

# THE DOMAIN NAME INDUSTRY BRIEF

**VOLUME 13 – ISSUE 1 – APRIL 2016**

## **THE VERISIGN DOMAIN REPORT**

AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN DOMAIN NAMES AND INTERNET SECURITY, VERISIGN REVIEWS THE STATE OF THE DOMAIN NAME INDUSTRY THROUGH A VARIETY OF STATISTICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESEARCH. VERISIGN PROVIDES THIS BRIEFING TO HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT TRENDS IN DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATIONS, INCLUDING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES, TO INDUSTRY ANALYSTS, MEDIA AND BUSINESSES.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth quarter of 2015 closed with a base of approximately 314 million domain name registrations across all top-level domains (TLDs), an increase of approximately 15 million domain names, or 5 percent over the third quarter of 2015. Registrations have grown by 25.9 million, or 9 percent, year over year.<sup>1</sup>

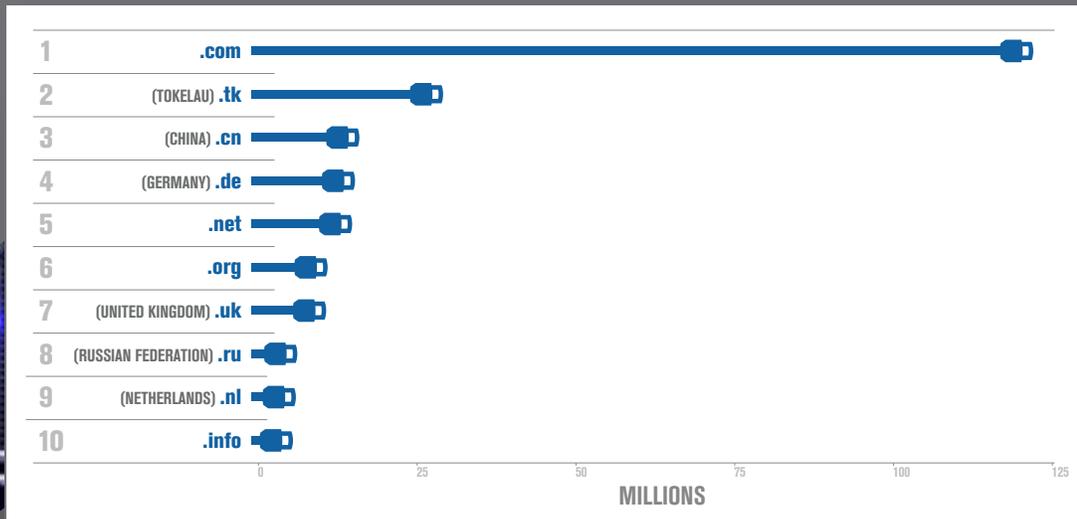
Total country code TLD (ccTLD) registrations were approximately 144.4 million domain names, a 4.8 percent increase quarter over quarter, and a 7.7 percent increase year over year.

The .com and .net TLDs experienced aggregate growth, reaching a combined total of approximately 139.8 million domain names in the domain name base<sup>2</sup> in the fourth quarter of 2015. This represents a 6.3 percent increase year over year. As of Dec. 31, 2015, the base of registered names in .com equaled 124 million names, while .net equaled 15.8 million names.

New .com and .net registrations totaled 12.2 million during the fourth quarter of 2015. In the fourth quarter of 2014, new .com and .net registrations totaled 8.2 million.

## TOP 10 LARGEST TLDs BY ZONE SIZE

Source: Zooknic, Q4 2015; Verisign, Q4 2015; Centralized Zone Data Service, Q4 2015



The largest TLDs in order by zone size were .com, .tk, .cn, .de, .net, .org, .uk, .ru, .nl and .info.<sup>3</sup>

The average sale price for the top 10 .com domain names reported by DN Journal as sold in the aftermarket in Q4 2015:<sup>4</sup>

**\$333,327.78**  
USD



Growth of .com and .net domain names redirecting to popular global social media and e-commerce sites compared to Q4 2014:<sup>5</sup>

AMAZON.COM  
**22%**

ETSY  
**25%**

FACEBOOK  
**21%**

LINKEDIN  
**32%**

TWITTER  
**18%**

WEIBO  
**43%**



<sup>1</sup> The generic top-level domain (gTLD) and ccTLD data cited in this report are estimates as of the time this report was developed, and is subject to change as more complete data is received. Total includes ccTLD Internationalized Domain Names.

<sup>2</sup> The domain name base is the active zone plus the number of domain names that are registered but not configured for use in the respective Top-Level Domain zone file plus the number of domain names that are in a client or server hold status.

