

# Internationalized Domain Names FAQs

## About Internationalized Domain Names

### Q: What are Internationalized Domain Names?

A domain name is the easy-to-remember name—like *cira.ca*—used to identify a computer on the Internet. Right now, CIRA only offers .CA domain names that contain the a-z alphabet, numbers (0-9), and hyphens (-). No accented letters can be used in .CA domain names – in fact if you were to type *www.préside.ca* into your browser, you'd get an error message. They just don't work. That's why CIRA will be implementing French character Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) at the second level (to the left of the dot).

CIRA will be adding the following accented characters to .CA domain names:

- é, ë, ê, è
- â, à, æ
- ô, œ
- ù, û, ü
- ç
- î, ï
- ÿ

So you could soon see domains like *www.grâce.ca*, *www.préside.ca*, etc. These are called Internationalized Domain Names, or IDNs.

### Q: When will IDNs be available in the .CA domain space?

IDNs are currently scheduled to be made available in early January 2013. Now that the IDN consultation is complete, CIRA has begun to develop the policies for the implementation of IDNs, and the technology required to implement this new offering. CIRA will continue to communicate any developments in the implementation of IDNs via our website and regular electronic communications.

### Q: How will IDNs appear in my browser?

Depending on the browser, IDNs will appear differently. For example, if you were to type *www.grâce.ca* in your browser, it might appear as *www.xn--grce-coa.ca*, or might appear as *www.grâce.ca*.

### Q: Who else offers IDNs?

IDNs are available in many other ccTLD (such as .eu and .de) and gTLD registries (such as .com and .org).

### Q. What are CIRA's objectives in launching IDNs?

CIRA's objectives for the launch of IDNs are as follows:

- To provide the opportunity to Registrants to register domain names correctly in French, one of Canada's two official languages;
- To continue to develop the .CA domain space as a key public resource for the social and economic development for all Canadians;
- For the IDN launch policies and procedures to reflect current global best practices;
- To ensure the **policies and procedures** of the launch be as consistent as possible with existing policies and procedures;
- For the policies and process not to be unduly complex;
- To reduce the potential for phishing and user confusion.

## Q: Are there any security concerns related to IDNs?

Data continues to show that the unique characteristics of IDNs do not increase security risks for Internet users. In particular, they are not being used to facilitate phishing (fraudulent websites that pass off as a legitimate website in order to collect your sensitive or personal information). See the report by the [Anti-Phishing Working Group \(APWG\)](#) which goes into detail about why IDNs do not materially increase risks related to phishing.

## About The Consultation

### Q: Why did CIRA launch a consultation about IDNs?

CIRA launched a consultation in order to seek feedback about different possible approaches to launching IDNs from a broad range of interested stakeholders, including Registrants, Registrars, Members, Government and Canadian Internet users. This feedback was used to assist with CIRA's development of its policy.

### Q: How did the consultation unfold?

The first phase of the consultation was open from September 20, 2011 and ran for a period of twelve weeks. During this time, we solicited feedback on our proposal for the implementation of IDNs. The feedback we received from the first consultation, along with a summary analysis, can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Based on the feedback we received, we amended our proposal for the implementation of IDNs, and launched a second phase of the consultation, which was open from January 24 to February 24, 2012. The feedback we received from the second consultation, along with a summary analysis, can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

## Q. Where can I learn more about CIRA's IDN plans?

Information about CIRA's planned implementation of IDNs can be found [here](#).

## Q: How can I prevent someone else registering a variant of my existing domain name?

CIRA will be bundling the characters in domain names, in order to prevent the registration of variants of domain names by different Registrants. For example, only the Registrant of *www.preside.ca* will have the right to register *www.préside.ca*, *www.prèsidë.ca*, and *www.prêsîdê.ca*. This means that no one else will be able to register a variant of your existing domain name.

## Q. Can variants in a domain name bundle be held by different Registrars?

No. CIRA is requiring that domain names in a bundle consisting of ASCII domain names and their IDN variants must all be held by the same Registrar, as well as having the same Registrant contact, due to significant technical and policy issues. For example, the domain names *preside.ca*, *préside.ca*, *prèsidë.ca*, *prêsîdê.ca*, etc. must all be held by the same Registrar under the same Registrant contact. If a domain name within the bundle is transferred to another Registrar, all variants of the bundle will have to be transferred. Transfers for some of the bundle variants will remain pending until transfers have been submitted for all variants.

CIRA conducted considerable investigation into whether ASCII domain names and their IDN variants could be held by different Registrars. It was determined that this would not be practical, from either a technical and policy perspective. It would also require all Registrars to engage in development effort to support this system, regardless of whether they intend to support IDN domain names or not. More details can be found [here](#).

### **Q: Does CIRA's planned implementation of IDNs protect trademark owners?**

As with all existing Registrants, trademark owners who have already registered the ASCII version of their brand will have the exclusive right to all variants of those domain names. In addition, as with ASCII domain names, trademark owners can rely on the [CIRA Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy \(CDRP\)](#) in the event of a dispute over a domain name.

### **Q: Will CIRA's other policies continue to apply?**

One of CIRA's objectives with its implementation of IDNs is to ensure the [policies and procedures](#) be as consistent as possible with existing policies and procedures. Of course, certain changes will be required to accommodate them.