

RESPONSE TO auDA CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR NEW .AU SECOND LEVEL DOMAINS

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1. Overview

auDA issued a Call For Proposal For New .au Second Level Domains on the 24th April 2002 [AUDA1] to consider proposals for and to judge whether there is sufficient public support for new second level domains in the .au namespace. In addition the existing dormant "info.au" and "conf.au" domains have been put up for review in respect to their continued availability and policy.

2. Proposal addressing changes to existing "conf.au" 2LD

2.1 Purpose of the "conf.au" 2LD

[AUNIC1] states the current purpose the "conf.au" 2LD - "*conf.au*" is used to support conferences and exhibitions that require a named Internet presence. The domain is a short duration domain, delegated to a conference or exhibition for a strictly limited duration."

It is my opinion that the conf.au domain should be retained as a open 2LD in the .au namespace.

conf.au will be used by conferences, conventions, exhibitions and trade shows for the following purposes:

- Promotion of the event
- Publication of information on and registration the event
- Publication of proceedings from the event
- For the purposes of a named internet presence if required at the event

Promotion

[LCA1], [LCA2] and [LCA3] have used the **conf.au** domain as the name of their conference, in this case, linux.**conf.au**. Other conferences merely choose to publish websites [IO1]

Publication of information on the event

[BFW1] includes the programme for their event and details on how to register.

Publication of proceedings from the event

For the purposes of a named internet presence if required at the event

[LCA2] had a network room facility available at the conference

2.2 Intended users of the "conf.au" 2LD

Registrants

For groups that are involved in organising a conference, festival, tradeshow, exhibition, convention, summit, congress, forum or similar. Groups exist in the following sectors that would take advantage of the "conf.au" domain are listed below alongside an example of a potential or current registrant.

Government

The *90th LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE* [LGAT1] run by the Local Government Association of Tasmania

Education and Research sector (in particular Universities)

"The InsideOut Conference, [IO1] sponsored by the University of Queensland, through the Community Service and Research Centre", a current registrant in **conf.au**, is a forum on engaging the wider community and the Higher Education sector.

Professional

The Best For Women Conference [BFW1], a current registrant in **conf.au**, is *"the first joint scientific meeting of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists."*

Industry

"AUSBUILD [HIA1] is the building industry's premier exhibition and convention. For the first time, the Housing Industry Association and the Australian Window Association will unite to produce the biggest and most comprehensive exhibition and convention for Australia's building industry."

Community

"Towards opportunity and prosperity: 2002 economic and social outlook conference" [COSS1] sponsored by the Councils of Social Service(COSSes) across Australia.

Non-Registrants

General public

The general public may be interested in events happening in their community, state, or field of endeavour.

Delegates to these events

Delegates need to be informed about, register, attend and view proceedings of events that happen in their community, state or field of endeavour.

Sponsors of these events

Sponsors welcome any opportunity for their name to be associated with events that they have an interest in.

2.3 Statement Addressing Selection Criteria

The 2LD must be robust, sustainable and viable.

The Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meeting Expo 2002, the peak gathering for individuals organising meetings, conferences and incentive travel, "saw 598 exhibitors and 2,464 visitors" [AIME1] [AIME2]. [PCB1] indicates in the last 5 years it and its members have welcomed between 35,000 and 40,000 delegates to Western Australia. An advertising feature in May 17th, 2002 edition of The West Australian indicated that the convention industry was worth more than \$630 million to the West Australian economy annually.

If the use of the **conf.au** 2LD was promoted in the industry; its viability is certain.

The 2LD should serve the needs of users, or a community of users, that are not well served by the existing 2LDs.

Due to the lack of use and promotion of conf.au currently, conferences can be found under a variety of different .au 2LDs; gov.au, edu.au, asn.au, com.au, org.au. As such there is no consistency in the manner in which domain names are used for conferences from the prospective of groups organising conferences and delegates using these names to find out information about them.

