

## Using the Web to Build Your Brand in Asia

With over 399 million Internet users in Asia, compared to 315 million in Europe and 253 Million in North America, it is no surprise that a recent e-commerce study conducted by the Internet Society of China (ISOC) found that China's total online spending increased 47%, to 276.8 billion Yuan (\$35.5 billion), in 2006. This surge now puts China at #2 for overall online spending worldwide. With growth throughout the region only expected to continue, many companies in North America and Europe are looking for ways to expand their brand in Asia.

While it can be a lengthy and costly process to develop a brick and mortar presence in one of the Asian countries, the growing use and popularity of the Internet now presents Western businesses with the opportunity to gain access to Asian consumers without actually being in-country. However, with over 73 economies comprising the Asia-Pac region, many have struggled to determine the right domain extension to use for these efforts – i.e., .COM, .CN, .JP, HK. A new domain name extension, .ASIA, is now being launched that plans to unify the presence and identity of the Asian region on the Internet, much like .EU did in 2005-2006 for those living and conducting business in the European Union.

### Is .ASIA the Right Choice?

A recent review of online search data acquired from the Overture® website, a search marketing service offered by Yahoo!®, revealed that the word “Asia” or “Asian” was searched online 309,369 times in February 2007. This is compared to 69,584 searches for terms containing “Europe” and 14,706 searches for terms containing “EU” in February 2007. These statistics seem to point to the fact that the term “Asia” is versatile in its usage and can be used to signify both where an entity comes from, as well as to identify its intended audience.

We have already seen traditional marketing and public relations channels leverage the word “Asia” to help companies and other organization indicate their affiliation or commitment to the Asian region by appending “Asia” to the back of their brands, as well as the use of “Asia” to identify regional exhibition or conference related events (ITU Telecom Asia, CommunicAsia) or to give regional significance to promotional events (i.e., Asian Games, Asia Cup). The launch of the .ASIA domain extension will not only help continue these efforts, but can help companies harness revenue from the hundreds of thousand Internet users worldwide who are searching the Web for utilizing “Asia” as part of their search.

## When Can I Get .ASIA domain names?

The launch of the .ASIA domain name is being rolled out in several phases. On July 11, 2007 the DotAsia Registry, the registry operator for the .ASIA domain extension, opened the Pioneer Program. This program runs through August 31, 2007 and is open to individual entrepreneurs, corporations, global brands and community organizations.

Applicants are invited to submit a brief proposal for the domain of their choice and measures have been put in place by the DotAsia registry to evaluate the proposals while protecting the rights of others and curbing abusive registrations. The intent of the Pioneer Program is to drive creation of active websites utilizing the .ASIA domain extension. "We are very excited about the Pioneer Domains program because it provides great value to businesses in the region. At the same time, it creates incentive for the adoption of the .ASIA domain by prominent entrepreneurs and "brands" adds Edmon Chung, CEO of DotAsia.

October 9, 2007 then marks the opening of Sunrise Registration. There are 3 major categories of Sunrise registration:

- Sunrise 1 (SR1): Government Reserved Names
- Sunrise 2 (SR2): Registered Marks trademarks and service marks)
- Sunrise 3 (SR3): Registered Entity Names (company names, etc.)

Sunrise 2 (SR2) is further divided into 3 sub-phases:

- SR2a: Early Bird Sunrise for well-established trademarks applied for by March 16, 2004 and which have demonstrable usage.
- SR2b: General Marks Sunrise for newer trademarks applied for by December 6, 2006 that may not have been of demonstrable use yet.
- SR2c: Extended Protection Sunrise for trademark owners who would like to register their brand plus a term used in the Nice Classification description.

The launch schedule for the phases is as follows:

- October 9 – October 30, 2007: Sunrise 1 and Sunrise 2a
- November 13, 2007 – January 15, 2008 – Sunrise 2b, Sunrise 2c and Sunrise 3
- February 2008 – Landrush registration
- March 2008 – Go Live registration

It is important to note that unlike many domain name launches in the past, neither Sunrise or landrush registration will be conducted on a "first come, first served basis." Instead, DotAsia will be utilizing an Auction process to determine who is awarded names for which they receive multiple applications. During Sunrise, only applicants that meet the Sunrise phase criteria for the name they have applied for will be able to participate.

The launch of the .ASIA domain extension provides companies with a new opportunity

to extend their brand into the Asian region and gain greater access to Asian consumers. The requirements and rollout is complex and requires careful consideration to ensure brand holders maximize the revenue opportunity .ASIA websites could generate while protecting their brands.

For assistance in devising your .ASIA strategy, understanding the Pioneer program, compiling your trademark information for Sunrise Registration or general information about how to get a .ASIA domain, CSC can help. CSC is an ICANN and .ASIA accredited registrar which specializes in trademark searching, domain name management and brand protection exclusively for corporations and law firms.

To schedule a one-on-one consultation or request additional information about .ASIA or any of our services, please visit <http://www.csccorporatedomains.com/contact-us.asp>.

To request CSC's .ASIA Briefing Paper and FAQ, please visit <http://www.csccorporatedomains.com/contact-us.asp>.