

.geek.nz Submission

From: Ian W Halliday
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Dear Sirs,

At first glance, it seems hard to see why New Zealand needs another second level domain, but I believe that the proposed second level domain `geek.nz` will serve a key purpose for a major body of interest both inside and outside the country.

The eleven existing second level domains all seem to serve particular parts of society well, but there has undoubtedly been a blurring of them over time. The perception that everything needs to be `.co.nz` is almost as prevalent as the international view that everything needs to be `.com`, although there is a growing recognition that it is possible to have something else. The Government's promotion of the second level domain `.govt.nz` has gone some way towards this, as has the use of `.net.nz` for public email addresses from local ISPs, most notably `clear.net.nz` and `paradise.net.nz`, while many schools have registered `.school.nz` domains, with resulting websites ranging from the marvellous to the utterly dire.

However, nothing seems to have captured the public imagination in the `.gen.nz` or `.org.nz` arenas. Some, but by no means all, voluntary organisations have chosen to register `.org.nz` domains. In many cases, these organisations choose `.co.nz` anyway. There are very few `.gen.nz` domains in use and very few of them are well known. The only one I can think of is `wizard.gen.nz`, owned by the Christchurch Wizard. Many users of the internet in New Zealand appear to be unaware of the existence of this second level domain, which is lacking in any profile or allegiance. It also fails to capture the imagination for the same reason that so many accountants and others dislike "miscellaneous" or "other" headings in their records. It seems that `.gen.nz` is simply for those few things that don't fit anywhere else.

New Zealand, however, enjoys a sizeable community of geeks, not just in information technology but in many other disciplines where detailed technical knowledge is required. Personal and experimental web sites or internet projects would find a natural home in domains that were `.geek.nz` and would undoubtedly thrive there. Irreverent sites or those which recognised that they were away from the mainstream could also find a home there quite easily, without the implied authority that might come from being a `.co.nz` or a `.org.nz` site.

At present, vanity domains owned by New Zealanders are frequently offshore domains such as .com or .org domains because New Zealand domains are so expensive to register. The cheapest annual fee I have found under the new New Zealand structure for a casual registration is \$38 for .nz domain, whereas I can register a .com or .org domain for less than half that amount. Although I accept that the cost of domain registration is only a part of the total cost of ownership, the fact is that the marginal cost of hosting and serving content under another domain name on the same machine is very low and sometimes zero. New Zealanders treasure their national heritage and I believe that with a sensible pricing structure, domains ending in .nz would be the preferred place for many of those who appreciate the unique things this country has to offer.

In summary, I welcome the proposal for the creation of the second level domain .geek.nz and offer it my full support, confident that New Zealand geeks and supporters will soon be able to choose a domain providing the opportunity to show pride in both their personal attributes and their national allegiance.

Yours faithfully,

Ian W Halliday, BA Hons