



.kids – a Kids Friendly Internet; for Kids, by Kids.

A Concept Paper for a New Internet Domain “.kids”

Executive Summary:

A recent new Internet regulation has enabled a new kids-dedicated cyberspace to be created with the Internet domain “.kids”. With the growing number of children getting online, one can imagine how accessible it could be to the whole kids population with such a domain. It on one hand could be an educational playground for kids, while on the other hand it might also be putting children at high risks. If such a cyberspace were operating only with business considerations, would the kids online well-being still be maintained? Therefore it is very important to ensure the rights of children are upheld with a safe and kids-friendly environment provided.

Now is the key time and only chance in determining how this “.kids” cyberspace be operated and by whom. For instance, we, DotKids Foundation, is one of the 3 applicants submitting proposals for a new “.kids” domain to ICANN (Internet Domain Regulatory Body) which we are now in competition with 2 big corporations - Amazon and Google. Yet, we believe “.kids” should not be only operated for business purposes, it should be taking the interests of kids into considerations with a comprehensive protective measurements and governance. Therefore we, as the only community-based applicant, are endeavored to promote and develop a kids-friendly cyberspace for children globally by adopting the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Child (UNCRC) as our fundamental guiding principles. While this cyberspace is for kids, it shall therefore also come from kids for which we highly value child participation. DotKids Foundation will become a self-sustainable resource, which contributes the domain registration revenue back to the children-rights community in supporting various children-related initiatives.

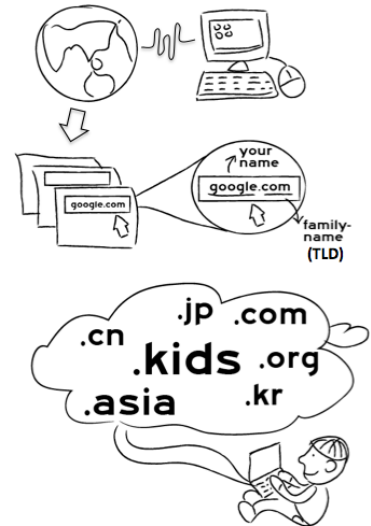
As such, children-rights organization worldwide or whoever concern about the well-being of children shall stand together with these core beliefs and fight for a better Internet world for our next generations. With the contention situation at the moment, the unity of our children-rights community will help to prove the importance of upholding the above principles. Therefore this concept paper serves to further explain this DotKids Initiative with the mission and vision of DotKids Foundation outlined.



What is a “.kids” domain and ICANN New gTLD Program?

Domain names are addresses and is the central tool for navigation on the Internet. Domain names are names like “www.company.com”, which are distinguished by dot“.” separated labels, with the right most suffix being the **Top-Level Domain (TLD)**, for instance “.com”, “.org”, “.net” are **generic TLD (gTLD)**. Each country (and territory) in the world is also allocated a TLD, for instance, “.cn” for China, “.jp” for Japan and “.kr” for Korea, namely country-code TLD.

All gTLDs are regulated by **The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)**, of which all registries operating gTLDs are in contract with this organization. In 2011, ICANN has decided to expand the numbers of available gTLDs (20 existing now) and therefore launched the **New gTLD Program** (<http://newgtlds.icann.org>) for public applications to become registry.

