



# The Biggest Obstacle for Innovating with New TLDs

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# About Tom Barrett

- President of EnCirca – Founded in 2001 in Boston, USA
  - Formerly with Neustar, NetNames, ThomsonReuters
  - Chair of the Blockchain Committee for the International Trademark Association
  - Engineering Degrees from MIT and WPI
- EnCirca is an Accredited ICANN Registrar
- Also a technology service provider to restricted Registry Operators
- EnCirca's primary TLD's include:
  - .BANK
  - .BOT
  - .JOBS
  - .PHARMACY
  - .REALTOR

# Specification Bias

How the width of two horses influenced the design of the Space Shuttle



# Specification Bias

- The US Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet 8 ½ inches wide
- How did this specific number become the industry standard?
- English immigrants designed the US railroads
- English railroads were based on the historic wagon wheel spacing



# Specification Bias

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# SRS is our Roman Chariot

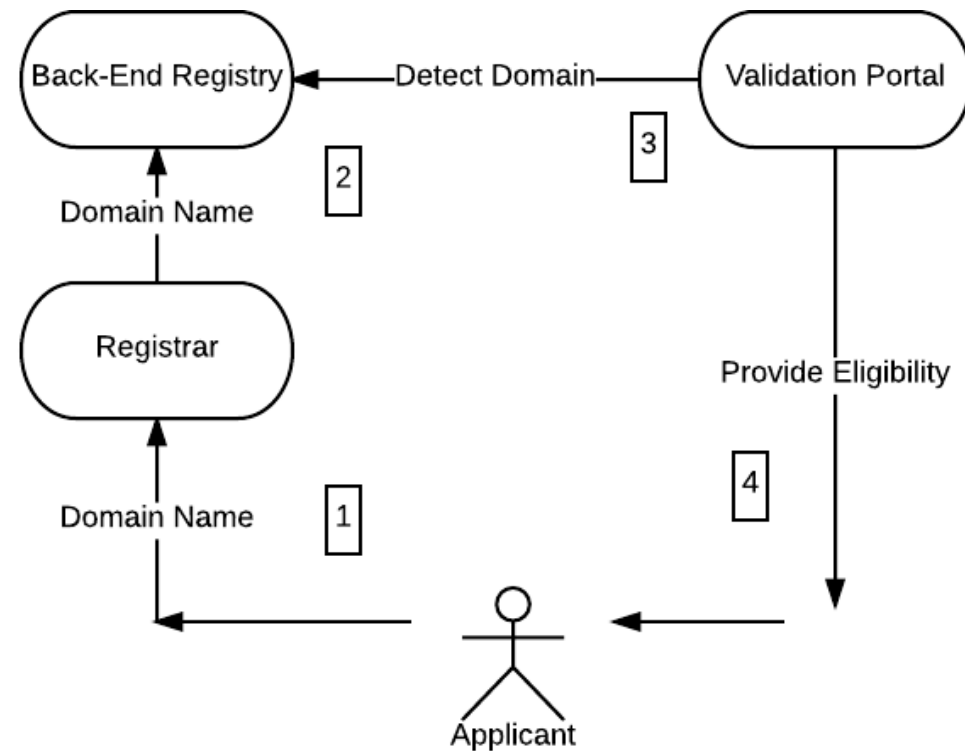
- The Shared-Registry-System developed by Network Solutions in 1999
- The biggest constraint in innovative new TLDs is overcoming the inertia of the Shared-Registry-System model
- One of the challenges in new TLD innovation is how to accomplish business goals despite the constraints of the legacy SRS

# Shared-Registry-System Legacy

- EPP Protocol
- Unidirectional data flow
- Annual registration terms
- Minimal grace periods
- Minimal credit policies
- Limited options for delayed processing
- Limited data extensions for collecting eligibility data
- Eligibility tokens support is sparse
- Registry Code of Conduct – limited vertical integration

