



The First Benelux City With Its Own Domain Name Extension Will Be Ghent

Ghent, 23 June 2011 - The City of Ghent's Local Council has approved, this very morning, the application for the dot gent extension. This means that the City of Ghent has become the very first Benelux city to publicise its intention of using its own domain name extension. The use of dot gent will reinforce the direct links of the companies, organisations and citizens with the city and with the region. It will make them easier to locate on the Internet and will provide enhanced protection for on-line traffic to and from the City's website.

Until now, there have only been about twenty generic extensions in existence, such as dot com, dot biz, dot info or dot tel. In addition to the well-known dot com, there are also some 270 national suffixes such as dot be or dot fr. The soaring rise of the Internet had resulted in the increased rarity of interesting or concise domain names. This situation is about to change, since ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, last Monday endorsed the extension of "top level" generic domain names. The organisation will consequently allow new applications to be made, as from the beginning of 2012. So this could lead not only to the advent of extensions such as dot kbc, dot beer and so on, but also to those such as dot gent.

From dot be to dot gent

Resul Tapmaz, Councillor responsible for Personnel, Data Processing, Administrative Simplification and Quality Management for the City of Ghent, is delighted that his city – hard on the heels of dot paris, dot nyc and dot berlin - is the first Benelux city that is in a position to announce, in liaison with CityTLD.eu, the beginnings of its own domain name extension: "Ghent is a city where ICT and creativity go hand in hand. You just have to think of those many Belgian Internet companies that have been incorporated here. The dot gent extension is an essential tool, not only for our local companies and shopkeepers but also for our own departments. Our volition is to encourage our municipal departments actively to promote the dot gent domain. I'm thinking for example of www.city.gent, www.tourism.gent or www.smak.gent (municipal contemporary arts museum) or of the inhabitants' e-mail addresses, of the resul@tapmaz.gent variety. The possibilities are endless since every conceivable combination in front of "dot gent" is available."

Partnership with a Ghentian Internet Company

At the beginning of 2012, CityTLD.eu will submit its candidature file to the Regulator ICANN. If the current timetable is adhered to and if there are no objections, dot gent could be up and running next year. "In order to make this project happen, we have received an interesting proposal from CityTLD.eu. We chose this specific proposal because it's a combination of the newest Belgian software, supported by a Ghentian company," Resul Tapmaz confided.



CityTLD.eu: a partnership between Combell and Sensirius

Combell is an ICANN agent. The company has a network of latest-generation servers at its disposal and is managing some 120,000 domain names today. Since 1999, the firm has been specialising in hosting websites and is currently serving more than 25,000 companies. “As we are a Ghentian company and as I am a Ghentian myself, I am obviously delighted that we can be the first in the Benelux to be able to implement an extension that is city-specific. In addition to dot gent, we are also looking into a number of other new extensions for marketing companies whose names we cannot reveal. The reactions on the ground indicate massive interest in being able to have ones own extension, in particular since ICANN has now definitively laid down the rules”, Jonas Dhaenens, CEO of Combell, emphasised.

The registration platform ‘OpenRegistry’ is specifically written for managing new extensions. Developed by the Belgian company Sensirius, it runs on Combell’s infrastructure.

Combell and Sensirius have set up this new CityTLD.eu association, which helps brands and organisations to prepare and complete the technical candidature file for submission to ICANN, from the presentation of the application to the activation of the zone. For the legal and technico-financial parts, Combell and Sensirius work in liaison with the world leaders in those respective fields.

While Awaiting ICANN’s Next Steps

An American non-profit-making body deals with Internet extension regulation. Last Monday, the contents of the questionnaire were definitively ratified during the ICANN Congress that was being held in Singapore. Applicants therefore are now aware of the criteria that they will have to meet. The Regulator is now going to embark upon a four-month worldwide advertising campaign. The files will then be able to be submitted starting January 2012. The Regulator will then check the administrative relevance of the file as well as its technical infrastructure. If no third-party objection is raised, the dot gent extension could be up and running as from the end of 2012.

All the details and the state of play of the dot gent project can be viewed on the www.dotgent.com website. Anyone who would like to be kept abreast of the latest developments can be registered on it.

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