There must be clear support for the 2LD, in particular among the users it is intended to serve, and in general terms from the wider community.

From a search on the Google [G1] Search Engine, seven current registrants in **conf.au** 2LD were found ([BFW1], [ADSADEA1], [FC1], [IRF4], [IO1], [MS1], [AHMRC1]) No statistics on the number of current conf.au 2LD registrants could be found on the AUNIC web or ftp sites.

[LCA3] intends to register in the conf.au 2LD, following on from its use for [LCA1] and [LCA2], but have not received any response from Robert Elz, current registrar for the **conf.au** 2LD, regarding their intended registration.

The 2LD should widen the choice of domain names available to users of the Australian DNS.

Currently there is no Australian 2LD that specifically focus of the business of running conferences and like events.

The Open asn.au, com.au, net.au and org.au 2LDs do allow for the registration of domain names for events that are closely and substantially connected to the registrant but provide no mechanism for distinguishing conferences and like events.

Some conferences and exhibitions may not fit the closely and substantially connected criterion well as they are the efforts of a conference specific committee or the collaboration of multiple organisations from different sectors.

An example of widening the choice of domain names available to users of the Australian DNS is the following scenario: The parent organisation for linux.conf.au 2003, the Australian Linux Technical Conference, is Linux Australia, Inc, which is the registrant for linux.org.au in the org.au 2LD. The ability to register a similar name in the conf.au 2LD enhances its use as it is possible to say "here is the parent organisation and here is their conference".

2.4 Proposed Eligibility Criteria for the "conf.au" 2LD

The conf.au 2LD is for conferences, exhibitions, tradeshows and festivals.

The following rules are to be read in conjunction with the Eligibility and Allocation Rules for All Open 2LDs.

1. To be eligible for a domain name in the conf.au 2LD, registrants must be:
 - a) an association incorporated in any Australian State or Territory; or (*ASN.AU, COM.AU, NET.AU*)
 - b) a political party registered with the Australian Electoral Commission; or (*ASN.AU*)
 - c) a trade union or other organisation registered under the Workplace Relations Act 1996; or (*ASN.AU*)
 - d) a sporting or special interest club operating in Australia; or (*ASN.AU*)
 - e) an Australian registered company; or (*COM.AU, NET.AU*)
 - f) trading under a registered business name in any Australian State or Territory; or (*COM.AU, NET.AU*)
 - g) an Australian commercial statutory body; or (*COM.AU, NET.AU*)
 - h) a foreign company licensed to trade in Australia; or (*COM.AU*)
 - i) a charity operating in Australia, as defined in the registrant's constitution or other documents of incorporation; or (*ORG.AU*)
 - j) a non-profit organisation operating in Australia, as defined in the registrant's constitution or other documents of incorporation (*ORG.AU*)

AND

be organising an event that is:

- a) conference; or
- b) festival; or
- c) tradeshow; or
- d) exhibition; or
- e) convention; or
- f) summit; or
- g) congress; or
- h) forum; or
- i) with similar intent.

3. Domain names in the conf.au 2LD must:

- a) exactly match the name of the event; or
 - b) be an acronym or abbreviation of the name of the event; or
 - c) be otherwise closely and substantially connected to the event, because the domain name refers to:
 - i) an sub-event or activity at the event; or
 - ii) a product/service/activity/sub-event/profession and the place the event is held; or
 - iii) a product/service/activity/sub-event/profession and the date the event is to be held; or
 - iv) a product/service/activity/sub-event/profession, the place and the date the event is to be held.
- 4) A significant proportion of the event must be held in Australia.

2.5 Proposed Policy Rules for "conf.au" 2LD

For the purpose of the conference only

Domain name licenses in the conf.au 2LD are provided for the purposes of the event only and not for any other purpose.

Dates to be provided and must not vary

On registration of a conf.au domain name license, registrant to provide start and end dates for the event. These dates determine expiry of eligibility for the license and are considered final for this purpose.

