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September 28, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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From: Jon W. Fullinwider
Chief Information Officer

Subject: **RECOMMENDED APPROACH FOR ESTABLISHING A SINGLE CONSISTENT COUNTY DOMAIN NAME**

On August 29, 2006, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Chief Information Office (CIO) to keep the current e-mail address utilizing *.org*, develop a simple and consistent e-mail for all County e-mail addresses, and report back to the Board with a single consistent e-mail for all County e-mail addresses. This memo proposes an approach for implementing a single consistent e-mail domain for all County e-mail addresses and websites.

Background

The Internet Domain Name System (DNS) allows users to refer to websites and online resources using domain names (such as cao.lacounty.gov) which are easier to remember than an actual Internet Protocol address (i.e., 216.183.103.150). In the late 1980's, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) established generic top-level domain names (i.e., .com, .org, .gov., etc.). The purpose of which was to establish a formal degree of delineation between the types of Internet domain names assigned and their related industries/usages. This allowed businesses to be designated as *.com* (commercial), non-commercial businesses as *.org* (organization) and government entities as *.gov*. During the early years of Internet adoption, the .gov designation by local, state and federal agencies grew at a rapid rate causing concern that it was being over-used and even misused by businesses, private groups and others. This resulted in the Federal government (GSA) imposing a restriction on the use of *.gov* to federal agencies. Local government and state agencies that had previously been authorized to use the *.gov* designation were "grandfathered" allowing for its continued use, however, any new requests by non-federal agencies were denied.

While the rapid adoption of the Internet continued in the mid 1990's, further efforts were undertaken by Internet standards groups to establish a standard domain name designation structure for local governments (i.e., counties and cities). This resulted in the adoption of the County's domain name (*co.la.ca.us*) which while cumbersome, achieved the objective of a common structure within the identified standard. Over the years, many departments found *co.la.ca.us* to be too cumbersome and not intuitive as to its significance and sought to obtain domain names more reflective of their business or service. This resulted in departments applying for and adopting domain names such as *lavotes, lasd, ladhs, lacounty, lacbos*, etc. However, in attempting to obtain a more descriptive name, it was determined that it had already been assigned within the .xxx domain designation desired resulting in the adoption of other domain names such as *.org, .net, .info,* and even *.com*, all of which have unrestricted use. It is the uncontrolled adoption of domain names that exacerbates the 'branding" and use of the County's Internet services (see Attachment I).

Approach

In March 2005, at a chance meeting in Washington DC., I met the individual from GSA who controls the use of the *.gov* designation for the federal government. In conversation, I asked why the restriction was imposed suggesting that it has caused many local government entities difficulty in branding their delivery of web services. I was surprised when told that given the uniqueness and size of Los Angeles County that I could request an exemption! The County had for several years attempted to seek approval for the use of the *.gov* designation and had always been told it was not available. Having made this contact within GSA, we immediately followed up and applied for an exemption. Within a few weeks, we were told we would be approved to use the *.gov* designation under the domain name of lacounty.gov. We were also told that this was the first time they had approved an exemption for a non-federal entity.

Upon receiving authorized to use the new designation, we briefed County department IT Managers and Department Heads about the domain designation and discussed the value it would have in helping standardized the branding of the County in its delivery of web services. There was strong support for this direction as it took the emotion out of departments' decision to have non-standard domain names. To minimize the impact to department operations, it was recommended that domain aliases be established allowing the old Internet/e-mail domain name to be used for an extended period or until the formal transition was complete within each department. This would allow both the old and new domain names to be used interchangeably.

To date, 21 departments have either transitioned to *lacounty.gov* or have established it as their e-mail domain alias, while the remaining departments are considering similar action. Adopting the *lacounty.gov* domain as the County standard has several advantages for our constituents and stakeholders:

- The *.gov* domain has become the recognizable Internet designation for US government entities, thereby making it more searchable and easier to remember.

- Its restricted use ensures that only County departments will be allowed to use the domain. Additionally, departments do not have to individually register their domain names since my office has the authority to designate and control the use of *lacounty.gov*.
- Using the same domain name for e-mail and websites promotes a single branding identity and a more coherent Internet presence for the County.

Recommendation

The eGovernment Advisory Committee (eGAC) comprised of participants from 19 departments has worked with all departments to establish e-mail naming conventions and a process to deploy the use of the *lacounty.gov* domain name with minimal impact to their respective operations. Attachment II delineates departmental e-mail standards (the department identifier would precede the *lacounty.gov* domain designation) that were reviewed and agreed to by County departments. To facilitate the implementation of a consistent domain name for countywide e-mail and websites, the Office of the CIO, in concert with eGAC, will prepare a Board letter to recommend the following:

- Designate *lacounty.gov* as the County's standard domain name; and
- Direct the CIO to coordinate the implementation of the *lacounty.gov* domain name for all County e-mail and websites within six months while allowing departments to retain aliases as they transition to *lacounty.gov*.

