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Domain Names  
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## Abstract

This document states a definition of Domain Name beyond the use of the term within the Domain Name System. The document includes a survey of the diverse ways Domain Names have been interpreted within various protocols over time. The purpose of this is to give a solid foundation for work on Domain Names across all protocols making use of Domain Names.

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## **[0.](#) NOTE TO RFC EDITOR AND REVIEWERS**

A suitable venue for discussion of this document is the dnsop working group. Private comments may also be directed at the editor.

This document will be presented to the Dispatch WG as it relates to the use of identifiers across protocols, despite perceptions that the DNS defines Domain Names.

This section (and sub-sections) **\*\*probably\*\*** should be removed prior to publication.

### **[0.1](#) Backstory**

Editorial note - I'm not sure whether 0.1 and 0.2 will remain in the document. Despite the "probably should" above.

Why bother to define Domain Names now, three decades after the earliest mentions in RFC documents? There are many examples of names as identifiers in existence, a lot of running code. There is a large industry built on management of names as well, a lot of financial investment made. Would not a definition appearing now be merely an academic exercise or worse, a disruption to what seems to be a reliable system?

The tipping point related to addressing the lack of a definition is the call to apply a special meaning to certain Domain Names, with special meaning "not managed via the DNS." The DNS, whose history and explanation follow, has been created to manage Domain Names and over time evolved to become the defining force behind Domain Names. The emergence of other name management systems, in the sense of "permissionless innovation", have called into question whether DNS is the defining force for Domain Names.

There are good reasons to call this into question. The DNS definition makes some simplifying assumptions about Domain Names, carving out some functionality that the newer name management systems wish to explore. To foster this innovation, better definitions, boundaries and even an architectural review of Domain Names is beneficial.

The beneficiaries of such work include both the developers of

software that makes use of names and identifiers. A single piece of code can be used in different naming environments if the code can determine how to process a name. With code reusable across different environments, another beneficiary are those exploring new means of identifying objects.

## **0.2 Goal**

The work ahead has the ingredients of a "clarification" - a loose or poorly worded initial definition, multiple diverse valid interpretations in use, and a need to converge on a more precise definition which may cause some issues with backwards compatibility. Before knowing what a precise definition means, the goal ought to be stated.

Already proposed, including a definition in this document, are accurate but purely conceptual (or theoretical or mathematical) definitions that, on the one hand, are pure to the idea but not helpful to developing code. Walking from the land of theory into what is helpful means adding elements to the definition, for better or worse.

What should the definition address? There are many environments for names and identifiers, what is the scope of Domain Names? How can one tell if a protocol, service, or application handles identifiers according to the definition of domain names or not? Can an application deviate "slightly" from the definition or is it all-or-nothing? Purporting to support Domain Names may appear to be more of a branding issue than a technical one, that is, merely a name and not a clear distinction.

## **0.3 Benchmark for revising this document**

Given the numbering, there will come a time to re-organize the draft, add in sensible paging, etc., or abandon it altogether. The point at which this document ought to "molt" into a more mature document could be when - there is a clearer sense of necessity for the work, a vague notion of a goal, and once the "deliverables" from the document are clearer. E.g., what is the definition, what is the scope of the definition, and possibly how we apply rules for resolving names (is it DNS? is it not DNS?).

## **1. Introduction**

Two or three decades into the history of Domain Names, a popular notion has taken hold that Domain Names were defined and specified STD 13, the definition of the Domain Name System (DNS). The definitions within [RFC 1034](#) and [RFC 1035](#) have become the apparently-authoritative source for discussions on what is a Domain Name.

The truth is, [RFC 1034](#) and [RFC 1035](#) do not define Domain Names, those documents define only how Domain Names are used and processed in the DNS. But the way in which those RFCs are written seem to lend to the confusion.

Throughout this document the term "Domain Names" is capitalized to emphasize the concept of the names and DNS is used to describe the protocol and algorithms described in STD 13, including any applicable updates, related standards track documents and experimental track documents.

The term domain is a generic term. And there are many naming systems in existence. The use of the term Domain Names in this document refers to the roughly-defined set of protocols and their applications use of a naming structure that is prevalent amongst many protocols defined in IETF RFC documents.

If there is a use of Domain Names not listed here it is merely an omission. The goal in this document is to provide a survey that is sufficient to avoid hand-waving arguments, recognizing the diminishing return in trying to build a complete roster of uses of Domain Names. If there are omissions that ought to be included, please send references for the use case to the author (while this is an Internet Draft, that is).

