



.Coop Goes Global

At 5:00 pm Greenwich Mean Time on January 30, registration within the new .coop top-level Internet domain (TLD) opened to all cooperatives worldwide

It is the first of the new, sponsored TLDs selected by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to go to global, open launch.

The launch received national coverage in Reuters and CNN in the U.S. Both outlets singled out the El Paso Area Teachers Federal Credit Union for their purchase of teachers.coop, a name representative of the addresses now available under .coop, but not under .com or .org.

To date, more than 5,000 .coop domain names have been registered by cooperatives from more than 30 countries. In the U.S., 40 percent of all utility cooperatives have registered more than 1,000 .coop names. And credit unions have outpaced all other sectors, purchasing more than 1,300 domain names.

"The .coop domain will not only relieve space in the crowded .com field, it will give cooperatives the opportunity to develop an online global identity and differentiate themselves as member-owned businesses that consumers can trust," said Paul Hazen, president and CEO of dotCoop, the sponsor of the new domain and a wholly owned subsidiary of the U.S.-based National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA).

The launch was celebrated by cooperatives from all sectors in the U.S. as well as abroad. New York City cooperatives recognized the launch at the offices of 1st Rochdale

Cooperative Group, the nation's first urban electric cooperative, which unveiled its new web address—1stRochdaleNYC.coop.

"Many cooperative initiatives of lasting value to consumers have been launched from this building," said Greg Wortham, chief operating officer for the co-op, "and we are very proud today to open a new vista for the outreach of cooperatives to the people of the world. It's impossible to overstate the scope of the .coop opportunity."

Michael Connery, president and CEO of the United Nations Federal Credit Union delivered a statement of support for .coop from United Nations Under Secretary General Nitin Desai. Cliff Rosenthal, executive director of the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions (NFCDCU), told the audience that .coop is a powerful new means of demonstrating the community focus and member-driven agenda of NFCDCU members. Representatives from New York's vast co-op housing community also attended the event.

DotCoop issued press releases announcing the launch in five languages—English, French, Spanish, Italian and Swedish—to media around the world. U.S. co-ops throughout the U.S. joined in the excitement by issuing their own releases announcing their new web addresses.

.Coop has also received support from both the United Nations and the European Union, which was highlighted

in the European releases. "The launch of .coop marks an important new development for the world's cooperative movement," said Mr Nitin Desai, Under Secretary General in the United Nation's Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "This new domain will provide a unique and important opportunity to promote cooperative principles and values, and to demonstrate how these are reflected in their business ethics, their solidarity and their ability to promote economic and social development."

Support for .coop has also come from the European Union. "The new .coop top-level domain name will be an important tool in differentiating cooperatives from other businesses in the e-economy," said Mr Erkki Liikanen, the EU Commissioner with responsibility for Enterprise and the Information Society.

NCBA proposed the .coop domain to ICANN in September 2000, in cooperation with the International Cooperative Alliance and Poptel, a cooperative Internet services provider in the UK that serves as the .coop registry operator. .Coop was one of only seven new top-level Internet domains selected to join .com, .org and .net at the end of Internet addresses.

NCBA, ICA and Poptel spent 2001 developing the eligibility and verification policies and technical systems for the new .coop domain. In late 2001, dotCoop opened up domain name reservation to a limited group of cooperatives to test the system. Cooperatives that had reserved names could activate them when the domain went live on the Internet's root server on January 9.

In contrast to other domains like .com, .coop domain name registration is open only to cooperatives and cooperative support organizations. Worldwide, 750,000 cooperatives provide services to an estimated 760 million members. ■



It's Simple We're a Co-op!

**Food Cooperatives
Differentiate
Themselves
Online...and Off**

With investor-owned retailers grabbing an increasing share of the natural and organic foods market, many food cooperatives are working to differentiate themselves in the mind of community-oriented natural foods consumers. Some of them think they've found part of the answer in the new top-level Internet domain, .coop.

For one co-op in particular, that differentiation has been critical. Whole Foods Cooperative in Duluth, Minnesota was around 10 years before investor-owned Whole Foods Market ever opened its doors. But as far as the co-op is concerned, the name is about all they have in common with the nation's largest natural foods retailer. That's why they jumped at the chance to buy wholefoods.coop. The .com version is owned by Whole Foods Market.

