

# Concern Over CPA Domain

The need for verification procedures to prevent possible fraudulent or illegal use of a “.CPA” internet domain was stressed in a letter to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) from four U.S. Congressmen: K. Michael Conaway (R-TX), Ruben Kihuen (D-NV), Steve King (R-IN) and Steve Pearce (R-NM). Their letter stated: “Strong, reliable verification procedures are essential to protect the public interest. The importance of the public trust to the CPA profession around the world cannot be overstated, and the potential harm to the public of fraudulent or illegal use of a “.CPA” domain is immense.” On September 15, ICANN President and CEO Goran Morby responded that the .CPA generic top-level domain (gTLD) has not yet been contracted out, but when it is, it will be under an implementation framework that sets contractual obligations of the registry operator. Two groups have applied to become the registry operator: the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and CPA Australia Ltd.

ICANN President Morby wrote to the Congressmen: “. . . Upon receiving your letter, we researched the generic top-level domain space (ICANN does not have visibility into country code top-level domains such as .US, .UK, .AU, etc.) looking for any existing abuse relating to ‘CPA.’ We estimate there are currently approximately 63,000 domains that start with ‘cpa-’, end with ‘cap’, or have ‘-cpa-’ in them. As of this writing, we are unaware of reports of pervasive fraud or abuse of those domains.”

AICPA President Barry Melancon stated in the Institute’s June 2015 letter to ICANN, seeking to become the regulator and administer of .CPA gTLD: “In the AICPA’s view, the .CPA gTLD should be a restricted gTLD, only open for CPAs who are working under the rules and oversight of a governmental body. Only those parties who qualify under the standards and criteria defined by a governmental accounting body that issues the title of CPA should be entitled to a .CPA domain name – any other result would result in consumer harm. . . .”

The AICPA and CPA Australia announced during a November 2014 conference that they had entered into “a collaboration agreement to administer the .CPA domain for the benefit of their members and affiliates worldwide through the procedures set forth in the AICPA’s .CPA application.” At that time the AICPA had also “noted their desire to form partnerships with other national CPA bodies.”

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