### **[1.1](#) Deconstructing [RFC 1034](#)'s Introduction**

[RFC 1034, section 2](#) begins with this text:

"This RFC introduces domain style names, their use for Internet mail and host address support, and the protocols and servers used to implement domain name facilities."

Which seems to indicate that [RFC 1034](#) is the origin of Domain Names. Immediately following is [section 2.1](#), entitled "The history of domain names" which includes the following text.

"The result was several ideas about name spaces and their management [IEN-116, [RFC-799](#), [RFC-819](#), [RFC-830](#)]. The proposals varied, but a common thread was the idea of a hierarchical name space, with the hierarchy roughly corresponding to organizational structure, and names using "." as the character to mark the boundary between hierarchy levels. A design using a distributed database and generalized resources was described in [RFC-882, [RFC-883](#)]. Based on experience with several implementations, the system evolved into the scheme described in this memo."

The DNS as it is known today did not invent Domain Names (work on the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol did) and, for what it's worth, wasn't the first attempt at an Internet naming system (described in [RFC 819](#) "The Domain Naming Convention for Internet User Applications").

One important phrase to keep in mind is:

"To simplify implementations,"

which appears in both [RFC 1034](#) and [RFC 1035](#) as well as their predecessors [RFC 882](#) and [RFC 883](#). This gives credence to the notion that Domain Names exist beyond the DNS.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Document**

This document has a goal of establishing a definition of Domain Names for the purpose of continuing efforts to innovate in naming systems. The path by which this document aims to meet the goal is to describe in more detail the original definition of Domain Names (which never seems to have been documented in an RFC) and then to illustrate how Domain Names have been interpreted in the DNS, SMTP, X.509 Certificate (PKIX), URNs and other environments.

## **1.3 Why Write This Now?**

[RFC 6761](#) defines "Special Use Domain Names" which has engendered much confusion of the role of Domain Names with respect to the DNS, particularly Top-Level Domains, which have come to have special meanings.

One of the outcomes from the recent discussion on [RFC 6761](#) [this section is written informally] is an assumption that client software, that is an application receiving a string that looks like a name without any supplemental context, will be able to determine how to treat the string within the appropriate naming context. Within the familiar world of domain names today, certain top-level names are recognized as special (such as those whose last label is local). To date there are a limited number of special names, as the number scales up, there will be more work for client software developers. (See [section 4.1](#) of this document.)

Note that whether or not the last label takes on this role is suggested here solely as an example. Whether it does or not is a something for "a solution" for which we don't even have the starting point nailed down. Hence, it isn't clear 4.1 should be in this document.

Given a lack of an explicit starting point, meaning a clear definition of what Domain Name means, this document is striving to provide a foundation.

## **2. Reaching a definition of a Domain Name**

Domain Names emerged from the need to build a hierarchy around the growing number of identified hosts exchanging email. [RFC 788](#), "SIMPLE MAIL TRANSFER PROTOCOL", explains, in its [section 3.7](#):

"At some not too distant future time it might be necessary to expand the mailbox format to include a region or name domain identifier. There is quite a bit of discussion on this at present, and is likely that SMTP will be revised in the future to take into account naming domains."

## **2.1 Historical Perspective**

Knowing the origins of a concept helps setting the correct boundaries for discussion. The past isn't meant to restrict the future but meant to help provide a context, include forgotten ideas, and help identify rational for scope creep.

[RFC 799](#) "Internet Name Domains" has (arguably) the first formation of what is a Domain Name:

"In its most general form, a standard internet mailbox name has the syntax

`<user>.<host>@<domain> ,`

where <user> is the name of a user known at the host <host> in the name domain <domain>."

Prior to this, domain referred to principally an administrative domain, such as the initial organizations involved in networks at the time.

[RFC 801](#) "NCP/TCP TRANSITION PLAN" contains this, indicating the passage from the host tables:

"It might be advantageous to do away with the host name table and use a Name Server instead, or to keep a relatively small table as a cache of recently used host names."

[RFC 805](#) "Computer Mail Meeting Notes" contains this:

"The conclusion in this area was that the current "user@host" mailbox identifier should be extended to 'user@host.domain' where 'domain' could be a hierarchy of domains."