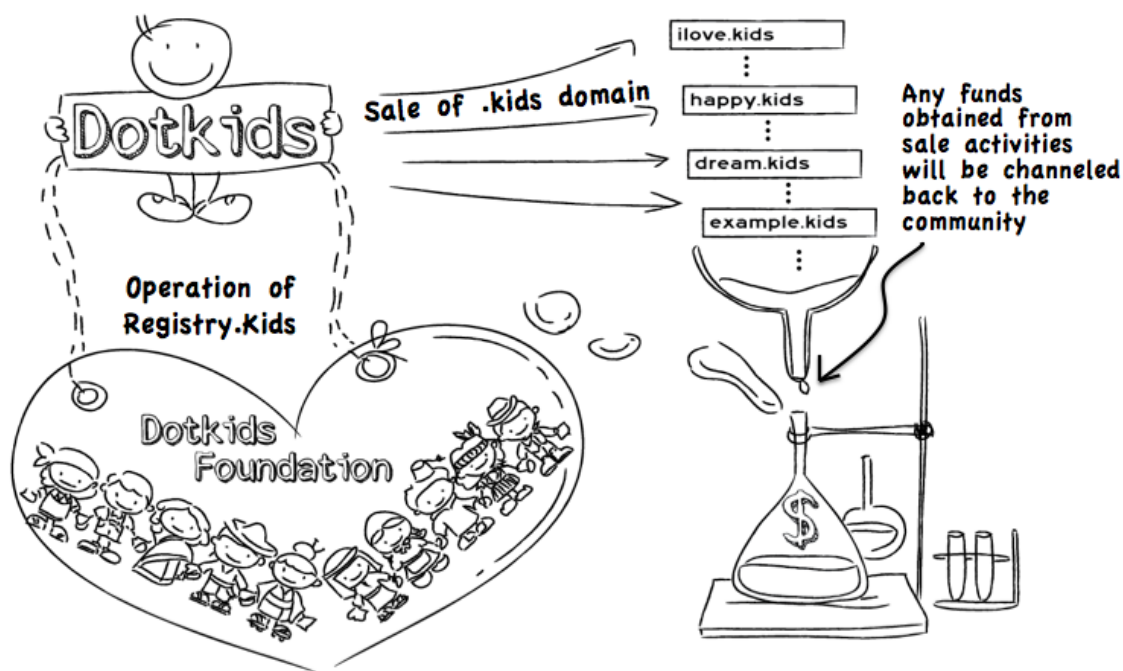


Due to such an Internet regulation change, a new Internet domain “.kids” is therefore possible which the .kids registry will offer domain names for registration such as “www.academics.kids”, “www.toys.kids”etc.. Among the 1900 applications submitted for the program, there are 3 applications for the string “.kids” while we, the DotKids Foundation, is the only community-based applicant who involves and contributes back to children-rights organizations worldwide. All the applications are currently under the evaluation process til end of 2013.

Therefore it is now the critical moment for us to make this happen and create a platform that is truly developed for kids and by kids with the genuine interest of kids!



The DotKids Foundation — It is a new global bottom-up not-for-profit organization to operate and govern the creation, implementation and sustaining of a “.kids” top-level-domain for the Internet. The vision of the DotKids Foundation is rooted in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** and accepts the guiding principles of the Convention, including non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to survival, protection and development; and the right to participation by the child. The DotKids Foundation aspires to develop the “.kids” domain not only as a playground and knowledge exploration space for kids, but also as a nurturing ground for children participation in global policies.



The mission of the DotKids Foundation will be to:

- Adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child as a fundamental guiding principle
- Operate as a not-for-profit initiative promoting kids-friendly content on the Internet
- Value children’s participation on Internet governance by making .kids a platform for children as an important part of the multi-stakeholder approach to build a better Internet world together
- Support child-right organizations and initiatives around the world, especially with relevance to the development of the Internet with the best interests of the child as a fundamental principle



Mechanism Development – Based on the fundamental rules and philosophy mentioned, the DotKids Foundation will devote the first year of establishment to build a core operational mechanism prior to full deployment of the .kids domain. The mechanism will cover issues concerning the allocation of funds, other policy and structure development which governs whom and how it goes to the beneficiaries. The discussion may involve the Board of Councilors, Advisory Councilors and other committed parties who showed initial support during the bidding process. This ensures the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the Foundation in achieving the missions and truly demonstrates children rights.

DotKids Foundation Governance Structure:

The DotKids Foundation will conceptually be a consortium of Children Rights Group and relevant Organizations globally. Voting members of the DotKids Foundation should be a legal and registered organization set up in the home country as well as beneficial to children with proof. There will mainly be 2 types of voting members:

1. **International Members** are organizations with presence in more than 2 countries. They will nominate and vote for 4 representatives at the DotKids Board of Councilors.
2. **Local Members** are organizations with presence in 1 country only. They will nominate and vote for 4 representatives at the DotKids Board of Councilors.

The Board of Councilors will in total have 11 seats with the DotKids Foundation accounts for the remaining 3 seats.

Professional individuals that are keen on the development of the DotKids Foundation and aligned with our core values will form the Professional Advisory Council in offering advice on various corporate and community development issues.

