InterConnect Communications
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String Similarity new gTLD Evaluation Panel – Process Description

Step	Name	Actions	Tracking	Who
1	Application Receipt and Verification Checks	• Incoming applications from ICANN automatically generate new tickets in internal tracking system – one record per applied for string • Incoming strings are sorted in Unicode order prior to entering into internal tracking system • Each ticket is automatically assigned an identifying ticket number in internal tracking system • The number of tickets generated is checked against the number of tickets sent by ICANN • For each ticket, a check is done to ensure that the string, slot and applicant is correctly entered into the system • For each record the SWORD algorithm result where the score is greater or equal to 70 is recorded • When this step is complete the record is changed from "INITIAL VERIFICATION" to "INITIAL ASSESSMENT" state	• Records each have the following information (string, slot ID, applicant) • Records initially set to "INITIAL VERIFICATION" state • Due date set to "time of entry into system" plus two working days • Internal records are initially assigned to Operations Manager	• String Similarity Operations Manager does all of these tasks
2	Initial Assessment	• Operations manager posts a copy of notice/agreement of non-conflict for the string in internal tracking system – in the case of conflict, notice is provided to ICANN • Visual assessment of each string is done by operations manager to provide an initial assessment – first, ASCII or IDN (recorded in internal tracking system as string type); second, easy/possibly contentious/hard/IDN (recorded in internal tracking system as string difficulty)? • Internal records for each string are set to "AWAITING INITIAL EVALUATION" state	• Internal records enter this step in "INITIAL ASSESSMENT" state • Initial assessment is completed by the Operations Manager • Due date set to two working days in the future • Records leave this step in "AWAITING INITIAL EVALUATION" state	• Operations manager completes initial assessment of all strings entered into internal tracking system in step one. • When this step is complete the internal records for each string are returned to the Operations Manager

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3a	Initial Assignment for ASCII Strings	• Operations Manager assigns each record with a string type of ASCII to an ICC evaluator • Operations Manager places current copy of TLD list (by reference) in the evaluation workbook • Operations Manager places current copy of reserved strings in the evaluation workbook • Operations Manager puts all pairwise comparison strings in the evaluation workbook • Tickets are put in "INITIAL EVALUATION IN PROGRESS" state	• Records enter this step in "AWAITING INITIAL EVALUATION" state • Internal records are given to ICC/UCL evaluators • Due date is set to three working days • Internal tracking system notifies evaluator	• Operations Manager assigns tickets to ICC/UCL evaluators
3b	Initial Assignment for IDN Strings	• Operations Manager identifies languages needed for initial evaluation of IDN strings based on list provided by ICANN • Operations Manager identifies number of strings in each language based on list provided by ICANN • Operations Manager coordinates with UCL Liaison to identify evaluators for IDN strings • UCL Liaison establishes evaluators for specific IDN strings and places nominations in each record for IDN applications • UCL Liaison uses nomination list to assign each ticket with a string type of IDN to a UCL nominated evaluator • Operations Manager places current copy of TLD list (by reference) in the workbook • Operations Manager places current copy of reserved strings (by reference) in the workbook • Operations Manager places current copy of Declared Variants list (by reference) in the workbook • Operations Manager places current copy of all IDN fast track strings (by reference) in the workbook • Operations Manager puts all pairwise comparison strings in the evaluation workbook • Internal records are put in "INITIAL EVALUATION IN PROGRESS" state	• Records enter this step in "AWAITING INITIAL EVALUATION" state • Workbooks are given to UCL evaluators • Due date is set to three working days • Internal tracking system notifies evaluator – notice in internal tracking system and by email • Records leave this step in "INITIAL EVALUATION IN PROGRESS"	• Operations Manager identifies IDN language and scope requirements based on initial material from ICANN • Operations Manager coordinates with UCL Liaison to state needs and get recommended UCL evaluators • UCL Liaison assigns evaluation workbooks to UCL evaluators