[RFC 819](#) "The Domain Naming Convention for Internet User Applications" contains this:

"A decision has recently been reached to replace the simple name field, "<host>", by a composite name field, '<domain>' "

A domain name began to take on its current form:

"Internet Convention: Fred@F.ISI.ARPA"

In addition, "simple name" is defined as what we now call a label, and a "complete (fully qualified) name" is defined as "concatenation of the simple names of the domain structure tree nodes starting with its own name and ending with the top level node name". Noticeably absent is a terminating dot or any mention or representation of a root.

[RFC 819](#) defines ARPA as a top-level name (as opposed to top-level domain name). This is an early mention of the role of top-level names.

This walk through history relies solely on the record left behind inside RFCs. The precise chain of events is likely slightly different and nuanced. The point of the exercise is to show that Domain Names are a concept that emerged over time, spawned the DNS with its domain names, a definition of host names derived from the host tables, and was heavily influenced by SMTP as the driving application. The definition of the FTP protocol, originally defined in [RFC 959](#) "FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL", never mentions hosts, domains or host names. But no formal definition of Domain Names has been written and recorded.

## **[2.2](#) Newly Stated Definition of "Domain Name"**

Looking through the early documents, and using the experience of the past decades, this new definition of Domain Names is stated:

A Domain Name is a sequence of labels concatenated by a designated separating character. The Domain Name Space is organized in a strict hierarchical manner with a recognized root Domain Name. The organization follows the rules of tree structure as defined by the field of graph theory in mathematics [Diestel].

Each label represents a node in a conceptual tree. The sequence of labels is concatenated from the deepest node in the tree up to the root node. "Fully qualified" refers to a sequence that ends with the root node.

When considering a fully qualified name, the first label of the name is the name of the deepest node in the tree, the last label is the name of the node is the root. The top-level label, top-level name, or top-level domain is the label just before the root (or last) label.

Excluded from the definition is the appearance or representation of the labels, the designated separator character's representation, the ordering of the sequence in appearance, such as left-to-right or right-to-left, nor the written script nor encoding. The definition is purely conceptual.

In [RFC 819](#) "Simple Mail Transfer Protocol", the designated separating

character is the dot ('.') as represented in the ASCII [\[RFC 20\]](#) [ANSIX34] character set. This is the earliest application definition of how it represents Domain Names.

### **[2.2.1](#) Definition from Lyman Chapin**

Included here is an emailed definition from Lyman Chapin, appearing in the archives of [inip-discuss@ietf.org](mailto:inip-discuss@ietf.org). The definition is in-line with the one in 2.2 except that it refers to a finite name space due to length restrictions.

"In graph-theoretic terms, the domain name space constitutes a labelled directed rooted tree in which the syntax of the label associated with each vertex other than the unlabelled root is defined by RFCs 1035, 1123, and 2181. The term "nth level domain name label" refers to a member of the set of all vertices for which the path to the root contains n edges. For n=1 the term most often used is "top level domain name label" or simply "top level domain" (TLD). A fully qualified domain name is a sequence of labels that represents a path from the root to a leaf vertex of the domain name space. The shorter term "domain name" is not formally defined; in common usage it may be the shorthand equivalent of "fully qualified domain name" (FQDN) or refer to any non-empty subset of the sequence of labels formally identified by a fully qualified domain name.

"In this formulation, the term "domain name space" refers to the complete graph consisting of all possible vertices and edges - not just those with which a specific meaning has been associated (what we might call "allocated" labels). It is a finite graph because the length of the longest possible FQDN is finite. At any point in time, there is another labelled directed rooted tree - a sub-graph of the domain name space - containing only vertices that represent allocated labels."

### **[2.3](#) Limitation**

There are many ways to build a name space, Domain Names are just one example. Domain Names are intended to build a name space that can scale tremendously as opposed to a name space for closed cluster of involved objects. Domain Names are used across many protocols defined inside and outside the IETF and have been defined to interoperate across implementations and protocols. This does not make Domain Names an official or required standard despite the name space's widespread use.

### **[2.4](#) Is This a Domain Name?**

In the vein of questions like "but is it art?" as to whether an object is art worthy of display in a museum, one can question whether any string with a dot in it is a Domain name. For example, is this multi-sentence paragraph a domain name? It has



characters and dots in it.

The important question is not whether a string is an example of a Domain Name based on its appearance. The use of a string is what makes it a Domain Name. A path name of a file with an extension looks like a Domain Name with the extension separated by a dot, if one allows the directory separating character (a '/' perhaps) as a legal member of a label. Within an OS, this is a file/path name. In a protocol it might be used as if it were a domain name.

