

Multi-Language Domain Names Coming Soon

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ICANN to test domain names in 11 languages

The organization that oversees the Internet address system is launching an evaluation of International Domain Names (IDN) that will allow Internet users to test top-level domains in 11 languages.

Currently, only the ASCII characters A through Z are available for use in the portions of the domain before the top-level domains, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) said in a [statement](#).

A site with content that's entirely in Japanese, for example, can have the initial portion of its URL in Japanese, but the URL still needs to end in a .com or .net spelled out in ASCII characters, according to the statement.

However, the test, which begins Monday, is the first step toward eliminating that requirement and allowing Internet users in other countries to browse the Web in their native languages, without having to use any English or the Roman alphabet when they type in a URL, ICANN said.

ICANN made the evaluation possible by the insertion into the root of the 11 versions of .test, which means they are alongside other top-level domains such as .net, .com, .info, .uk and .de at the core of the Internet, according to the statement.

Beginning Monday, Internet users around the globe will be able to access wiki pages with the domain name example.test in 11 test languages: Arabic, Persian, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Russian, Hindi, Greek, Korean, Yiddish, Japanese and Tamil. The languages were selected based on the Internet communities that had the most interest in moving the project forward.

The wikis will allow users to establish their own subpages with their own names in their own languages.

"Users will be able to have their name in their language for their Internet when full IDN implementation makes available tens of thousands of characters from the languages of world," said Paul Twomey, ICANN's president and CEO, in the statement. "This will be one of the biggest changes to the Internet since it was created."

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