

23 October 2019

ccNSO actions regarding the November 2017 Board Resolutions on use of Emoji as SLDs

To: Cherine Chalaby, Chair of the ICANN Board of Directors
CC: Chris Disspain, Nigel Roberts, Göran Marby

Dear Cherine:

As a follow-up to my letter to you from 24 January 2019 and in response to ICANN Board resolutions 2017.11.02.10 and 2017.11.02.11, I am pleased to inform you that all actions described in the aforementioned letter have been completed.

In March 2018 (during ICANN61 in San Juan, Puerto Rico) SSAC explained and discussed with the community present the risks associated with the use of Emoji as Second Level Domains at both Tech Day and the ccNSO Members meeting days.

The ccNSO established ccNSO Study Group on use of Emoji as SLDs (ESG) and invited members of SSAC and ICANN Staff to participate in the group as well. Recently, the ESG completed its work and the ccNSO Council has adopted the final report of the group ([final report](#)) and supports the Observations and Recommendations contained in the report:

Observations:

- Potential for confusability with emoji is significant but is currently contained given the small number of registries which accept the registration of domain names which include emoji.
- Some in the emoji domain name industry have proposed Whitelisting as a potential solution to address confusability

Recommendations

1. Dialogue

Following the Study Group's efforts to liaise with as many relevant parties as feasible (including ccTLDs) one of the findings is that a full and frank dialogue with ccTLDs accepting emojis as second level domains should be continued and fostered. It should be ensured that both potential harms of and the reasons for accepting emojis should be well understood. This dialogue, however, will only succeed if all relevant parties participate. The ccNSO Council is requested to share the Study Group's final report with the ccTLD community, and in particular with those ccTLDs that have been identified by the Study Group as accepting emojis in second level domains.

2. Define and communicate consistently what is and what is not an Emoji.

To understand the breadth of use and issues associated with the use of emoji in domain names the Study Group looked at the definitions of emoji which are

currently available. One of the observations made was that in trying to arrive at an authoritative and all-encompassing definition of what is an emoji one may, at least for the moment, have to settle on referring to the latest version of emoji as documented by the Unicode Consortium. However, the Study Group is aware that this definition is unsatisfactory for many reasons. It is therefore recommended that the issue of definition of what is and what is not an emoji be further explored by the broader community.

3. Identification of cc's and others accepting Emojis in second level domains.

As mentioned in the report, the Study Group used a variety of ad-hoc methods to identify ccTLDs that include emojis in second level domains. However, the Study Group is well aware that these methods were not systematically developed, nor applied consistently across namespaces. One of the underlying issues is definitional in nature (see the previous point and related findings of the Study Group). To understand the full scope of the issues, a systematic and consistent research approach is advised to provide a sound basis for well-informed and evidence-based discussions and recommendations. The Study Group therefore recommends that the ccNSO Council advises ICANN that, prior to taking further steps, ICANN and the broader community consider clearly delineating what it considers emoji and develop systemic methods to identify (cc)TLDs who include emoji (however defined) as second level domains.

During its work the ESG informed the community regularly and, as documented in the report, as part of its efforts it reached out to the ccTLDs accepting emoji as second level domains. The broader ccTLD community has also been informed and alerted to the publication of the Final Report of the ESG.

The ESG also checked the reference in the overall draft policy (ccNSO PDP 2) and Fast Track and did not see a reason to adjust the current reference to the relevant RFCs.

On behalf of the ccNSO Council,



Katrina Sataki, Chair