracting visitors, workforce and investors, especially in times of accelerated digitalisation. Furthermore, when using a local TLD, the government has access to self-explanatory and intuitive domain names for intuitive governmental apps and services and at the same time gets search engine benefits for free.

Ask us to get your geoTLD!

City, regional and supra-national governments that use a local TLD as main entrance to their services:

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www.fryslan.frl
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www.gov.wales
www.isula.corsica
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www.prefeitura.rio
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Contact

To learn more about geoTLDs, and to begin your journey towards having one, contact us to learn more about becoming an Observer of the geoTLDgroup.

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The directors of the association are

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Dirk Krischenowski (Vice Chairman)

Ronald Schwärzler (Treasurer)

The GeoTLD Group Association internationale sans but lucratif (AISBL)

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