If the Board desires to continue using the lacbos.org designation for its e-mail, the option to continue its use as an alias can certainly be sustained. However, several of the Board offices have already adopted *lacounty.gov* and it may be confusing that not all offices would have a similar standard.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 974-2008 or Peter Loo, Associate CIO, at (213) 974-1725/ploo@cio.lacounty.gov.

JWF:PL:ygd

Attachments

c: Department Heads
Information Systems Commission

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Survey of L.A. County Department Internet Domain Names

Los Angeles County Departments/Agencies	Domain Names	
	e-mail	Websites
Affirmative Action Compliance Office	.org	.org, .co.la.ca.us
Agricultural Commissioner/Weights & Measures	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us
Alternate Public Defender	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us
Animal Care and Control	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Assessor	.org	.com, .net, .org, .co.la.ca.us, .gov
Auditor-Controller	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us, .gov
Beaches and Harbors	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us, .info
Board of Supervisors	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Chief Administrative Office	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.gov
Chief Information Office	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.info
Children and Family Services	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us
Child Support	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us
Community and Senior Services	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.org
Community Development Commission	.org	.org
Consumer Affairs	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Coroner	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.org, .co.la.ca.us
County Counsel	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.info
District Attorney	.org	.org, .co.la.ca.us, .tv
Fire	.org	.org, .net
Health Services	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.org
Human Relations Commission	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.org
Human Resources	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.info
Internal Services	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us, .info
Information Systems Advisory Body	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.info
Los Angeles Superior Courts	.org	.org
Military and Veteran's Affairs	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Mental Health	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.org, .info, .net, .com
Museum of Art	.org	.org
Museum of Natural History	.org	.org
Office of Ombudsman	.org	.info
Office of Public Safety	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Office of Small Business	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Parks and Recreation	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.org, .com, .net, .info
Probation	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Public Library	.org	.org

Survey of L.A. County Department Internet Domain Names (Cont'd)

Los Angeles County Departments/Agencies	Domain Names	
	e-mail	Websites
Public Defender	.org	.co.la.ca.us
Public Health	.org	.org
Public Social Services	.org	.org
Public Works	.org	.org, .net, .com
Regional Planning	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.co.la.ca.us
Registrar-Recorder	.org, .co.la.ca.us	.net
Sheriff	.org	.org
Treasure and Tax Collector	.org	.co.la.ca.us

Proposed Department/Agency Domain Naming Conventions

Department/Agency	Domain Naming Convention
Affirmative Action	oaac.lacounty.gov[1]
Agriculture Commissioner - Weights and Measures	acwm.lacounty.gov*
Alternate Public Defender	apd.lacounty.gov[1]
Animal Care and Control	acc.lacounty.gov
Assessor	assessor.lacounty.gov[1]
Auditor-Controller	auditor.lacounty.gov[1]
Beaches & Harbors	beaches.lacounty.gov[1]
Board of Supervisors	bos.lacounty.gov
Chief Administrative Office	cao.lacounty.gov[1]
Chief Information Office	cio.lacounty.gov[1]
Child Support Services	cssd.lacounty.gov*[1]
Children and Family Services	dcfs.lacounty.gov
Community and Senior Services	css.lacounty.gov[1]
Community Development Commission	cdc.lacounty.gov
Consumer Affairs	dca.lacounty.gov[1]
Coroner	coroner.lacounty.gov
County Counsel	counsel.lacounty.gov*[1]
District Attorney	da.lacounty.gov
Department of Health Services	dhs.lacounty.gov
Fire	fire.lacounty.gov
Human Relations Commission	hrc.lacounty.gov
Human Resources	hr.lacounty.gov[1]
Information Systems Advisory Body	isab.lacounty.gov
Internal Services	isd.lacounty.gov[1]
Mental Health	dmh.lacounty.gov
Military and Veteran Affairs	mva.lacounty.gov[1]
Museum of Art	lacma.org
Museum of Natural History	nhm.lacounty.gov
Office of Ombudsman	ombuds.lacounty.gov*[1]
Office of Public safety	ops.lacounty.gov

Proposed Department/Agency Domain Naming Conventions (Cont'd)

Department/Agency	Domain Naming Convention
Parks and Recreation	parks.lacounty.gov
Probation	probation.lacounty.gov
Public Defender	pubdef.lacounty.gov
Public Health	ph.lacounty.gov*[1]
Public Library	library.lacounty.gov
Public Social Services	dpss.lacounty.gov[1]
Public Works	dpw.lacounty.gov[1]
Regional Planning	planning.lacounty.gov[1]
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk	rrcc.lacounty.gov[1]
Sheriff	lasd.lacounty.gov
Treasurer and Tax Collector	ttc.lacounty.gov[1]

Notes:

* Indicates updated department sub-domain name per department request.

[1] Indicates department/agency has either transitioned to or established an alias for the "lacounty.gov" domain.