"The issue is to differentiate ourselves from Whole Foods Market," says Chris von Rabeneau, IT manager at Whole Foods Cooperative. "There's a lot more trust of co-ops than there is for .coms." The co-op also wanted a simpler, more memorable web address. It had been using wfco-op.com, "but that's not very intuitive," according to von Rabeneau. The co-op has not only switched over its web site to its new address, it has also changed all staff e-mail addresses to end with the .coop extension. They've already begun reprinting business cards and will reprint their brochures and other information as well.

There are other "Whole Foods" cooperatives in the U.S. that didn't act as quickly to buy their .coop names. But the Duluth cooperative has offered to put

a link on its web site to other co-ops with the same names, to avoid consumer confusion.

Another popular name for food co-ops in the U.S. is "Peoples Food." Those names went early during the .coop name reservation process. Peoples.coop and peoplesfood.coop were gone by the time San Diego's Ocean Beach People's Organic Foods Market registered its .coop names.

But that wasn't much of a problem, according to Amber McHale, marketing director for the co-op. She said that the co-op has been using "OB Peoples Food Co-op" as a short name for many years, so they just bought obpeoplesfood.coop—the same name they used under .com. They've already switched their site, which gets about 100 hits a week, over to the new .coop name, and changed the address on the banner of its newsletter. She says the co-op's members "see us as a safe, safe place." McHale thinks the .coop name reinforces that image. "It's a simple thing: we're a co-op."

Patrice Jennings, general manager of Greenstar

Cooperative in Ithaca, New York and the president of the Cooperative Grocers Association of the Northeast (CGANE), has even grander plans for .coop. "Our intention is to bring co-ops to the forefront of the industry," Jennings says. She sees .coop as an integral part of that effort.

Greenstar purchased greenstar.coop, and has switched its web site over to the new name as well as its e-mail addresses. Jennings says giving out her new e-mail address provides her with a great opportunity to talk about cooperatives. "It's great," says Jennings. "I get to talk to rental car companies about cooperatives when they ask for my e-mail address."

Greenstar bought several .coop names, including ithaca.coop and ithacachai.coop, for its new chai tea business. The co-op produces chai and distributes it throughout New York. Jennings also bought cgane.coop on behalf of the regional co-op association.

The co-op has been actively promoting its new domain name through its newsletter to some 4,500 members. It plans to do a special promotion of the domain during October Co-op Month celebrations that it coordinates with other credit unions and co-ops in the Ithaca area.

Pete Kinne, operations manager for Bloomingfoods Cooperative Market in Bloomington, Indiana, registered bloomingfoods.coop and has directed the new name to the co-op's web site. "Our interest in going to .coop was motivated by our co-op identification and pride," Kinne said. "It benefits us; it helps our brand identity and sets us apart from the average for-profit .com." ■

FIND THEM AT:

bloomingfoods.coop
greenstar.coop
obpeoplesfood.coop
organicfoods.coop
ozark.coop
pcc.coop
uncommonmarket.coop
wedge.coop
wholefoods.coop

Not A Co-op?

Don't Register In This Domain

Verification System Weeds Out Ineligible Registrations

With the worldwide launch of the new, exclusive cooperative Internet domain, the dotCoop Operations Center is weeding out domain name registrations by non-cooperatives. Some registrations immediately raised red flags in the Ops Center. Staff puts suspect registrants on notice that they have 30 days to provide further documentation of their cooperative status, or have the name revoked without refund.

Mary Allen, verification lead for dotCoop, said the registry has put on hold domain names registered by some 14 applicants. Registrants are notified that they must submit further documentation to verify their cooperative status. Allen said few of these registrants

have responded to the e-mail request.

The .coop registration system requires registrants to identify themselves with a Verification Partner, usually a co-op apex organization for a specific country that has entered into a partnership with dotCoop. Registrants are also asked to list two other sponsors—cooperatives or cooperative organizations—that can substantiate their co-op status. [see story on page 10]

When a registrant lists a non-existent sponsor, it sends an immediate signal to the verification lead. "Those are 'gimmees' that we deal with immediately," Allen said. "But we still give them 30 days to respond." Allen checks out the web sites of sponsors and evaluates other aspects of the registration.