# Post-Registration Validation Model

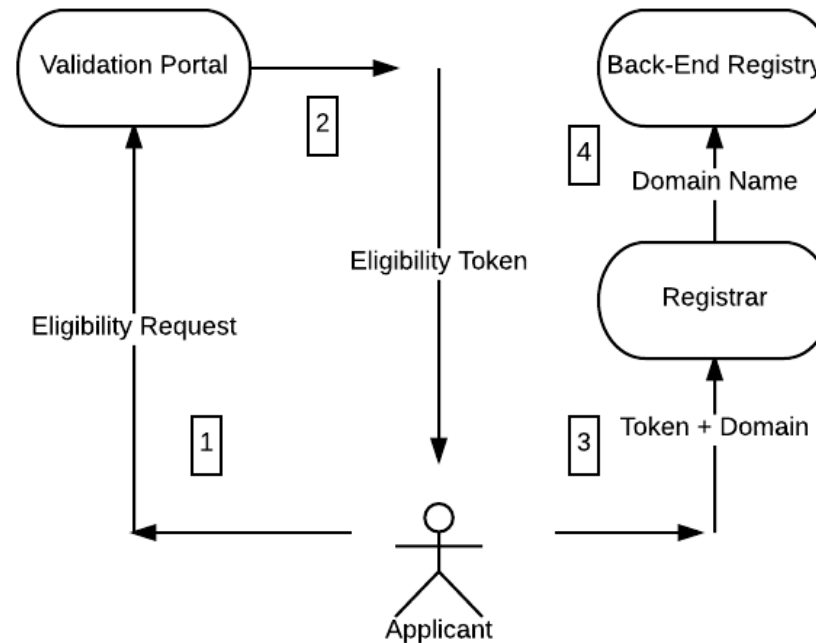
- **Advantages:**
  - “Just like .COM” - No extra work for registrars
  - Standard EPP transactions only
- **Disadvantages:**
  - Requires chasing registrants to provide validation information after the registration
  - Poor user experience, high cancellations
- **Examples:**
  - .ORGANIC
  - .COOP





# Pre-Registration Validation Model

- **Advantages:**
  - Ensures compliance
  - Strong brand signal
- **Disadvantages:**
  - Required support by registry back-end (no longer)
  - Two website visits are required by Applicants
- **Examples:**
  - .BANK
  - .BOT



# The Evolution for .BANK

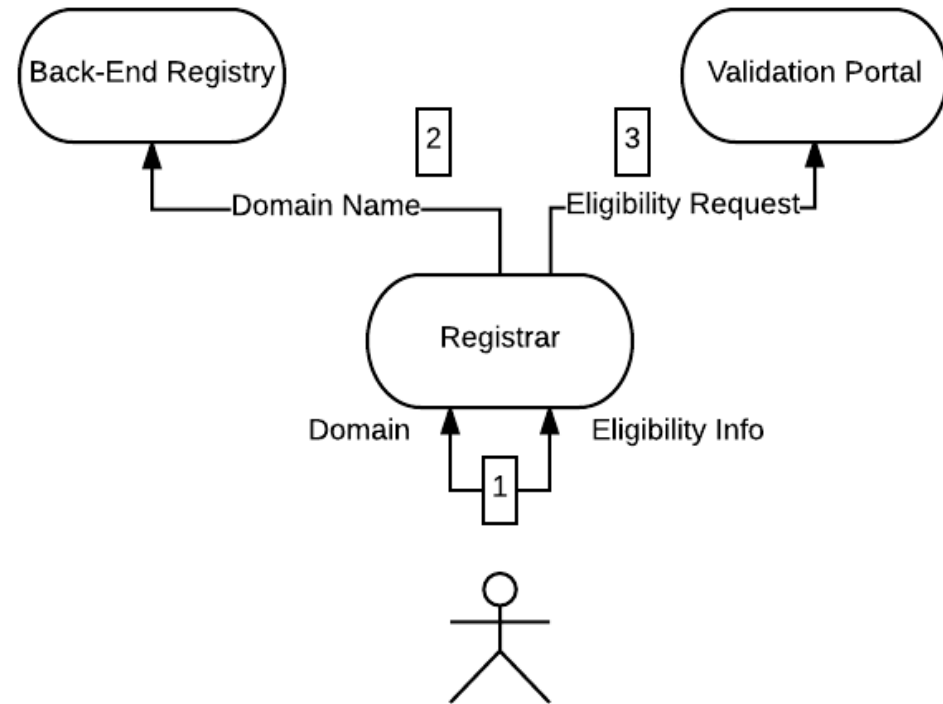
- Replaced SSL platform with a commercial CRM
- Replaced Post-registration *Pending Create* with pre-registration eligibility tokens - JWT tokens using industry standards
- Smart Eligibility tokens also contain validated registrant data

## End-Result

- Registry back-end removed from validation workflow
- Registrars more integrated into validation workflow
- Facilitated back-end portability – Have since switched back-ends

# Parallel Validation Workflow

- **Advantages:**
  - Streamlined workflow and user experience
  - Single visit by Registrant
- **Disadvantages:**
  - Requires Registrars willing to customize workflow
  - Discourages adoption by mass market Registrars
- **Examples:**
  - .REALTOR
  - .CPA



# Lessons Learned

- The domain name registration should be the last step in the process and not the first step
- The best end-user experience is to allow users to provide all required information in a single visit with a single payment
- Minimize the involvement of back-end registry provider for validation
- Integrate Registrars into the validation workflow

# Take-Away for Operators of New TLDs

- Don't let historical SRS bias hinder your business model or objectives
- The back-end registry platforms were not designed for new Registry business models
- Avoid involving your back-end registry provider in your validation workflow – reduces flexibility and increases switching costs
- Insist Registrars customize their registration workflow to support your business strategy

# Thank You !

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