Case Study
.MOE

"The idea with .MOE is to create a namespace that serves as a digital identity for self-described geeks and 'otakus' around the world."

Background

Interlink Co., Ltd., a Tokyo-based technology company and Internet service provider (ISP), had been following developments about the expansion of generic top-level domains (gTLDs) through ICANN's New gTLD Program since early 2007 and wanted to add a fun and unique gTLD to its existing roster, which included .EARTH and .OSAKA. Interlink's CEO is a self-described "otaku," a Japanese term for a person who is obsessed with anime and other aspects of popular culture, so the company decided to apply for .MOE (pronounced as "moh-ay").

The Japanese slang word "moe" is often used to describe a feeling of excitement toward some object or character – mainly in animation, manga (Japanese comic books) and video games. .MOE seemed like the perfect gTLD because it is three characters long and easily understood by anime lovers around the world.

Objectives

Interlink's objective with .MOE was twofold: to create the opportunity for a new online identity for users who love anime, manga, cosplay and/or identify with the "otaku" culture, and to operate a safe, stable, and secure TLD for Internet users everywhere.

Interlink aimed to engage its creative users as much as possible during its pre-launch activities. Some of their efforts included a logo design contest, a character design contest, and a music-writing contest where users submitted original music to go with the lyrics of its official theme song.

.MOE is a very visual TLD where users share their artwork, animations, music, etc. via their domain by either adding the content directly or linking (redirecting) it to another online destination. .MOE is currently used by anime/gamer forums, anime clubs, artist pages, voice-over actors and many other organizations and individuals who share a passion for fandom.

To date, adoption of .MOE has grown primarily through word of mouth; however, Interlink plans to continue spreading awareness of .MOE through influencer marketing and attendance at various global anime/otaku conferences – some of which draw crowds of several hundred thousand people.

Website
http://nic.moe/en/

Registry Name
Interlink Co., Ltd.

Location
Tokyo, Japan

TRIVIA

Date TLD available on Internet: **22 July 2014**

Number of registrations: **More than 7,600 registrations as of December 2017**

— In addition to .MOE, Interlink operates .EARTH and also manages .OSAKA through Osaka Registry Co., Ltd.

New gTLD Fast Facts

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN) New gTLD Program is responsible for introducing new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) into the Internet, which will result in the largest-ever expansion of the domain name system. The goal of this expansion is to enhance competition, innovation and consumer choice. Top-level domains are the letters immediately following the final dot in an Internet address. Through the program, the domain name system is expanding from 22 gTLDs to hundreds.

The New gTLD Program, led by ICANN's Global Domains Division makes it possible for communities, governments, businesses and brands to apply to operate a top-level domain registry. Operating a registry is a responsibility that requires a major commitment. In essence, the registry operator becomes the custodian of a piece of the Internet's core infrastructure. For this reason, ICANN established a rigorous process for those who applied for a new gTLD. The application process is a cornerstone of the New gTLD Program.

THE NEW GTLD PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

gTLD Key Stats

1930 total applications received by the deadline (May 2012)

1300⁺ new gTLDs or "*strings*"possible

Language Options

1st time Internationalized Domain Names will be available as gTLDs, enabling new extensions in different language scripts such as Arabic, Chinese and more.

Applications By Region

17	Africa	**675**	Europe
303	Asia/Pacific	**911**	North America
24	Latin America/Caribbean		

Safeguards In Place

17 new safeguards created to help lay the foundation for a broader, more mature domain name industry. Examples include Rights Protection Mechanisms and DNS Security.

ICANN

One World, One Internet