Farm Co-ops Grab .Coop Names



Supply and Processing Co-ops Think Names Will Resonate With Members

Minnesota's Corn-er Stone Cooperative didn't waste any time in selecting the choice, generic domain names corn.coop, ethanol.coop and wind.coop. Manager David Kolsrud wanted to grab the names that he viewed as being key to his cooperative's mission—to help his farmer-members and other farmers use cooperatives to improve their income. Generic names in agriculture are getting tougher to get under .coop now that registration under the new domain has opened worldwide. But Kolsrud got in early and has big plans for his names.

"New generation co-ops are the purest form of ensuring that the profits get back to the producers," says Kolsrud. His cooperative owns a majority stake in an ethanol processing business—AgriEnergy—and an interest in two other ethanol plants. Kolsrud says that ethanol production is expected to triple over the coming years and he wants farmers to be the owners of those new production facilities. He plans to use corn.coop and ethanol.coop to help that happen.

He's equally excited about opportunities for farmer-owned wind-energy cooperatives. "Farmers have put up with the wind for years," Kolsrud says. "Maybe they should profit from it." Kolsrud and fellow co-op members have spent the last two years looking into developing a wind-energy cooperative and say they are close to getting it done. He plans to use the wind.coop domain for a web site that will generate excitement among potential farmer-investors.

Since the global launch of .coop, agricultural cooperatives in the U.S. and around the world have registered .coop domains to promote their cooperatives and protect their trademarks. Big name co-ops Ocean Spray and SunKist have registered both generic names like cranberry.coop and orangegrowers.coop, as well as their respective trademarked names Oceanspray.coop and SunKist.coop.

Cabot Creamery Cooperative, which actively promotes itself as a co-op, snapped up cabotcheese.coop and cabotcreamery.coop and uses both of them to point to its home page.

Farm supply cooperatives, such as GROWMARK and CHS Cooperatives, have also registered dozens of names that reflect their product and service lines. GROWMARK registered several names for aspects of the FS/GROWMARK system. Both cooperatives are already pointing some of their new .coop names to their sites.

But smaller, local cooperatives have also jumped in. Aurora Cooperative, a farm supply and grain marketing cooperative in Aurora, Nebraska, was able to reserve their .coop domains names prior to the global

launch because of their membership in the Nebraska Cooperative Council, which is affiliated with NCBA.

The cooperative registered both auroracoop.coop, which is the same as its .com name, as well as simply aurora.coop—the name it plans to use.

Communications Director Brett Faber says the cooperative has already directed the aurora.coop domain name to its current web site and plans to gradually transition away from the .com name.

The cooperative will be promoting aurora.coop in all of their advertising and collateral. He says the shorter name will be easier for people to remember than auroracoop.com and will be another way to promote the member ownership aspect of the business. Aurora.coop will be a way of telling members that "this is their web site," according to Faber. "Our members have a lot of trust in us," he says. "Seeing .coop will have a lot more appeal to them."

Sarah Dorman, with West Central Cooperative in Iowa, agrees. West Central registered several names including westcentral.coop, a name they couldn't get under .com without a hyphen between the two words. "People worry that their co-op will be eaten by big business," Dorman says. "[Coop] will reinforce that

the local co-op will still be there for the farmers. It's a good connection for farmers."

She says the simpler name will also make it easier for users to find them on the worldwide web and should be well-accepted by farmers because "co-ops are a way of life for them."

West Central also registered a series of .coop names to reflect their branded product lines: Soy Chlor and Soy Plus, feed supplements and proteins; and Soy Power, alternative fuel and lubricant products. The cooperative creates products from soy oil and meal from the beans produced by members.

"[Coop] is an exciting advance in technology to be able to associate the cooperative with these products," says Dorman.

Internationally, farmer co-ops have also been aggressive in registering new .coop domain names. The Guajaret Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, the largest dairy co-op and the leading food marketer in India, registered dozens of names for their cooperative. A co-op in the U.K. registered the appealing freshmilk.coop.