### **3. Subtypes of Domain Names**

Subtypes of Domain Names have come to be defined for different protocols, evolving and sometimes building on previous definitions.

#### **3.1 Domain Names as Restricted for DNS**

The DNS protocol place size restrictions on Domain Names and defines rules for matching domain names, treating sets of Domain Names as equivalent to each other. (This matching refers to treating upper case and lower case ASCII letters as equivalent.) The DNS defines the format used to transmit the names across the network as well as rules for displaying them inside text zone files. The DNS creates the notion that names are assigned by an authority per zone.

Placing size restrictions on Domain Names is significant in reducing the overall population of names that can be represented in the DNS. The matching rules have the effect of creating (to use a term from graph theory) cliques, distorting the tree-nature of the Domain Name graph. A clique is a completely connected sub-graph implying cyclic paths, a tree is a graph that is acyclic. In sum, the treatment of ASCII (and only ASCII) cases as equivalent is a distortion of the Domain Name hierarchy.

DNS defines two formats for domain names. One is the "on-the-wire" format used inside messages, a flags-and-length octet followed by some count of octets for each label with the final length of 0 representing the root. The other is a version that can be rendered in printable ASCII characters, complete with a means to represent other characters via an escape sequence. This does not alter the Domain Name concept but has implications when it comes to interoperating with other protocol definitions of their domain name use.

DNS assumes that there is, in concept, a central authority creating names within the DNS management structure (called a zone). Although the DNS does not define how a central authority is implemented nor how it coins names, the names have to come from a single point to appear in a zone. There are other means for claiming names, an example will be mentioned later.

DNS domain names could appear to be the same as address literals, such as "192.0.2.1" or "0:0:0:0:0:FFFF::192.0.2.1". Such DNS domain names are not used for two reasons. Applications expecting a Domain Name (as a comment line parameter as an example) would opt to treat the string as an address literal and would therefore not look for the string in the DNS domain name space. The management model of the DNS would prefer to aggregate (as in routing) addresses belonging together in the same zone, resulting in labels appearing in reverse order. E.g., the network address 192.0.2.1 would be represented by a DNS domain name as "1.2.0.192.in-addr.arpa." as described in [RFC 1035](#). For IPv6, the convention used is documented in "DNS Extensions to Support IP Version 6" [\[RFC 3596\], section 2.5](#).

DNS domain names have become the dominant definition of domain names due to the success (scale) of the DNS on the public Internet. Many protocols interact with the DNS but instead of supporting the complete definition of DNS domain names, the protocols rely on a subset more commonly called host names.

### **[3.2](#) Host Names**

Work on the definition of a host name began well before the issuance of the STD 13 documents defining DNS. The rules for the Preferred Syntax in [RFC 1034](#) conform to the host name rules outlined in [RFC 952](#). **The host name definition was presented again in [RFC 1123](#)** "Requirements for Internet Hosts -- Application and Support" (which is part of STD 3). In [section 2.1 of RFC 1123](#), one (of two mentions) definition of host name is presented, noting that the definition is a relaxation of what is in [RFC 952](#).

Host names are subsets of DNS domain names in the sense that the character set is limited. In particular, only "let" (i.e., presumably letters a-z), "digits" and "hyphen" can be used, with hyphen only internal to a label. (This description is meant to be illustrative, not normative. See the grammar presented on page 5 of [RFC 952](#) for specifics.) [RFC 1945](#) "Hypertext Transfer Protocol -- HTTP/1.0", [Section 3.2.2](#) "http URL" specifically references [section 2.1 of RFC 1123](#). The reference is explicit.

[RFC 5321](#) "Simple Mail Transfer Protocol" refers to [RFC 1035](#) for a definition of domain names but includes text close to what is in the previous paragraph, noting that domain names as used in SMTP refer to both hosts and to other entities. [RFC 5321](#) updates [RFC 1123](#), but does not cite the latter for a definition of host names. [RFC 5321](#) additionally requires brackets to surround address literals, referring to the use case as an "alternative to a domain name."

### **[3.3](#) URI Authority and Domain Names**

In [RFC 3986](#), also known as STD 66, "Uniform Resource Identifier (URI): Generic Syntax", mentions in its [section 3.2.2](#) (page 20)

that the host subcomponent of the URI Authority ([section 3.2](#)) "should conform to the DNS syntax". This comes after discussion that the host subcomponent is not strongly tied to the DNS, i.e., names can be managed via concept other than the DNS. There's no discussion on the rationale but this enables the reuse of code parsing and marshalling the host subcomponent between different Domain Name environments.