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4	Initial Evaluation	• Evaluator posts a copy of notice/agreement of non-conflict for the string in internal tracking system – in the case of a conflict, the Operations Manager selects a new assessor using the mechanism in 3a or 3b as appropriate • Evaluator checks the string against the current copy of the TLD list • Evaluator checks the string against the current copy of the reserved string list • Evaluator checks against the current list of IDN fast track strings • Evaluator checks against the current Declared Variants List • For any string that does not meet one of the three tests above: the record for the string is put into the "FAILED INITIAL EVALUATION" state; string in conflict is recorded in internal tracking system; the record is given to the Operations Manager; the process moves to step 7a, below. • Evaluator optionally adds relevant details, if needed, explaining any failure in free form in the workbook. • For all other strings: the record is put into the "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state; the process moves to step 5 below.	• Records enter this step in "INITIAL EVALUATION IN PROGRESS" state • Evaluators have three working days to make the initial evaluation • Records are owned by the evaluators • Records leave this step in either "FAILED INITIAL EVALUATION" or "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state • At the end of this step either the Operations Manager owns the record for the individual string (in the event that the string did not pass); or, the Evaluator continues to own the record.	• Evaluators – ICC and UCL – process the initial evaluation • Evaluators continue to own the record throughout this step unless the Initial Evaluation fails (then, the Operations Manager is the owner of the record)

Step	Name	Actions	Tracking	Who
5a	Detailed Evaluation for ASCII Strings	• Evaluator completes a pairwise comparison of the applied for string and all other applied for strings • Evaluator considers SWORD pair scores as documented in the string evaluation workbook • The results of these two evaluations are documented in the string evaluation workbook • If the string is found to resemble another visually that it is likely to deceive or cause confusion: the tracking record for the string is put into "IN CONTENTION SET – AWAITING CONFIRMATION" state; the string, ticket number and slot ID of the strings in the contention set are documented; the record is assigned to the Operations Manager. • If the string is not found to be similar to any other string: the record is put into "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state; the tracking record is assigned to the Operations Manager.	• Tracking records enter this step in "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state • Records are set with a due date of ten working days • At the end of this step the record is either in the "IN CONTENTION SET – AWAITING CONFIRMATION" state or the "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state • At the end of this step, the record is always owned by the Operations Manager	• Strings are evaluated by ICC/UCL evaluators • Results are returned to the Operations Manager

Step	Name	Actions	Tracking	Who
5b	Detailed Evaluation for IDN Strings	• Evaluator completes a pairwise comparison of the applied for string and all other applied for strings • Evaluator considers SWORD pair scores as documented in the string evaluation workbook • If the IDN is two characters in length, the evaluator completes the review against any one-character label (in any script), and any possible two-character ASCII combination. • The results of these four evaluations are documented in the string evaluation workbook • If the string is found to resemble another visually that it is likely to deceive or cause confusion: the tracking record is put into "IN CONTENTION SET – AWAITING CONFIRMATION" state; the string, ticket number and slot ID of the strings in the contention set are documented; the record is assigned to the Operations Manager. • If the string is not found to be similar to any other string: the ticket is put into "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state; the tracking record is assigned to the Operations Manager.	• Tracking records enter this step in "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state • Records are set with a due date of fifteen working days • At the end of this step the record is either in the "IN CONTENTION SET – AWAITING CONFIRMATION" state or the "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state • At the end of this step, the tracking record is always owned by the Operations Manager	• Strings are evaluated by UCL evaluators • Results are returned to the Operations Manager