The most unusual registration came from the Mongolian Association of Private Herders Cooperatives, which registered mongolia-net.coop. ■

FIND THEM AT:

aurora.coop
cabotcheese.coop
cabotcreamery.coop
chs.coop
growmark.coop
soyplus.coop
soypower.coop
soychlor.coop
westcentral.coop



"People worry that their co-op will be eaten by big business. .Coop will reinforce that the local co-op will still be there for the farmers. It's a good connection for farmers."

Some ineligible registrations, however, are not done in bad faith. One registrant, an individual, attempted to register his surname. In that case, the registrant was unaware of the eligibility requirements that allow only cooperatives and cooperative support organizations to register names in the .coop domain.

Even bona fide cooperatives that register for .coop names through a Verification Partner may be reviewed by dotCoop as an extra check on the system. Once co-op status is confirmed, registrants receive another e-mail notifying them that the registration has been verified and they can now use their names.

In some cases, non-cooperatives have attempted to register their trademarked company and brand

names under .coop as a defensive measure. Those ineligible businesses may never use the .coop names they buy, but they want to make sure that no one else can. DotCoop is developing a policy that will give non-cooperatives the right to put their trademarked names on reserve so that they could never be purchased by others. But those non-cooperative businesses will never have the right to use those names either.

That privilege will likely come at a much higher cost than the \$80 registration fee, according to Byron Henderson, vice president for dotCoop operations. The advantage for the private or investor-owned companies is that they will not have to go through a dispute resolution process against a cooperative that

registers the company's trademarked names.

"Essentially, it saves them time and legal costs," says Henderson. At press time, the policy was in the process of being finalized.

And what if a Verification Partner or Sponsor provides feedback about registrations they think are not legitimate?

"That's part of the ongoing verification process," Allen says. Even if .coop names are active, the dotCoop Operations Center has the right to revoke them without refund at any time if new information shows the registrant is not a co-op. ■

For more information on .coop eligibility, see www.coop.



Integrity Key to Global .Coop Success

Cooperatives and cooperative organizations around the world now have an opportunity to simplify .coop registration for their members—a key association benefit—and help ensure the integrity of the .coop domain.

With the global launch of the .coop domain, dotCoop has put its Verification Partner (VP) Program in full-swing. Verification partners are cooperatives and cooperative organizations around the world that will help the dotCoop Operations Center verify the cooperative status of .coop registrant in their country, countries or sector.

The goal of the VP program is to involve global partners in the cooperative-only domain registration system and to protect the value of the .coop name, according to dotCoop President Paul Hazen. “The program demonstrates that cooperatives worldwide have not just a stake in the integrity of the domain, but a key role in its development.”

Hazen says the program is also a recognition that legal and institutional definitions of cooperatives differ around the world. “The program is designed to respect those differences and the expertise that associations provide in helping to define co-ops in their country.”

Carol Hunter, director of communications for the Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA), a new .coop verification partner, says that CCA is best positioned as a national association to determine the cooperative status of co-ops in that country. CCA will be verifying Anglophone—or English speaking co-ops—while the Conseil Canadien de la Cooperation (CCC), another new VP, will verify francophone cooperatives.

“We want to make sure there is credibility with the registration process,” Hunter says. And with CCA listed on the .coop registration site, she believes Canadian cooperatives will have more confidence in who their partners are. Canada is home to some 10,000 cooperatives, two-thirds of which are Anglophone.

And the benefit for CCA and CCC? “Being a verification partner gives us a greater profile with our members and to non-members as well,” Hunter says. “It also allows us to show leadership in promoting the cooperative advantage—that’s our mission and .coop is consistent with that mandate.”

CCA is aggressively promoting the value of marketing the cooperative advantage. “At the end of the day it will be difficult [for cooperatives] to compete on price alone,” Hunter says. “Co-ops need to differentiate themselves as value-based and community-based enterprises. And [.coop] is another way to show the value of using your cooperative status as part of your marketing cache.”

Verification partners receive a payment for each registration that they verify to compensate them for the added costs of doing so. In addition, VPs must also commit to marketing .coop to their members and within their country.

