

1. Introduction

auDA has solicited proposals for new 2nd Level Domains and modifications which should be made to 'info.au' and 'conf.au'. This proposal is intended to address the current policy for the conf.au namespace.

1.1 Disclosure and Declaration of Interest.

Stephen Walsh is the Vice President of Linux Australia, current holders of the domain name "linux.conf.au", was the Network and Technology Manager for Linux.conf.au 2008, and has been responsible for registering and de-registering the linux.conf.au domain with the current registrar since June 2007.

2. Changes to existing domains

2.1 'conf.au'

a. Purpose

The aunic policy [0] for the conf.au namespace describes

"The domain 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."

I believe that the conf.au domain should be retained as a open 2LD in the .au namespace, with registration possible via all current AUNIC-certified registrars.

b. Promotion

The Annual Technical Conference run by Linux Australia, held in 2001[1], 2002[2], 2003 [3], 2004[4], 2005[5], 2006[6], 2007[7], 2008[8], 2009[9], have used the conf.au domain as the name of their conference, in this case, linux.conf.au, as is the current conference LCA2010[10].

Publication of information on the event "Best For Women"[11] in 2002 included the programme for their event and details on how to register, as did InsideOut[12], and the 4th International Ranger Federation Congress 2003[13].

b. Benefits

i. To Registrants

The domain will be used by those, already existing, organisations that are organising conferences and exhibitions. This may be at a Government, at Educational institutions, commercial organisations or community groups level.

It provides a separate, and distinct, area which promotion, registration and proceedings may be available.

ii. To non-Registrants

Provides a distinct, logically, separated domain which may reduce the amount of unnecessary registrations that occur in domains(e.g. com.au, org.au) for these events.

c. Criteria

As it is proposed that the conf.au be 'opened', only a long-term commitment by auDA and accredited registrars is required. There is currently no existing domain which can be used for conferences and events; many events simply "hi-jack" another domains purpose.

From my own experience with a conf.au domain (specifically linux.conf.au); both registrations and interest in the conference increased once registration of the associated conf.au domain has occurred, with

commensurate decrease when technical difficulties have resulted in the domain not being available.

d. Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for registration within conf.au, the applicant should be an organisation with an existing .au domain and also be organising an event (like a conference, exhibition, trade show).

e. Policy Rules

The current policy rules for conf.au are "For short duration conferences and exhibitions, this domain space has an expiration policy". Having been associated with an event registered within the conf.au namespace four times I do not believe that the complete expiry and subsequent re-registration of the domain names in this namespace is appropriate. [14]

I have included for reference the Proposed Eligibility Criteria [15] and Proposed Policy Rules [16] submitted by Mr Mark Tearle, previously submitted in 2002, and again for this proposal, as I believe these proposed rules are in the spirit and intent of existing 2ld registration rules.

f. Open or Closed?

I believe that the conf.au will best be served by being open. This will provide all accredited registrars with the opportunity to provide registration services. This should make registration simpler and far more assured than the current registration system, as well as providing knowledge and assurance that the domain will not be removed or de-registered during the period the domain has been requested.

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==references==

- [0] <http://www.aunic.net/policies.html#confau>
- [1] <http://web.archive.org/web/20001204203800/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [2] <http://web.archive.org/web/20020119152212/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [3] <http://web.archive.org/web/20021127205755/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [4] <http://web.archive.org/web/20040123071259/http://www.linux.conf.au/>
- [5] <http://web.archive.org/web/20050128143720/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [6] <http://web.archive.org/web/20060105022523/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [7] <http://web.archive.org/web/20060821041007/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [8] <http://web.archive.org/web/20070709120046/http://linux.conf.au/>
- [9] <http://web.archive.org/web/20080417025922/marchsouth.org/>
- [10] <http://www.linux.conf.au>
- [11] http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.bestforwomen.conf.au/
- [12] http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.insideout.conf.au/
- [13] http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.irf4thcongress.conf.au/

[14] I base this decision on the difficulty involved in knowing when a domain name is "live" and when it is not. The current registrar does not provide any indication when an application for delegation (or removal of delegation) has been rejected; nor have these events (in many cases) matched the requested dates. The 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 have used alternate names to promote the conference due to the instability of the current registration system, include it's disappearance during critical

times (shortly after registrations have opened). In all of these situations, the de-registration has occurred due to a miscommunication during the registration process, with no feedback from the current registrar that the error had occurred, and the registrant needing to resort to "back channel" communications via an independent third party.

[15] 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.

[16] 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.