



A Case for Limited New TLD Flavors

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[La Casa Gelato](#) in Vancouver, Canada, is doing just fine by selling a grand total of more than 500 ice cream flavors (wild asparagus, balsamic vinegar, dandelion—you get the idea). On the other hand, Apple Inc. has built its enviable business on the principle of the fewer options the better. So, what does the confused ICANN need to do with its [proposed new top-level domains \(TLDs\)](#)?

My advice: Go the Apple route. When ICANN unleashes its next wave of new TLDs, it should keep them few in number.

Scarcity increases demand. ICANN has already created information scarcity by giving up on its [Expression of Interest submissions](#) initiative, a decision taken at its March 12, 2010, board meeting in Nairobi. In doing so, it dropped the idea of having a stage prior to a formal TLD request submission. On top of this information vacuum, keeping the next launch to just a few TLDs would create physical scarcity.

But why aren't new TLDs like gelato flavors? For large offerings to succeed, customers must be able to sample before buying. Variety also works when customers know what they want and just need to find a store that provides it.

The initial demand for previously launched TLD expansions, such as dot-biz and dot-info, can be understood in the light of sampling. Note that, after sampling through relatively inexpensive registrations, brand owners decided to keep only a few of the TLD flavors, which explains the drop in their corporate demand over the years. A large wave of new TLDs may make them less likely even to take that first look, since sampling costs can become prohibitive when TLD types, and the number of combinations within the TLDs, get as plentiful as flavors at a gelato store. ■