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Workshop on Member States' experiences with ccTLD

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**DOCUMENT FOR ccTLD WORKSHOP**

**Source:** Industry Canada  
**Title:** Case Study on Canada's .ca domain

**Purpose**

This paper provides a general overview of the process that led to the re-delegation of the .ca in Canada.

**Background**

The management of ccTLD .ca was delegated to John Demco of the University of British Columbia (UBC) by Jon Postel of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) in 1987.

Since the .ca's inception and registration with IANA in 1987, John Demco managed the .ca domain space using the facilities and equipment of UBC. John Demco managed the .ca on a voluntary basis. He and his group allocated .ca domain names at no charge to users. The evolution of the Internet, the nature of the .ca policies at the time and the delay involved in obtaining a .ca registration (about a week) relative to other DNS registries such as .com, generated widespread dissatisfaction within the Canadian Internet community.

In 1997 John Demco, UBC, the government of Canada and other interested parties recognized the need to revitalize the .ca domain space in order to maximize the public benefit. At the Canadian Internet community's annual conference, discussions of reform led to the formation of the Canadian Domain Names Consultative Committee (CDNCC) to address the transition from the current management of the .ca domain to a 'more commercial type of operation'. Following a public consultation, the CDNCC recommended that a private sector, not-for-profit corporation be set up to take over the administration of the .ca from UBC and John Demco.

In 1998, the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation with the intention of managing the .ca domain space in the public interest.

In 1999 a letter was sent to CIRA and signed on behalf of the government of Canada by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Spectrum, Information Technologies and Telecommunications of Industry Canada (the March 11 letter). In this letter, the Canadian government recognized CIRA as

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**Contact:** Lisa Jacobson  
Industry Canada  
Business and Regulatory Analysis  
Tel: +1 613 998 4411  
Email: [Jacobson.Lisa@ic.gc.ca](mailto:Jacobson.Lisa@ic.gc.ca)

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the new administrator of the .ca. It also set out the general principles and structure pursuant to which it expected CIRA to administer the .ca domain space. The general principles are:

1. conducting CIRA's activities in an open and transparent manner that ensures wide public access to all relevant information;
2. following fair and sound business practices;
3. ensuring an appropriate balance of representation, accountability and diversity on the Board of Directors for all categories of stakeholders;
4. applying for domain names being as quick and easy as applying for domain names in other top level domains, and priced competitively;
5. reducing conflicts between persons granted domain names and other rights holders, including trade-marks or business names; and
6. administering a system that facilitates and encourages entry for new players including registrars.

In May 2000, UBC, CIRA, and the government of Canada signed the Umbrella Agreement wherein the parties committed to providing an orderly transition of the management of the .ca domain space from John Demco and UBC to CIRA. Included in the Umbrella Agreement were the following statements:

1. UBC relinquishes any interest arising from its operation of the .ca domain space, and CANADA in turn designates CIRA to manage, operate, and control the .ca domain space in accordance with principles for the public interest described in the March 11 letter.
2. CIRA is to be recognized as having the exclusive authority to operate the top-level domain servers for the .ca domain.

The agreement achieved by UBC and CIRA recognizes the .ca domain space as a key public resource for the benefit of all Canadians.

The Umbrella Agreement was structured so that the delegation of authority to operate the .ca comes to CIRA from ICANN rather than the government of Canada. The agreement designates CIRA to operate or cause to be operated the .ca domain space in accordance with the principles and structure set out by the government of Canada in the March 11 Letter and in accordance with other principles, being in the public interest and being reasonable, as the government of Canada may, from time to time, set.

In October 2000, a letter was sent to ICANN on behalf of the government of Canada to formally designate CIRA as the Government of Canada's designee to be the .ca delegee. CIRA assumed its responsibilities as of December 1, 2000.

CIRA has been able to establish a more market-oriented approach to the registration of .ca domain names. In December 2000 there were 60,000 active names, today there are around 300,000. This represents an increment of 400% for that time period.

A copy of the Umbrella Agreement is found at:

[http://www.cira.ca/en/cat\\_Cira.html](http://www.cira.ca/en/cat_Cira.html)

### **Canadian Eligibility Requirements for Registrants**

Consistent with the view that the .ca domain space should be developed as a key public resource for the social and economic development of all Canadians, CIRA has established a policy whereby persons who wish to register a .ca domain name must meet certain Canadian Eligibility

Requirements. CIRA acts to preserve the .ca domain as a Canadian resource operated and managed by Canadians for Canadians. In general, registrants must be Canadian citizens, residents, companies or other legal entities as defined by Canadian law or have a registered trademark in Canada.

CIRA Board members must be Canadian citizens or residents. CIRA operates according to Canadian law.

### **Objectives of CIRA**

The objectives of CIRA are to:

1. Act as a not-for-profit registry for the .ca Internet domain;
2. Provide professional registry services comparable to other major national and international registries;
3. Develop and carry out other Internet related registration activities as directed by the membership and approved by the Board (the process to be determined by CIRA)

### **Registration process**

CIRA functions as a registry, offering registration services through registrars to applicants and registrants in the .ca Internet domain.

As a registry CIRA's goal is to:

1. Provide registration services to registrars;
2. Maintain the .ca database;
3. Provide name resolution services for .ca domain names;
4. Bill registrars
5. Provide services for handling registrant complaints about registrars.

### **Board and directors**

CIRA is managed by a Board of thirteen directors. Three directors are appointed annually to represent the Internet user community, the commercial Internet community and CIRA's certified domain name registrars. Nine directors are elected by the membership for up to three years and there is one ex-officio, non-voting, director representing the Government of Canada.

### **Intellectual property and dispute resolution considerations**

Domain names are granted in the first-come, first-serve basis. The potential for conflicts between holders of intellectual property (trademarks, trade names, corporate names and others) and domain name holders may increase.

CIRA has developed a dispute resolution policy. This policy is expected to take effect in the fall of 2002. A copy of the CIRA DRP can be found at:

[http://www.cira.ca/en/cat\\_Dpr.html](http://www.cira.ca/en/cat_Dpr.html)