

Launch of .co Extension

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On 1 March 2010, the Colombian Domain Name Registry launched a new top level domain (TLD) extension – ‘.co’.

Given the saturation of the generic TLD ‘.com’ market, and that ‘co’ is a common abbreviation for company, the new domain name extension may be an attractive alternative. Not only is the ‘.co’ extension useful to businesses with a Colombian market or presence but also to businesses wanting to take advantage of the ‘company’ connection as well as those wanting to profit from web-traffic generated by mistyping the extension .com. The ‘company’ connection is particularly attractive to small and medium size businesses that already have country code TLD’s such as ‘.co.uk’, and ‘.co.nz’ as well as others, and who want to expand their web-presence.

As with most recent other TLD launches, the Colombian registry is running a phased launch process with owners of Colombian domain name registrations (with extensions such as ‘.com.co’ and ‘.net.co’) being given first priority, followed by holders of Colombian trade marks. Next in line are trade mark holders in other states after which the land rush period and general registration periods commence.

The Colombian Registry will be marketing the '.co' extension to the global web community in an effort not to restrict the meaning of '.co' to 'Colombia' or 'company'. To further this aim, numerous rights protection mechanisms (RPMs) have been put into place to protect brand owners' rights.

RPMs relating to the launch of '.co' include the IP Clearinghouse, a 'rapid suspension system' for domain names that infringe trade mark rights and the implementation of the Uniform Domain-Name Dispute-Resolution Policy (UDRP) for the settlement of disputes relating to '.co' domain names. Domain name registrants will also not be allowed to use a proxy service to hide their identity, which will be available through 'Whols' services.

The general registration period for .co domain names begins on 1 August 2010 subject to availability.

For advice in relation to domain names or any of the issues raised above, please contact [Rosemary Wallis](#) or [Vineetha Veerakumar](#)