

Philippe Barbet


Letter of motivation to CCT review team

I am very interested in competition economics and markets for information goods. The domain name market is characterized by a strictly regulated market for the provision of gTLDs (registry), a more competitive market at the registrar level and the existence of a very dynamic second market. The competitive architecture of this market is very specific with a bilateral monopoly between ICANN and registry for each gTLD.

The growing demand for domain names and criticism about the dominant position of “.com” has lead ICANN to liberalize the creation of new gTLDs. I have examined the principal economics arguments exchanged during this period and I was quite skeptical about the social benefits of this process. My main concerns are about the facts that I am not sure that the multiplication of bilateral monopolies at the top of the competitive architecture can really enhance the competition for this specific market. One essential question is to know if gTLDs are complementarities or substitutable goods because only if they are substitutable the provision of a great number of gTLDs can increase competition and lower the market power of the “.com”.

At the registrar level, I think we have to be very careful about a tendency to a concentration and the risk of dominant positions for a very limited number of firms inside an oligopoly market structure .

The launch a new of round of creation of new extensions is a probably a good opportunity to have a precise estimation of the costs and benefits of the actual process and maybe to make this market more competitive.

I am volunteer to participate to this review of the new gTLD program taking in account that my responsibilities at university Paris 13 give me only limited time.

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