W3C Mobile Web Initiative Workshop

Position Paper of the Mobile TLD Consortium

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The Current State of the Mobile Web

Currently, users of mobile devices have no expectation that when they enter a URL into their phone browser that it will yield any useful experience. Quite to the contrary, those who have tried to do this have learned by experience that Web sites that work on mobile phones are the exception, not the rule. Most provide a frustrating user experience at best (for example, images and content size too large, services that require cookie and JavaScript support often lacked in stripped down, embedded device browsers). Consequently, many potential users of this medium have given up on the mobile web.

How a Top Level Domain Can Help

The Mobile TLD Consortium believes strongly that a top-level domain (.mobi) can provide a clearly identifiable label to consumers that a particular Web "site" will work sufficiently with their mobile device, and will also address their needs as a mobile user.

When users see a URL with a .mobi suffix (such as www.newsservice.mobi), they will know that it is likely this service will work on their mobile device.

It is our view that the ".mobi" moniker will become an "ingredient brand" which identifies to consumers underlying quality of service.

We believe the Mobile Top Level Domain (.mobi) could be an additional element to make the "mobile web" more user friendly. It can do so by providing an easily recognizable "brand" for mobile-device friendly services (for example, services which adhere to best practices developed within the Mobile Web Initiative)

Background on the Mobile TLD Consortium

3, *Ericsson*, *GSM Association*, *HP*, *Microsoft Corp.*, *Nokia*, *Orange*, *Samsung Electronics Co, Ltd.*, *Sun Microsystems*, *TIM*, *T-Mobile International* and *Vodafone* have submitted an application for a Top Level Domain for the mobile industry from Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

If the application is successful and the Top Level Domain is granted by ICANN, this consortium has agreed to form a new joint venture, a Registry Company, to manage the mobile TLD.

The companies taking part in this application see the creation of mobile TLD to be a key step in bridging the world of mobility and the Internet to the benefit of customers and the entire mobile industry. A mobile TLD on the Internet creates the opportunity to streamline the deployment of new Internet sites optimized for mobile usage. This initiative is driven with the aim of simplifying the Internet experience for mobile subscribers and increasing the ease-of-use and speed of delivery of mobile services.

For more information on the Mobile TLD Consortium, see http://www.mtldinfo.com.

The Process behind .mobi

.mobi branded sites will predictably work on mobile devices because the ownership of a .mobi domain will be linked to specific best practices and implementation of standards, which are enforced through the domain policy made effective with the contractual binding between the domain owner and the naming authority. It is not the joint venture's intention to develop these guidelines solely within the consortium, but rather to reference standards, such as those being developed within the W3C's Mobile Web Initiative.

The implementation of these best practices could not be maintained with a standard domain name prefix (such as mobi.example.com) because there is no way to place contractual obligation against the usage of such a prefix.

The validation of conformance to these guidelines will be implemented using a combination of self-certification and certification by third parties. For Web site validation the consortium would ideally like to use a certification program and tool set developed as part of the W3C's Mobile Web Initiative as the basis for these conformance tests.

Conclusion

We believe that the approach of linking name ownership to best practices, through the mechanism of a sponsored top level domain is a legitimate and innovative use of DNS as an "ingredient brand" for high-quality mobile data services.