<sup>3</sup> tk is a free ccTLD that provides free domain names to individuals and businesses. Revenue is generated by monetizing expired domain names. Domain names no longer in use by the registrant or expired are taken back by the registry and the residual traffic is sold to advertising networks. As such, there are no deleted .tk domain names. <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20131216006048/en/Freenom-Closes-3M-Series-Funding#UxeUGNDv9s>. The .tk zone size reflected here is based on data from Q4 2014, which is the most recent data available.

<sup>4</sup> Source: DN Journal (accessed 2/22/2016) <http://www.dnjournal.com/archive/domainsales/2015/2015-top-100-sales-charts.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Source: VeriSign, Inc. data

## Largest ccTLDs by Zone Size

Source: Zooknic, Q4 2015

For further information on the Domain Name Industry Brief methodology, please refer to the last page of this report.

Total ccTLD registrations were approximately 144.4 million at the close of the fourth quarter of 2015, with an increase of 6.6 million domain names, or a 4.8 percent increase compared to the third quarter of 2015. ccTLD registrations increased by approximately 10.4 million, or 7.7 percent, year over year. Without including .tk, ccTLD quarter-over-quarter growth was 6 percent and year-over-year growth was 9 percent.



The top 10 ccTLDs, as of Dec. 31, 2015, were .tk (Tokelau),<sup>3</sup> .cn (China), .de (Germany), .uk (United Kingdom), .ru (Russian Federation), .nl (Netherlands), .eu (European Union), .br (Brazil), .au (Australia) and .fr (France).

As of Dec. 31, 2015, there were 289 global ccTLD extensions delegated in the root, including Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), with the top 10 ccTLDs comprising 67.2 percent of all ccTLD registrations.

## TOP 10 TRENDING KEYWORDS IN .COM AND .NET: Q4 2015

Here are the top 10 trending keywords in .com and .net domain name registrations for the fourth quarter of 2015.

Verisign publishes a **monthly blog post highlighting domain name registration keyword trends** that reflects trends from the previous month. Using the same methodology, this list reflects the keywords with the highest percentage of registration growth relative to the preceding quarter.

This method is intended to highlight the new and changing keywords seen in .com and .net domain name registrations. By evaluating the keywords with the largest percentage shift, the top 10 that have seen a significant shift in end-user interest quarter over quarter can be identified.

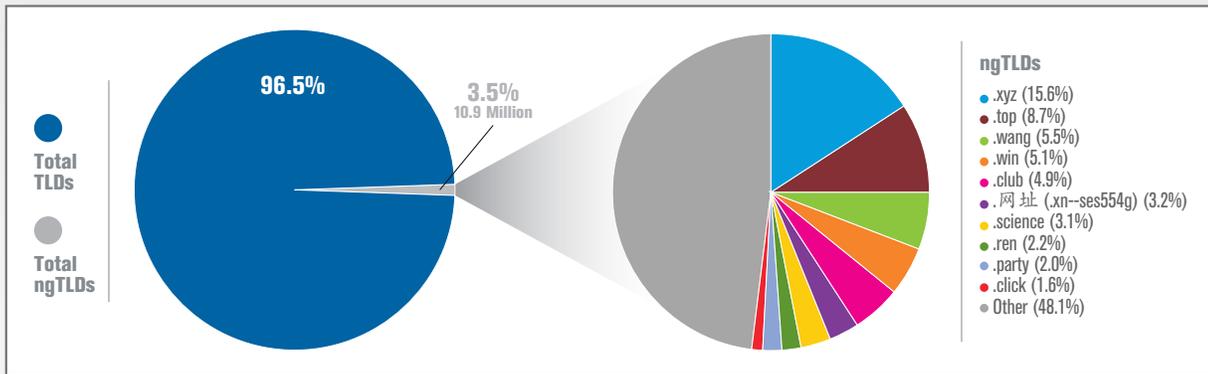
Rank	.com	.net
1	christmas	animal
2	got	christmas
3	marijuana	chain
4	crowd	nike
5	hover	watson
6	boots	paris
7	bits	part
8	friday	michigan
9	dispensary	nashville
10	insurances	assistant