This reinforces the notion that there's a need to understand how Domain Names interoperate amongst protocols and applications. And reinforces the need to derive or make explicit a way for client software to know how to resolve a name, that is, convert a name into a network address.

### **[3.4 Internet Protocol Address Literals](#)**

The above definition includes address literals such as 192.0.2.1 for IPv4 and even IPv6 literals such as ::ffff:192.0.2.1. Yes, these qualify as Domain Names. In some protocols, these domain names are specified as being preceded by a "#" (find this and cite) or encased in square brackets "[" and "]" (SMTP mentioned already). In the DNS, as previously described in [section 3.1](#), they are represented according to appropriate conventions.

### **[3.5 Internationalized Domain Names in Applications](#)**

The original uses of Domain Names (such as DNS domain names and host names) assumed the ASCII character set. Specifically, making the labels case insensitive prohibited a straightforward use of any method of representation of non-ASCII characters.

[RFC 5890](#) "Internationalized Domain Names for Applications (IDNA): Definitions and Document Framework", with associated other documents, defines IDNA2008 as a convention for handling non-ASCII characters in DNS domain names. In figure 1 of that document, the sets of legal DNS domain name formats are defined. Noted in the footnotes of the figure, applications unaware of IDNA2008 cannot distinguish the subsets defined by the document meaning this definition is not an alteration of Domain Names, but, like host names, yet another subset of DNS domain names.

Open question - how closely is IDNA tied to DNS domain names as opposed to Domain Names? "IAB Thoughts on Encodings for Internationalized Domain Names" [[RFC 6055](#)], discusses the representations of IDNs.

### **[3.6 Restricted for DNS Registration](#)**

[RFC 4290](#) "Suggested Practices for Registration of Internationalized Domain Names (IDN)" presents reasons why registration of DNS domain names is restricted, in the context of IDN. (That RFC refers to an

older form than IDNA2008, but the concepts still apply.) This is yet another convention related to DNS domain names, excluding names that would lead to undesirable outcomes.

### **[3.7](#) Tor Network Names**

The Tor network is an activity organized by the Tor Project, Inc., described on its main web page ["https://www.torproject.org/index.html.en"](https://www.torproject.org/index.html.en). One component of the network are Domain Names ending in ".onion". (There are other suffixes in use, but it isn't very clear how they are used, defined or whether they are active.)

The way in which Domain Names are used in Tor is described in two web documents "Tor Rendezvous Specification" [RENDEV] and "Special Hostnames in Tor" [OHOST] available from the project's website.

Syntactically, a Tor domain name fits within the DNS domain name definition but the manner of assignment is different in a manner incompatible with the DNS. (Not better or worse, still significantly different.) Tor domain names are derived from cryptographic keys and organized by distributed hash tables, instead of assigned by a central authority per zone.

### **[3.8](#) X.509**

In [RFC 5280](#) "Internet X.509 Public Key Infrastructure Certificate and Certificate Revocation List (CRL) Profile", [section 4.2.1.6](#) "Subject Alternative Name" a `dNSName` is defined to be a host name, with the further restriction that the name " " cannot be used.

### **[3.9](#) Multicast DNS**

Multicast DNS uses a name space ending with ".local." as described in [RFC 6762](#), "Multicast DNS". The rules for Multicast DNS domain names differ from DNS domain names. Multicast DNS domain names are encoded as Net-Unicode as defined in [RFC5198](#) "Unicode Format for Network Interchange" with the DNS domain name tradition of case folding the ASCII letters when matching names. [Appendix F of RFC 6762](#) gives an explanation of why the punycode algorithm is not used.

### **[3.10](#) /etc/hosts**

The precursor to DNS, host tables, still exists in remnants in many operating systems. There are library functions, used by applications to resolve DNS domain names, that can return names of arbitrary length (meaning, for example longer than what DNS domain names are defined to be).

[RFC 3493](#), "Basic Socket Interface Extensions for IPv6", addresses this in [Section 6](#), further documentation can be found as part of The Open Group Base Specifications Issue 7 [IEEE1003.1] and Microsoft

Winsock Functions [WINSOCK].

### **3.11 Other Protocols**

This section is used to enumerate other protocols that use Domain Names but in general do not impose any other restrictions that what has been mentioned above.

SSH [RFC 4251 "The Secure Shell (SSH) Protocol Architecture"] uses host names, using the name when storing public keys of hosts. SSH clients, not necessarily the protocol, illustrate how applications juggle the different forms of Domain Names. SSH can be invoked to open a secure shell with a host via its DNS domain name/host name or it can be used to open a secure shell with a host via its Multicast DNS domain name.

