

.TEL sTLD Launch

What is .TEL?

.TEL is a sponsored Top Level Domain Name (“sTLD”) launching on December 3, 2008. The main purpose of the .TEL sTLD is to provide an online contact directory that will enable companies and individuals to post updated contact information on a global scale in a timely and efficient fashion.

What are the benefits of registering a .TEL?

The .TEL Top Level Domain will create a universally accessible source of contact information for individuals and businesses alike while eliminating the need for the domain holder to create and maintain a website. .TEL domain names will be linked to a domain name system (“DNS”) where the contact information will be stored. .TEL domain name holders will be able to create and manage a personalized communications hub regardless of their physical location by maintaining and updating contact information, such as telephone numbers, fax numbers, pager numbers, email addresses, and instant messaging addresses. Since the .TEL Top Level Domain will also host second, third, or more-level domain names, registrants will have unlimited ways at their disposal to centralize and organize contact information available worldwide through a single domain name.

How do you register a .TEL domain name?

During the Sunrise Period, from December 3, 2008 until February 2, 2009, only owners and licensees of registered trademarks with application dates prior to May 30, 2008, may apply for .TEL domain names identical to their marks. Sunrise applications will be granted on a “first-come, first served” basis, so early application is strongly recommended. All Sunrise Period registrations will be valid for an initial three-year period. If an application is rejected, the applicant will have ten calendar days to file an appeal (or reconsideration proceeding). Alternatively, if an application is accepted, third parties will have ten days thereafter to file a challenge. All .TEL domain name registrations will be subject to the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (“UDRP”) administered by ICANN.

During the second stage, the “Landrush” period, from February 3, 2009 to March 23, 2009, registration will be open to anyone for a premium price on a first-come, first-served basis and will be granted for an initial term of three years. Finally, after March 24, 2009, registration will be open to anyone on a first-come, first-served basis for an initial one-year term.

Conclusion

The .TEL sTLD is expected to be a valuable and cost-effective tool for maintaining an online global directory with the flexibility to publish changes to a company’s contact information. With the increased reliance on and prevalence of the Internet in our daily communications, participation in this global directory will be crucial for businesses. The .TEL Sunrise Period is designed to enable trademark owners to protect their valuable intellectual property rights via priority registration of .TEL domain names identical to the word elements of the trademark on which the application is based. As the anticipated value of .TEL domain names is expected to attract cybersquatters, we strongly encourage brand owners to take advantage of this Sunrise Period. If you would like more information or require assistance in applying for .TEL domain names, please contact Dennis Prahll or Chloe Hecht of Ladas & Parry LLP / Ladas Domains LLC at dottel@ladasdomains.com.