

Viewpoint #8

**AFNIC puts the accent
on domain names**

afnic

As of July 3, 2012, it will be possible for anyone to register domain names under the .fr, .yt, .pm, .wf, .tf, and .re TLDs with new characters such as é, ç or the German Eszett. Viewpoint on a natural and necessary development in the supply of French domain names

INTERNATIONALIZED DOMAIN NAMES OR "IDNs": GIVING GREATER MEANING TO DOMAIN NAMES

Since the inception of the naming system in 1985, French Internet users have had to get used to composing domain names in the "Latin without diacritics" format based solely on letters (AZ), numbers (0 to 9), and the hyphen, to the exclusion of any other character.



This constraint becomes meaningless when there are technical standards to create "natural language" domain names that reflect the ways in which French users speak. The latter have already anticipated the development by regularly communicating on domain names integrating accents, such as [www.élysee.fr](http://www.elysee.fr) rather than www.elysee.fr.

In languages with diacritics, IDNs are the best means of communication for holders of domain names to reflect the pronunciation of their identity or their brand.

Source : <http://www.elysee.fr>

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HOLDERS TO OPTIMIZE THEIR NAMING STRATEGIES

The .fr and the overseas TLDs managed by AFNIC are not the first extensions to open up to IDNs. Several other major extensions have adopted IDNs for several years. Their experience is that cases of cybersquatting are rare. As for the use of IDNs in phishing operations, only one incident was recorded worldwide in 2011.

In addition, if the fact is taken into account that in European countries, the proportion of "IDN" names exceeds no more than 3-5% of the total volume of trade names, the few additional registrations required by users to optimize their Naming strategies represents a low cost in comparison with the benefit induced by the system in terms of the improvement in their digital communications.

Trademark protection is the same in the "IDN" system as in the 'traditional' naming system. The SYRELI procedure set up and managed by AFNIC allows copyright owners to quickly and cheaply obtain the deletion or transfer of domain names in dispute filed by third parties in bad faith or with no legitimate interest.

OPENING DESIGNED TO PROTECT RIGHTS HOLDERS

Unlike other approaches, AFNIC has opted for an opening in several steps, so that holders of ASCII domain names under extensions managed by AFNIC can pre-empt the internationalized versions of their domain names.

This means that, from May 3 to July 3, 2012 there will be a so-called "Priority Registration" period, enabling holders of domain names with .fr, .yt, .pm, .wf, .tf, and .re extensions to file "IDN" variants of their domain names. The opening for all of them will take place on July 3, 2012.



Registrars who work with AFNIC are the obvious contacts for clients needing help to decide whether they have an interest in registering the IDN versions of their domain names, either for defensive purposes or for use in their marketing and communication operations. A directory listing all of these partners is available at the following address:

<http://www.afnic.fr/en/your-domain-name/find-my-registrar/registrars-directory/>

A FORM OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

As an association governed by the provisions of the Act of 1 July 1901 on non-profit organizations, AFNIC manages the French Internet extensions for which it is responsible in the public interest. Its governing bodies include various consultative committees designed to nurture exchanges with the French Internet community. Government authorities, registrars and users are all represented on the AFNIC Board of Directors and take part in the choices made by the association.