

INTERNET

1,400 new address suffixes on the way

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Government agencies and business groups across Thailand should be aware of new policies governing internet domain names if they wish to protect the country's interests, says the non-profit group responsible for the security of internet protocol.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (Icann) oversees a number of internet-related tasks that were previously handled by the US government.

Headquartered in California, Icann manages internet domain names on a global basis.

Domain names are the unique identifiers typed into a browser's address bar to access webpages on the internet.

Chairman Steve Crocker confirmed the group will introduce 1,400 new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) on top of its existing 20.

A gTLD is visible to internet users as the suffix at the end of a web address, also known as the domain name.

The core group of gTLDs consists of .com, .info, .net and .org.

The .com domain accounts for 120 million domain names, nearly half the total number of gTLDs.

The new gTLDs will enable business groups to label a web address with their

own brand name or trademark.

In Thailand, Siam Commercial Bank has already passed the initial evaluation stage for its own gTLD.

Wanawit Ahkuputra, Thailand's representative on Icann's governmental advisory committee, said big groups such as Thai Airways International could potentially fuel their growth if they join the gTLD bandwagon.

He suggested it could provide a huge boost for Thailand's tourism industry.

Mr Wanawit said gTLDs that refer to geographical names and other sensitive areas such as race, culture or religion should be supervised by the government and in most cases avoided.

The gTLD .thai, for example, is ambiguous in that it has the potential to cast positive or negative light on a com-



Crocker: .thai still being considered

pany.

This example mainly concerns the darker side of the country's tourism industry such as sex tourism.

Mr Crocker said the .thai application remains under consideration, and any arguments over a particular domain name will be settled by auction.

Meanwhile, Kothom Areeya, chairman of the non-profit Thai Network Information Center Foundation, said the administered top-level domain name .th has accumulated more than 64,000 registrations in the past 25 years.

DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Thailand's internet statistics as of March 31, 2013

Number of internet users ▶ **25 million** of total population of 64 million (39.06%)

Bandwidth use ▶ Domestic bandwidth **462,997 Mbps**
International bandwidth **1,070,055 Mbps**