Restriction on renewals and long term use

The existing policy for the conf.au 2LD states that it "*is a short duration domain, delegated to a conference or exhibition for a strictly limited duration.*"

The "Eligibility And Allocation Rules For All Open 2LDS" state that "*the domain name licence period is fixed at 2 years. It is not possible to license a domain name for a shorter or longer period.*" and "*Renewal of a domain name licence at the end of the 2 year period is dependant on the registrant continuing to meet the eligibility and allocation rules of the relevant 2LD*".

It is worthwhile to retain the spirit of the existing conf.au 2LD policy and make the use registrations in the conf.au 2LD be limited in duration.

Eligibility for domains names in the conf.au 2LD expires 6 months after the last date of the conference or event.

Initial Registration - conf.au domain names can typically only be registered at most 1.5 years before the event. If registrants can demonstrate that their event has previously been run regularly on a period over 1.5 years apart, they are eligible to register in the conf.au 2LD at the discretion of the registrar.

Renewing Registration - If the registrants domain name in the conf.au 2LD licence

requires renewal as their event was over 1.5 years from their initial registration they may renew their domain name license.

Follow On Registration - If a similar event recurs the registrant may release the domain name to a subsequent registrant for a new registration before its expiry. (The registrants may be the same) This covers the case of events that are organised and occur on a regular basis.

Not for conference bids

Use of registrations in the conf.au 2LD for conference bid efforts is not allowed. The registrant must have won the bid for and be holding the conference.

This however does not limit registrants from providing information regards their winning bid or for providing hosting of conference bid documents for subsequent events that otherwise closely and substantially connected with the event associated with the current registration.

Cancellation of event

If the event is cancelled, eligibility for the domain name license expires six months after the date of cancellation. Registrants must act in good faith and not use cancellation to work around requirements for provision of dates.

2.6 Open or Closed?

The conf.au 2LD will be an open 2LD.

Author:

Mark Tearle
<mark@tearle.com>
PO Box 581
Nedlands WA 6009
+61 418 958 985

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Mark Tearle is the Treasurer of the "linux.conf.au 2003 Organising Committee". The linux.conf.au 2003 Organising Committee intends to be a registrant in the conf.au 2LD.

References:

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- [AHMRC1] <http://www.ahmrcongress2002.conf.au/>
- [AIME1] <http://www.aime.com.au/page.cfm/Link=127>
- [AIME2] <http://www.aime.com.au/page.cfm/Link=140>
- [AUDA1] <http://www.auda.org.au/about/news/2002042402.html>
- [AUNIC1] <http://www.aunic.net/policies.html#confau>
- [BFW1] <http://www.bestforwomen.conf.au/>
- [COSS1] http://www.coss.net.au/events/1011849488_597_20020124.html
- [FC1] <http://www.firstcultures.conf.au/>
- [G1] <http://www.google.com/>
- [HIA1] http://www.hia.asn.au/servlets-prod/iWebStreamer2?page_id=4510
- [IO1] <http://www.insideout.conf.au/>
- [IRF4] <http://www.irf4thcongress.conf.au/>
- [LCA1] linux.conf.au 2001 - The Australian Linux Technical Conference held in Sydney, 17th to 20th January 2001; <http://web.archive.org/web/20010308234149/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [LCA2] linux.conf.au 2002 - The Australian Linux Technical Conference held in Brisbane, 6th - 9th February 2002; <http://www.linux.org.au/conf/>
- [LCA3] linux.conf.au 2003 - The Australian Linux Technical Conference to held in Perth, 22-26th January 2003; <http://conf.linux.org.au/>
- [LGAT1] <http://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/annual%20conference%20and%20seminars/Index.htm>
- [MS1] <http://www.mappingsciences2002.conf.au/>
- [PCB1] http://www.pcb.com.au/index.php?rgn=2&article_id=49