FTP [RFC 959 "FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL (FTP)"] is silent on domain names but client implementations of the protocol behave as SSH clients, being unaware the differences between definitions of Domain Names (DNS vs. MulticastDNS).

DHCP [RFC 2131 "Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol"] includes domain names in its Domain Search Option [RFC 3397 "Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) Domain Search Option"]. The encoding of Domain Names used is the on-the-wire format of the DNS, using DNS-defined message compression. DHCP handles Domain Names in other options such as in [RFC 4702](#) defined "The DHCP Client FQDN Option", in the same format. The significance of this is that most other protocols represent DNS domain names or host names in a human readable form, DHCP is using the machine-friendly format.

## **4. Interoperability Considerations**

Any single protocol is able to define a format for a conceptual Domain Name. Examples given above show that many protocols have done so. From the examples it is clear that the way in which protocols have interpreted Domain Names has varied, leading to, at least, user interfaces having to have built-in intelligence when handling names and, at worst, a growing confusion over how the Domain Name space is to be managed.

When protocols having different formats and rules for Domain Names interact, software implementing the protocols translate one protocol's domain name format to another's format. Even when the translation is straightforward, software often fails to handle error conditions well. (Is there a citation for that?)

Often times the clash of definitions impacts the design of a new protocol and/or an extension of a protocol. For example, adding non-ASCII domain names has to be done with backwards compatibility with an installed base of ASCII-assuming code. This clash can

inhibit new uses of Domain Names.

Search lists are a Domain Name mechanism studied in SAC064 "SSAC Advisory on DNS 'Search List' Processing". One of the particular use cases related to this topic is the issuance of search lists via DHCP and then used by any user-client protocol implementation. This emphasizes an interoperability consideration for how Domain Names are treated in different protocols, not just among implementations of one protocol.

The definition of a Fully Qualified Domain Name has two forms. The discussion over FQDN involved human-readable names. The principle question is whether to require the terminating dot or to assume it when the end of an input string is hit. Many protocol clients will silently add a dot when a user types in a name to a command line. But some definitions, such as the one in SAC064 require the terminating dot to be included before a name is considered to be fully qualified.

The Special Use Domain Names registry defined in [RFC 6761](#) lists Domain Names that are to be treated in a manner inconsistent with the DNS normal processing rules. This registry contains Domain Names regardless of whether the name is a DNS domain name and regardless whether the name is a top-level (domain) name [[RFC 819](#)] or is positioned elsewhere in the tree structure.

These are reasons this document is needed. The reason for the confusion over what's a legal domain name stems from application-defined restrictions. For example, using a one-label domain name ("dotless") for sending email is not a problem with the DNS nor the name in concept, but is a problem for mail implementations that expect more than one label. (One-label names may be assumed to be in ARPA host table format.)

#### 4.1(\*) Use of Top-Level Domains as Protocol Identifiers

(Would like to have "dns" and "dns<digit>" added to the Special Use Domain Names registry. As well as the digits [address literals].)

(\*) - I am not sure this belongs in this document. The idea is what one can select a name space by the top-level domain (label). I believe this would be scope creep for this document. Leaving it here for consideration.

## 5. Acknowledgements

Input received from Andrew Sullivan and Paul Hoffman. Not to imply endorsements of the text.

The definition in 2.2.1 was lifted from an email from Lyman Chapin. The URL for that message is (combine the two lines):

<https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/msg/inip-discuss/>

[cqVFTt3\\_ve9EB0QfA9TlcqgTIFc](#)

Comments from George Michaelson, Kevin Darcy, Joe Abley, Jim Reid, Tony Finch, Robert Edmonds, hellekin, Stephane Bortzmeyer, Ray Bellis, Bob Harold, Alec Muffett, Stuart Cheshire and a growing list of others I am losing track of. Not to imply endorsement.

## **6. IANA Considerations**

None.

## **7. Security Considerations**

Nothing direct. This document proposes a definition of the term "Domain Name" and surveys how it has been variously applied. In some sense, loosely defined terms give rise to security hazards. Beyond that, there is no impact of "security."

## **8. References**

Many references are in-line throughout the text with titles to ease comprehension of the prose. All documents cited are listed here. Whether there is a normative/informative split will depend what, if any, track this document is processed. For now, consider this a reading list on the topic.

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