## New gTLDs as Percentage of Total TLDs

Source: Centralized Zone Data Service, Q4 2015 and Zooknic, Q4 2015

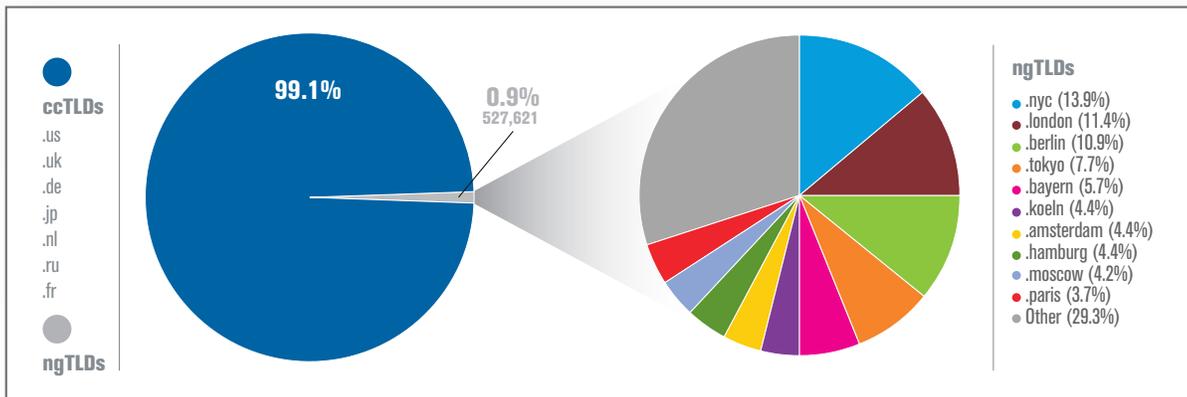
As of Dec. 31, 2015, new gTLD (ngTLD) registrations totaled 10.9 million, which represents 3.5 percent of the total of 314 million domain name registrations across all TLDs. The top 10 ngTLDs represented 51.9 percent of all ngTLD domain name registrations. The following charts show ngTLD domain name registrations as a percentage of overall TLD domain name registrations and the top 10 ngTLDs as a percentage of all ngTLD domain name registrations for the fourth quarter of 2015.



## Geographical New gTLDs as Percentage of Total Comparable Geographical gTLDs

Source: Centralized Zone Data Service, Q4 2015 and Zooknic, Q4 2015

Among the delegated ngTLDs that have a geographical focus, 34 have had more than 1,000 registrations since entering general availability (GA), as of the end of the fourth quarter of 2015. The first graph below summarizes the registrations as of Dec. 31, 2015 for these geographical ngTLDs (527,621 registrations) and the respective ccTLDs (approximately 55.66 million registrations) within the same geographic region. In addition, the second graph highlights the top 10 geographical ngTLDs as a percentage of the total of these geographical ngTLD registrations.



## DNS QUERY LOAD

During the fourth quarter of 2015, Verisign's average daily Domain Name System (DNS) query load was approximately 123 billion queries per day across all TLDs operated by Verisign, with a peak of nearly 194 billion. Quarter over quarter, the daily average query load increased 2.8 percent and the peak decreased by 67.3 percent. Year over year, the daily average query load increased by 11.9 percent and the peak increased by 32.6 percent.

## LEARN MORE

To subscribe or access the archives for the Domain Name Industry Brief, please go to [Verisign.com/DNIB](http://Verisign.com/DNIB). Email your comments or questions to [domainbrief@verisign.com](mailto:domainbrief@verisign.com).

## ABOUT VERISIGN

Verisign, a global leader in domain names and Internet security, enables Internet navigation for many of the world's most recognized domain names and provides protection for websites and enterprises around the world. Verisign ensures the security, stability and resiliency of key Internet infrastructure and services, including the .com and .net domains and two of the Internet's root servers, as well as performs the root-zone maintainer functions for the core of the Internet's Domain Name System (DNS). Verisign Security Services include intelligence-driven Distributed Denial of Service Protection, iDefense Security Intelligence and Managed DNS. To learn more about what it means to be Powered by Verisign, please visit [Verisign.com](http://Verisign.com).

## METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this report for ccTLDs, including quarter-over-quarter and year-over-year metrics, reflects the information available to Verisign at the time of this report and may incorporate changes and adjustments to previously reported periods based on additional information received since the date of such prior reports, so as to more accurately reflect the growth rate of the ccTLDs. In addition, the data available for this report may not include data for all of the 289 ccTLD extensions that are delegated to the root, and includes only the data available at the time of the preparation of this report.

For gTLD and ccTLD data cited with Zooknic as a source, the Zooknic analysis uses a comparison of domain name root zone file changes supplemented with Whois data on a statistical sample of domain names, which lists the registrar responsible for a particular domain name, and the location of the registrant. The data has a margin of error based on the sample size and market size. The ccTLD data is based on analysis of root zone files. For more information, see [ZookNIC.com](http://ZookNIC.com).