COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
INTERNET DOMAIN NAME POLICY

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I. Introduction

A domain name is a unique name that identifies an Internet resource such as a website. Domain names are defined through the Internet Domain Name System (“DNS”), the international system for naming network resources, and are registered in DNS. A domain name consists of a series of alphanumeric words separated by periods; for example, www.columbia.edu is a domain name.

Domain names are organized in subordinate levels or subdomains that descend from the right to the left in the name with each level separated by a “dot”. The name www.columbia.edu is considered a “third level” domain name and www.engineering.columbia.edu is considered a “fourth level” domain name.

Domain names ending in columbia.edu are considered to be “internal domain names”. Domain names of University-affiliated organizations that do not end in columbia.edu are considered to be “external domain names”.

CUIT bears the overall responsibility for managing the University’s DNS, but may delegate responsibility for certain internal and external domain names to other units of the University.

The purpose of this Policy is to define the requirements for requesting, obtaining and managing domain names in order to protect the University’s name, brand and reputation. This policy applies to all domain names that are related to University activities.

Capitalized terms used herein without definition are defined in the Columbia University Information Security Charter (http://policylibrary.columbia.edu/information-security-charter).

II. Policy History

The effective date of this Policy is October 31, 2014. This Policy replaces the Columbia Domain Name Policy, dated May 17, 2004 and amended in February 2013.

III. Policy Text

A. Third Level Domain Names

Only an academic or administrative unit of the University (e.g., a school, department, center, institute or administrative organizational unit of the University) may establish a third-level domain name. Third-level domain names may not be created for individuals or student groups (see fourth-level domain names, below).
A Dean, Vice President, or Vice Provost responsible for the requesting unit must initiate a request for a new third-level domain name.

Final approval of a new third-level domain name must be obtained from the Associate Vice President and Chief Technologist, CUIT, and the Office of the Provost, whose review may result in the need for further consultation with, or approval by, relevant University officers.

With the exception of names for common shared services, third-level domain names may not be generic or potentially applicable to many units or functions. For example, a domain name such as center.columbia.edu is too generic and may not be used. However, a name for a common University-wide service such as email is acceptable (e.g. lionmail.columbia.edu). Abbreviations in domain names are acceptable, but must be meaningful.

B. Fourth- and Lower-Level Domain Names

Academic or administrative units of the University that have an existing third-level domain name pursuant to Section A above may establish fourth- and lower-level domain names below that third-level domain name. These subdomain names may be requested from, and will be approved by, the relevant official responsible for the existing third-level domain; no further approval is required.

C. External Domain Names

External domain names (e.g. whatever.org, xyz.com, myschool.edu) that are used to identify academic or administrative units of the University are discouraged. Use third-level domains within columbia.edu.

In the event that a cogent case is made for an external domain name (e.g. for certain research projects that might have reason to appropriately not identify the University affiliation, or in the case of multi-institutional collaborations), final approval of a new external domain name must be obtained from the Associate Vice President and Chief Technologist, CUIT, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of General Counsel, whose review may result in the need for further consultation with, or approval by, relevant University officers. Acquiring external domains without this approval is prohibited.

The academic or administrative unit that has obtained approval for an external domain name is responsible for any costs associated with establishing and maintaining the domain name, including initial and renewal registration fees and the costs of any external services needed to operate the domain name service.

D. Use of Domain Names

The University official responsible for the academic or administrative unit having a third-level or an external domain name must ensure that the web content associated with that domain name does not misuse or misrepresent the University’s brand name and logos, and that neither copyrighted material is distributed nor trademarks used without proper authorization from the copyright or trademark owner. University identity guidelines are documented at http://www.columbia.edu/identityguidelines.