Step	Name	Actions	Tracking	Who
6a	Independent Contention Set Processing for ASCII Strings	• The Operations Manager requests that the Core Team execute an independent contention set assessment of the ASCII string in the tracking record. • The record and result is presented to the Core Team for quality assurance • If the result of the independent assessment results in a confirmation of the results in step 5a above, the record is placed in the "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" state and the record is reassigned to the Operations Manager • If the result of the independent assessment results in a confirmation of the contention set, an automatic re-review of the string is completed using the process documented in steps 3, 4 and 5 • If the result of the independent assessment results in no confirmation or a question about the contention set, the ticket is placed in "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state; the ticket is reassigned to the Operations Manager who then moves the process back to Step 5a for re-evaluation by another evaluator	• Tracking records enter this step in "IN CONTENTION SET – AWAITING CONFIRMATION" state with a String Type of ASCII • Tracking records are assigned for a confirmation assessment to a member of the Core Team • Review by the Core Team results in either a confirmation of the Contention Set analysts or a need for re-evaluation of the string • Records leave this step in either the "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" state or the "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state	• Operations Manager assigns the Contention Set assessment the Core Team • Core Team executes the assessment • Reporting by the Core Team results in actions by the Operations Manager

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6b	Independent Contention Set Processing for IDN Strings	• The Operations Manager consults with the UCL Liaison to identify a second analyst for string similarity • The UCL Liaison nominates a new string similarity assessor for the string in the tracking record • The UCL Liaison assigns the record to the nominated assessor • The UCL Evaluator executes an independent assessment of the IDN string in the evaluation workbook • If the result of the independent assessment results in a confirmation of the results in step 5b above, the record is placed in the "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" state and the ticket is reassigned to the Operations Manager • If the result of the independent assessment results in a confirmation of the contention set, an automatic re-review of the string is completed using the process documented in steps 3, 4 and 5 • If the result of the independent evaluation results in no confirmation or a question about the contention set, the ticket is placed in "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state; the record is reassigned to the Operations Manager who then moves the process back to Step 5b for re-evaluation by another evaluator – the very few (if any) cases where this loop takes place are monitored by the Operations Manager	• Tracking records enter this step in "IN CONTENTION SET – AWAITING CONFIRMATION" state with a String Type of ASCII • Records are assigned for a confirmation assessment to a member of the UCL team as nominated by the UCL Liaison • Review by the UCL Evaluator results in either a confirmation of the Contention Set analysts or a need for re-evaluation of the string • Tracking records leave this step in either the "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" state or the "PASSED INITIAL EVALUATION" state	• Operations Manager works with the UCL Liaison to assign the Contention Set analysis to an independent, different member of the UCL team • UCL Evaluator executes the assessment • Reporting by the Core Team results in actions by the Operations Manager

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7a	Quality Review for Strings That Pass the Initial Evaluation	• For all tracking records in "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state, the Operations Manager requests the full Core Team to lead a quality review against a standard checklist to ensure consistency in processing. The Operations Manager assigns the tracking record to the Core Team and facilitates the Core Team review. • For strings that have received more than one review with conflicting evaluations, the Core Team may determine to a) send the string for another evaluation, b) defer the decision on the String or c) resolve the conflict so that the string may move to the "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" or "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" state. • When the Core Team chooses to re-evaluate a string with a conflicting evaluation, the string is placed into step 6a or 6b appropriately. As with the initial re-review, another independent evaluator is assigned the string without knowledge of the initial evaluations. • At the end of the quality review for tickets in "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state, the tracking records are put into either "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – NO CONCERNS NOTED" or the "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – CONCERNS NOTED" state and reassigned to the Operations Manager for re-evaluation	• Tracking records are in one of three states: "FAILED INITIAL EVALUATION," "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION," or "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" • Records are initially owned by the Operations Manager • Tracking records are set with a due date of five working days • Records are assigned to the Core Team for Quality Review • Records change state based on the result of the Quality Review • Records are eventually reassigned to the Operations Manager	• Operations Manager assigns Quality Review to the Core Team • The Operations Manager facilitates the Core Team's Quality Review • The results are documented in the tracking record by the assigned Core Team member and the record is reassigned to the Operations Manager

