

Press release

EURid and UNESCO investigate the multilingual Internet

Brussels, 6th November 2012 – The growth of multilingualism on the internet and the factors that contribute to it are tracked and analysed in a new report from EURid, the .eu registry, and UNESCO. The “2012 World Report on Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) Deployment” follows last year’s study, “IDNs - State of Play”.

Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) are an essential building block for creating a truly multilingual Internet. The issue of IDNs has received more attention within the international community in recent years, making this report a vital contribution to the development of IDN usage around the world. Functionality and user experience for IDNs remain in their infancy. However, it is notable that within two years of fully internationalised domain names becoming available, at least 3.5 million registrations have already been carried out. Countries that have embraced IDNs at the top level include the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea, which together have seen approximately 1 million registrations so far.

“The introduction of internationalised domain names at country level was a very positive development towards fostering multilingualism in cyberspace and providing new opportunities to access information for those who do not use the Latin script in their language. UNESCO is working with various partners to turn this opportunity to the advantage of people around the world,” stated Janis Karklins, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information at UNESCO.

The report, based on a 2011 study by EURid and UNESCO, found that there was a significant correlation between IDNs and local content. Using data drawn from 90% of the world’s top-level domains (TLDs) and case studies from Egypt, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the EURid-UNESCO report offers an essential insight into the current state of IDN usage in these countries. It addresses deployment experiences and reviews the linkages between local languages and IDN uptake. The report highlights elements which enhance the “IDN readiness” in a particular country or region.

“This is the second year running in which EURid and UNESCO have collaborated to investigate the status of online multilingualism and the uptake of IDNs,” said EURid’s General Manager, Marc Van Wesemael. “The scripts of the 23 EU languages are supported under .eu and therefore, we see the relationship between local language and geographical location in the IDN registration patterns and understand its importance.”



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At IGF in Baku

The EURid-UNESCO report will be presented to the Internet community during the workshop No.126 which will take place on 6th November 2012 at 2:30 pm (Azerbaijan local time), during the 7th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Also online

The report “EURid-UNESCO World Report on Internationalised Domain Names Deployment 2012”, as well as the one published in 2011, are available for download at: <http://link.eurid.eu/insights>. They form part of the *.eu Insights* report series, which is based on surveys, studies and research conducted by EURid, in cooperation with industry experts and sector leaders.

About .eu IDNs

Internationalised Domain Names are particularly important for .eu, as the European Union has 27 Member States and 23 official languages. EURid introduced IDNs under the .eu TLD in December 2009. For more information about .eu IDNs, including a list of supported characters, please visit: <http://link.eurid.eu/idns>.

About .eu and EURid

The .eu domain ranks among the largest top-level domains in the world, connecting 500 million people in 27 EU countries to one Internet identity. More than 3.5 million .eu names have been registered since the domain opened for registration in 2005. Many companies and brands use a .eu website as a practical solution to convey a clear European identity and their business ambitions, including Fairtrade International, Foot Locker, Louis Vuitton, the MAN Group, Microsoft Corporation, Orangina and Toyota.

EURid is the not-for-profit organisation that operates the .eu top-level domain, following the appointment by the European Commission. EURid works with over 850 accredited registrars and provides support in the 23 official EU languages. EURid is registered by the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), which is an expression of EURid’s environmental commitment. With headquarters in Brussels (Belgium), EURid also has regional offices in Pisa (Italy), Prague (the Czech Republic) and Stockholm (Sweden). More information at: <http://www.eurid.eu>.

About UNESCO

UNESCO is the United Nations specialised agency. Its mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

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