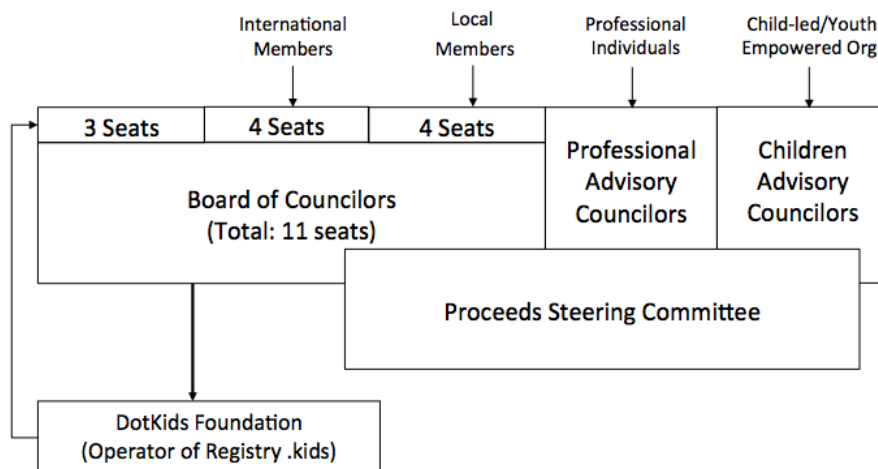
Valuing Children's Right to Participation

Child-led or Youth Empowered Organizations can join the DotKids Foundation as Associate Members. While the child-led or youth empowered organizations need not be a legally registered organization, they must be nominated by an existing member organization of the DotKids Foundation. Each associate member could nominate one representative to the Children Advisory Council. A child-friendly discussion environment will be created where they may form different concern groups at times to freely express their opinion. The inclusion of children acts out the fundamental principles of the Foundation.

Finally, the Board of Councilors will create a Proceeds Steering Committee to oversee the allocation of surplus proceeds, if any, from the operations of Registry.Kids. This Committee may consist of board members, advisory councilors and or outside consultants.



The following diagram summarizes the Governance structure for the DotKids Foundation:



In general, the principles for the conceptual structure of the DotKids Foundation are:

- Ensure broad representation from the community and the voice of children are heard
- Ensure operations and strategic direction of the registry to be towards the benefit of the community
- Ensure that surplus management will be directed to relevant children-centric initiatives

Features of the “.kids” TLD – The following are some of the features of the .kids registry explaining why a .kids TLD will be valuable to the Internet and the community at large.

Promotion of Kids-Friendliness on the Internet: registrants of .kids domains will be required to commit to the development of kids-friendly content, materials and services in relation to the domain. We understand that fostering a kids-friendly Internet environment is not about censorship or filtering, but about the promotion and availability of kids-friendly content, which are produced with children as a primary target audience and with their interests in mind.

Children Centric Policy Development Processes: As part of the core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are entitled to the freedom to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life. The DotKids Foundation will incorporate children-led groups as part of its organizational structure and governance, as children advisory councilors. The DotKids Foundation believes that this process not only ensures that the voices of children are heard in all policy development processes, but will also contribute to nurturing children participation in Internet governance and other global policies in general.



Participation by International and Local Children Rights Groups: members of the DotKids Foundation will include international and local children rights groups as well as children led initiatives and relevant government related initiatives, agencies and organizations. The board, advisory council as well as policy development and proceeds steering bodies will leverage the knowledge and expertise of such groups to reflect the interests of children around the world.

Additional Dispute Resolution & Suspension Policies: the “.kids” domain is not about filtering “child-safe” materials. Nevertheless, the DotKids Foundation will proactively promote a kids-friendly environment for the “.kids” domain space. Beyond the standard gTLD dispute resolution and suspension policies the “.kids” registry will develop and implement special dispute and suspension policies as protective mechanisms to curb any inappropriate content and services. A monitoring committee formed by children-rights experts from different organizations around the world will be set up for such purpose.

Contribution to and the Upholding of Children’s Rights for Development & Participation: as a global not-for-profit organization, the DotKids Foundation will dedicate funds raised through the operation and registration of “.kids” domains to promote Children’s rights development around the world. The funds will especially be directed towards the development of kids-friendly content as well as to support children-led and children-centric projects highlighting the participation by children in the shaping and implementation of policies, including Internet governance policies and beyond.

Brief Summary – One domain registry alone may not be able to develop a kids-friendly cyberspace, however, the DotKids Foundation, with the “.kids” domain will help bring focus to this mounting need for kids-friendly content and services on the Internet, which is now already prevalent in everyday lives of children. This paper aims to be a discussion paper to start the process of establishing a “.kids” domain on the Internet for children. The participation from children groups around the world will help make “.kids” a success, which will contribute towards the aspiration towards increased kids-friendly materials on the Internet, as well as to encourage and support children participation on Internet governance as well as policies that are relevant to their well being.