

May 21, 2014

Ms. Christine Willett  
Vice President, gTLD Operations  
ICANN  
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90094

Via email: [christine.willett@icann.org](mailto:christine.willett@icann.org)

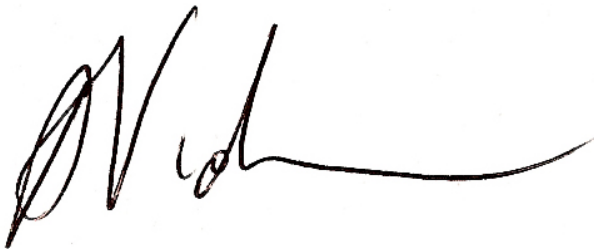
Re: Community Priority Evaluation for .ART application of EFLUX.ART, LLC

Dear Ms. Willett:

Please find attached a statement regarding the pending CPE for .ART made by EFLUX.ART, LLC. We respectfully request that ICANN forward this communication and its attachment to the Community Priority Evaluation Panel and such members of the ICANN Board of Directors and such members of the GAC as may be appropriate.

Thank you in advance of this kindness.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anton Vidokle', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anton Vidokle  
EFLUX.ART, LLC

cc: Mr. Cherine Chalaby, Chair, ICANN Board NGPC by email  
to: [cherine.chalaby@icann.org](mailto:cherine.chalaby@icann.org)  
Ms. Heather Dryden, Chair of the GAC by email to: [Heather.Dryden@ic.gc.ca](mailto:Heather.Dryden@ic.gc.ca)

## **Preserve DOT ART – An Open Letter to the ICANN Board and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)**

Throughout the history of humankind, art has always been created both inside and outside of structures of government and management. From cave paintings to state propaganda, from renaissance to baroque to contemporary, art benefits from patronage and exposure, from public service and private interests. But it cannot be limited or permanently pegged to any of these single motivations. In fact, since the formal study of art history began in the late nineteenth century, the study of art has been a way of discovering a history of human civilization not always written by warlords and victors, but rather through the materials created by artists and artisans—that is, by the people themselves.

But now we have the Internet. Information networks have so profoundly changed the shape of power in our age that those same victors and warlords who wrote the history of civilization are today subject to the same logics of flow and entropy that artists have always responded to. We have to admit that we live in a truly inspiring time.

In 2012, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) launched its “New gTLD Program”, allowing any company or organization to apply for one or more generic top-level domains. Within the regulatory framework established by ICANN and the ICANN community, priorities have been given to self-designated communities who wanted to promote and protect their common language, culture, interests, identity or any other common denominator they can demonstrate to represent.

Two entities have applied for the .ART gTLD, having elected community designation: DeviantArt and e-flux. Both organizations mutually support each other’s applications. Both are committed to develop “.ART “ as an authentic Internet address for the arts and represent its community.

We are on the cusp of an extraordinary opportunity with the simple use of a single word: a virtual place within the Internet for the arts and a virtual palace to the arts built site-by-site by millions of artists and art institutions each with an individualized artistic contribution gathered around the simple namespace of “.ART.” The .ART gTLD can become a touchstone of world culture and contribute transformative vision across all boundaries.

However, eight other, purely commercial, entities and individuals have also chosen to apply for the same generic top-level domain, proposing a purely commercial exploitation of this important and meaningful string.

Left to pure commercial exploitation, .ART will stand as a complete failure. It will only occasionally and haphazardly designate the arts themselves. It will not be a

welcomed location for the arts. The impact of the worldwide abuse of a beloved term through disjointed, disorganized, and random designations - completely irrelevant to its meaning and associations - would be an irretrievable tragedy.

e-flux, with a network of over 100,000 art institutions and professional artists, curators, and practitioners as members and readers, and deviantART, with over 30 million registered members, are committed to manage the .ART gTLD. They are prepared to convene a Policy Board of the most passionate and essential artists and art institutions to first debate and then establish standards for the use of the .ART address. **They are prepared to initiate a gTLD for the arts, by the arts, and with the arts.**

We believe preservation of the arts is at risk based upon the results of the initial community evaluations made by ICANN that clearly disfavor their approval with a resulting and evident bias towards commercialization.

Therefore, we call upon the ICANN Board to intervene on behalf of the arts. We ask the Board to recognize the .ART gTLD's unique and substantial value as a world cultural monument and to dedicate its management to trusted, proven organizations that have introduced and guided the arts to the World Wide Web since its inception.

**We call upon the ICANN Board and the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) to safeguard the arts as a universal human right in its shared culture.**

We call upon both to insist upon the recognition of valid community interests in the assignment of gTLDs by ICANN's management in line with various requests from the GAC to ICANN over the past years.

We call upon ICANN to set aside its unlimited and seemingly unrestrained commercialization of the Internet name space and embrace the opportunity that it hardcoded into its guidebook for applicants to self-identify as a community. ICANN must choose to promote the arts rather than destroy their common identity.

And together with DeviantART, we call upon the world community of the arts to make itself known and rise to the defense of its own integrity and good name.

#savedotart

Respectfully submitted by EFLUX.ART, LLC on May 21, 2014.