



Remarks by U.S. Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley

Domain Name Press Conference

September 28, 1999

11:30 am

As Prepared for Delivery

I am very pleased to announce this morning that the Department of Commerce, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and Network Solutions (NSI) have successfully concluded negotiations on the critical outstanding issues regarding domain name management. This is a landmark day for the Internet.

In 1997, as part of the *Framework for Global Electronic Commerce*, President Clinton and Vice President Gore asked me to privatize the management of the domain name system. They wanted to create robust competition, facilitate global participation, AND preserve the stability of the Internet.

So last year I asked NSI to build a new system to allow competitors to provide registration services in the .com, .net, and .org domains. And NSI built a Shared Registration System for all registrar to use.

I also called on the private sector to create a private, global organization to manage Internet names and addresses and to facilitate this move to a competitive market place for domain name registration. The Internet community responded by creating ICANN, which is not even a year old now.

There was no precedent for this undertaking, so it shouldn't surprise anyone that there have been a few bumps in the road. But today we have 11 companies registering domain names in .com, where we only had one a year ago. And another 60 companies are preparing to compete in this market. In less than one year ICANN has made substantial headway in creating an international consensus-based organization that will set the rules for this new system.

In order to make all of this happen, ICANN, NSI and the Department needed to reach agreement on a number of important and -- and I have to say contentious -- issues in order to create a level playing field for competition and to create bottom-up management of the domain name system. We also had to address concerns about the availability of WHOIS data. As with any negotiations, compromises had to be made. But we never compromised on the President's desire to give the public more choices and to ensure the stability of the Internet so that electronic commerce could grow and flourish.

The agreements we are announcing today put ICANN on a stronger footing. They make NSI a full partner in the process of private sector management. And they protect the public interest. Most importantly, we worked this out at the negotiating table - not in a court room, where we could have idled the Internet, the engine of growth in today's economy. We want the absolute best, most stable, and most efficient domain name system we can get. As a result of dotting the final I on these negotiations, we are well on our way to making it even easier for everyone to get "dot coms."

So this is good news all the way around. NSI and ICANN have worked hard in the last few months to overcome significant differences. I know that as ICANN goes through its comment period and as these agreements are implemented, continued cooperation is going to be critical. So I want to congratulate everyone who has been at the negotiating table for long hours and say, in advance, keep up the good work.

I'm going to turn this meeting over to Andy Pincus, our General Counsel, who can explain the details and answer all your questions.