.nz NEWSLETTER – August 2003

:: DNC Office ::

Summary of the .nz market

As at 20 August 2003, 41 organisations had been authorised as .nz registrars. Of those, 30 had connected to the production SRS and were undertaking domain name registration and management directly with the SRS. With the Stabilising Registrar, Domainz, and the DNC Registrar there are 32 registrars on the SRS.

July saw the largest month for new domain name registrations, with 4,051 new domain names created during the month. Overall net growth for July was 2,129 as there were a high number of cancelled domain names also over the month. The total number of .nz domain names at the end of July was 132,056.

Implementation of the new second level domain - .geek.nz

Registrations in the .geek.nz second level domain name space are available from 11am on Tuesday 26 August. The InternetNZ Council approved the allocation of 'www.geek.nz' to the applicant of the proposal to create the new second level domain, Dean Pemberton. Aside from this domain name, all other .geek.nz domains are available on the standard first come, first served basis.

Domain Names NZ

A large number of .nz domain name registrants received a letter from a company trading under the name of Domain Names NZ and soliciting for new registrations in a domain that the registrant didn't currently have. This letter specified a particular domain name, based on a name already registered, and had the appearance of a renewal notice or invoice. The confusion caused by Domain Names NZ was widespread and resulted in a lot of calls to registrars, the Commerce Commission, Consumers' Institute, Fair Go and the Office of the DNC.

It appears that a variety of different alternatives were offered by Domain Names NZ. The most common appeared to be registrants of .co.nz domain names receiving a letter with the .net.nz version of their domain detailed. There were, however, also .com registrants being 'offered' .co.nz names, and other .nz registrants being offered .com or .net domains.

Notices were issued by a number of registrars and ISPs. The DNC also put out a public notice, as did the Commerce Commission. The DNC is still working with the Commerce Commission on possible outcomes from this. The organisation involved is based in Australia and are already known to the .au Domain Administration (auDA). The DNC acknowledges the assistance of the CEO of auDA, Chris Disspain, in working through this matter.

If anyone was confused by the communication with Domain Names NZ and haven't already contacted either the Commerce Commission or the DNC, you are encouraged to do so. Please

email info@dnc.org.nz if you do have any concerns. An update on this matter will be in the September newsletter.

Domain Name Allocation process ends 5 September

InternetNZ has announced the sale of Domainz to Melbourne IT. The settlement of the sale is due to occur on Friday 5 September 2003. From this date the Domain Name Allocation policy no longer applies. Any registrar wanting to transfer bulk domain names after this date will need to use the bulk transfer process in the Transfer to Another Registrar policy (http://dnc.org.nz/content/transfer_registrar.pdf)

Email out to registrants

The final batches of emails out to registrants, informing them of the competitive market and asking them to select a registrar, have been done. The final date for registrants to go onto the DNC site and select a registrar is Wednesday 3 September. The draw for the trip to Fiji will take place shortly after and the winner will be published in the September newsletter.

Final statistics from the email out will also be in the September newsletter. To date, the response rate has been around 16%, with around 57% of those responding selecting Domainz.

Statistics

Figures as at 31 July 2003:

Note: these figures do not include names in the 'pendingrelease' status. They incorporate all active domain names in the .nz register.

	Active names as at 1 July	Active names as at end 31 July	New registrations July	Renewals July	Change over month
.ac	745	769	26	122	24
.co	110656	112372	3459	20065	1716
.cri	27	27	0	0	0
.gen	791	814	28	116	23
.govt	667	675	11	147	8
.iwi	40	43	3	8	3
.maori	397	410	15	20	13
.mil	15	15	0	4	0
.net	7188	7336	242	1103	148
.org	7416	7580	234	1211	164
.school	1985	2015	33	522	30
TOTAL	129927	132056	4051	23323	2129

:: .nz REGISTRY SERVICES ::

Connections

One more registrar has connected to the production SRS since the last newsletter was published. Together with Domainz and the DNC Registrar, it means there are now 32 registrars on the SRS.

Scheduled Outages and Updates

There were no scheduled outages during July.

SRS Availability

	March	April	May	June	July
%	99.94	99.64	99.97	99.46	99.93

July period response time performance figures on the production environment were:

Avg Response time (in seconds)	May 2003	June 2003	July 2003
Domain Details Query	0.366	0.488	0.289
Domain Update	0.441	0.644	0.405
Domain Create	0.492	0.809	0.495
GetMessage performance	3.961	13.362	3.788
GetMessage (volume)	28810	33012	35254
Whois	0.197	0.227	0.204
Whois queries at back end including Registrar (volume)	680683	704559	1358205
Whois Server Queries (volume)	274158	335222	967517
UDAI Valid Query	0.183	0.228	0.182

The increase in the number of whois queries was nearly all through the whois server. The queries were undertaken in a manner that triggered the initial rate limiting checks on the whois server. After that limit was breached however, the servers' volume decreased to fit it under the rate limiting steps. From investigations by NZRS it appears as though over 300 different IP addresses contributed significant hits to the .nz whois, each at levels below those that trigger the alerts. There has been more than one IP number blacklisted from accessing the whois.

With the mass mail campaign undertaken by Domain Names NZ in early August, it would appear that this attack on the .nz whois was the source for some of the information used.

Daily monitoring has now been put in place for the whois. In addition to rate limiting checks, there are also other parameters set and these will either lead to IP addresses being blocked from access, or will trigger an alarm to NZRS who can then investigate who has accessed the whois and why. These measures should make the protection of the .nz register more robust.

Unscheduled Outages

There were five unscheduled outages during June, as detailed below.

	Outage 1	**Outage 2**	**Outage 3**	**Outage 4**	**Outage 5**
Date	19 July	23 July	24 July	24 July	27 July
Time	03:21	02:00	17:00	20:26	14:40
Duration	8 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes	3 minutes	4 minutes
Impact	High	High	High	High	High
Cause	whois server failed	Auto restart failed	Front end replication	Auto restart problem, failing to kill off child processes	Process exceeded memory allowance
Action Required	whois server restarted The rest of the SRS was not affected	Restart program updated to remove old PID files	Process killed and restarted	Process for killing off child processes updated and exhaustive logging of failure conditions has been put in place	Doubled size of memory to 240mb

Any comments?

If you have any questions or concerns about the SRS, please don't hesitate to contact us. For registry or technical matters, contact Nick Griffin at support@nzrs.net.nz. For all other matters, contact Debbie Monahan at info@dnc.org.nz.

Please note

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