CCA has launched a six-week marketing campaign that includes weekly e-mails, articles in their print newsletter, and one-on-one communications, which it will follow with monthly communications. CCA has also created a dedicated .coop page on their web site where members can get more information on how to use .coop. The association is profiling early adopters who have registered valuable .coop web

.Coop Verification Partners

- Conseil Canadien de la Cooperation (CCC);
Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)**
Country served: Canada
- Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU)**
Country served: Japan
- Confederacion Uruguaya de Entidades Cooperativas**
Country served: Uruguay
- Lithuanian Consumer Cooperative Union**
Country served: Lithuania
- Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic**
Country served: Czech Republic
- Foreningen Kooperativ Utveckling I Sverige**
Country served: Sweden
- Pellervo Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives**
Country served: Finland
- Orah Cooperative**
Countries served: Switzerland,
Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia
- Institute of Cooperation of Greece**
Country served: Greece
- Instituto Antonio Sergio de Sector Cooperativo**
Country served: Portugal
- National Cooperative Business Association**
Country served: U.S.A.

addresses and is providing marketing materials for their members to use at conferences and other regional meetings.

Verification partners are listed on the .coop registration web site on a pull-down menu. Registrants can select those VPs with which they are affiliated to verify their status as a co-op. The dotCoop Operations Center can then cross-check those cooperatives against information provided by the Verification Partners. That simplifies the domain name registration process for the registering cooperative, and expedites the confirmation of their preferred domain names.

At press time, dotCoop had entered into agreements with 11 verification partners in 10 countries and was continuing discussions with several others interested in serving as VPs. The VP program is also open to sector-specific organizations that may have expertise in cooperatives in a particular industry. ■

For more information, contact Mary Allen toll-free at (866) 288-3154 or via e-mail at support@communicate.coop. International callers must call the ATT Direct Access Number for their country, and then dial the toll-free number above. Check <http://www.att.com/traveler> for current Direct Access Numbers.

Global Excitement for .Coop

To celebrate .coop launch, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) asked its members to provide their perspectives on .coop. Here's what they said:

Co-operatives worldwide see the advantage of .coop, the new global, co-operative-only top-level Internet domain. JCCU has registered jccu.coop as our domain name.
— Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union (Japan)

Coop Norway and .coop, joined together in harmony! We just had to do it! We will carry our co-op domain with pride. It represents the essence of our work—in one word.
— Coop Norway (Norway).

Pellervo has paid very much attention to developing our presence on the web. We think that this helps our member companies in building the co-operative character of their



business into real competitive edge. The recent launch of the .coop domain and Pellervo joining among the first in it, is part of this general co-operative strategy. We are planning on using two .coop addresses: osu-ustoiminta.coop (“cooperation” in Finnish) and Pellervo.coop.
— Pellervo (Finland)

We are delighted to register income.coop as our domain name. It will enhance our image as a co-operative - to serve our members.
— NTUC Income (Singapore)



The co-operative and mutual insurance sector forms a key part of the world financial services industry. The .coop domain will be an effective tool to proclaim the co-operative identity.

— International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF)



Confcooperative is deeply convinced that this suffix is appropriate to co-operatives since it reflects their specific business structure which needs to be differentiated from other forms of businesses, especially in the field of the electronic commerce.

Confcooperative is an Italian national organisation which represents more than 18,000 co-operative enterprises.

— Confederazione Cooperative Italiane (Italy)

The National Confederation of Co-operatives (NATCCO) welcomes the launching of the new .coop domain with co-op pride and joy. We in NATCCO believe that this new domain name will highlight the distinct nature and advantage of co-operatives in the Internet which grows daily in its importance.

— National Confederation of Co-operatives (Philippines)



.Coop will identify very publicly the benefit of co-operation. Co-operative enterprises are value-led organisations which increasingly are being sought out by consumers of services. .Coop will allow new consumers to find co-operatives with ease on the world wide web.

— Co-operative Union (UK)

The essential aim of Fundación Espriu is to develop and promote the health co-operative system and we are convinced that “.coop” will be an important development.

— Fundación Espriu (Spain)