Step	Name	Actions	Tracking	Who
7b	Quality Review for Strings That Do Not Pass the Evaluation	• For all tracking records in "FAILED INITIAL EVALUATION" or "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" states, the Operations Manager requests the full Core Team to lead a quality review against a standard checklist to ensure consistency in processing. The Operations Manager assigns the tracking record to the Core Team and facilitates the Core Team review. • For strings that have received more than one review with conflicting evaluations, the Core Team may determine to a) send the string for another evaluation, b) defer the decision on the String or c) resolve the conflict so that the string may move to the "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" or "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" state. • When the Core Team chooses to re-evaluate a string with a conflicting evaluation, the string is placed into step 6a or 6b appropriately. As with the initial re-review, another independent evaluator is assigned the string without knowledge of the initial evaluations. • At the end of the quality review for records in "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION" state, the records are put into either "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – NO CONCERNS NOTED" or the "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – CONCERNS NOTED" state and reassigned to the Operations Manager	• Tracking records are in one of three states: "FAILED INITIAL EVALUATION," "PASSED DETAILED EVALUATION," or "IN CONTENTION SET – CONFIRMED" • Records are initially owned by the Operations Manager • Tracking records are assigned to the full Core Team (and, possibly, the UCL Liaison) for Quality Review • Records change state based on the result of the Quality Review • Records are eventually reassigned to the Operations Manager	• Operations Manager assigns Quality Review to the full Core Team • The Operations Manager facilitates the Core Team's Quality Review • If IDNs are involved in the ticket, the UCL Liaison participates in the Quality Review • The results are documented in the tracking record by the assigned Core Team member and the record is reassigned to the Operations Manager

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8	Quality Concerns Resolution	• For records in the state "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – CONCERNS NOTED" the concerns must be addressed and resolved before reporting to ICANN • Operations Manager assigns the record to the full Core Team to resolve the issue • Follow up dialogue between the Core Team and the participants in both the review and the evaluation. • All actions taken to resolve Quality Concerns are documented in the tracking record • The Core Team, facilitated by the Operations Manager, can set the state of the record to "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – NO CONCERNS NOTED" as a resolution of the concerns or recommend that the record be fully re-evaluated. This is for Quality Control issues only. • The record is then reassigned to the Operations Manager	• Tracking records come to this step in the "QUALITY REVIEW COMPLETED – CONCERNS NOTED" state • Records are initially owned by the Operations Manager • Records are assigned to the full Core Team, facilitated by the Operations Manager to resolve the Quality or Process Issue • The record is returned to the Operations Manager in a resolved state or with a recommendation of full re-review.	• Tickets are passed to an independent Core Team member for assessment and resolution of the Quality Concerns • The ticket is then acted upon by the assigned Core Team Member and returned to the Operations Manager
9	Variant Analysis and Reporting	• Operations Manager makes any required, standardized additions to the tracking record • Operations Manager works with the UCL Liaison to perform the analysis against the IDN Variant Tables for all required strings • Operations Manager sets record state to "INTERNAL EVALUATION AND REPORTING COMPLETE" • Tracking records are closed and unavailable for further addition of material (text, tracking or attached files) • Operations Manager transfers the result of the evaluation in the ticket to ICANN's TAS • Operations Manager sets record state to "REPOINTERNAL TRACKING SYSTEMING TO ICANN COMPLETED" • Operations Manager puts the record into "EVALUATION CLOSED" state	• Internal reporting and findings are documented • IDN Variant Analysis is completed as necessary • Reporting to ICANN is completed • Tracking record is closed	• Operations Manager completes the reporting on the tracking record

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10	Advice to ICANN	• Operations Manager transfers the result of the evaluation to ICANN's TAS • Operations Manager sets tracking record state to "REPORTING TO ICANN COMPLETED" • Operations Manager reports on contention sets in ICANN's TAS • Operations Manager puts the record into "EVALUATION CLOSED" state	• Reporting to ICANN is completed • Tracking record is closed	