

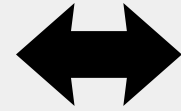
Addressing DNS Abuse and Trademark Misuse

What Can ICANN Do to Strengthen Trust in the Domain Name System?

Presented by Sanjina Kshetri
ICANN87 NextGen (2026)

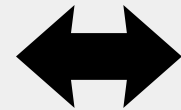


DNS ABUSE



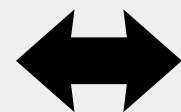
- Phishing
- Malware
- Botnets
- Pharming
- Spam only when used to deliver another DNS-abuse type

Trademark Misuse



- Cybersquatting
- Brand impersonation
- Confusingly similar names can exploit existing trust

The Interaction



- A malicious domain may borrow a trusted brand identity to make deception more convincing.

The Economic Drivers of Abuse

How Registration Pricing and Discounts Scale Malicious Activity

The Value-Vulnerability Curve



GLM Regression Findings

+49% Spike

Correlates to a mere \$1 promotional discount on domain registration.

+6.6% Increase

Correlates to every \$1 baseline price drop.

What has ICANN been doing?

2024

Contractual amendments

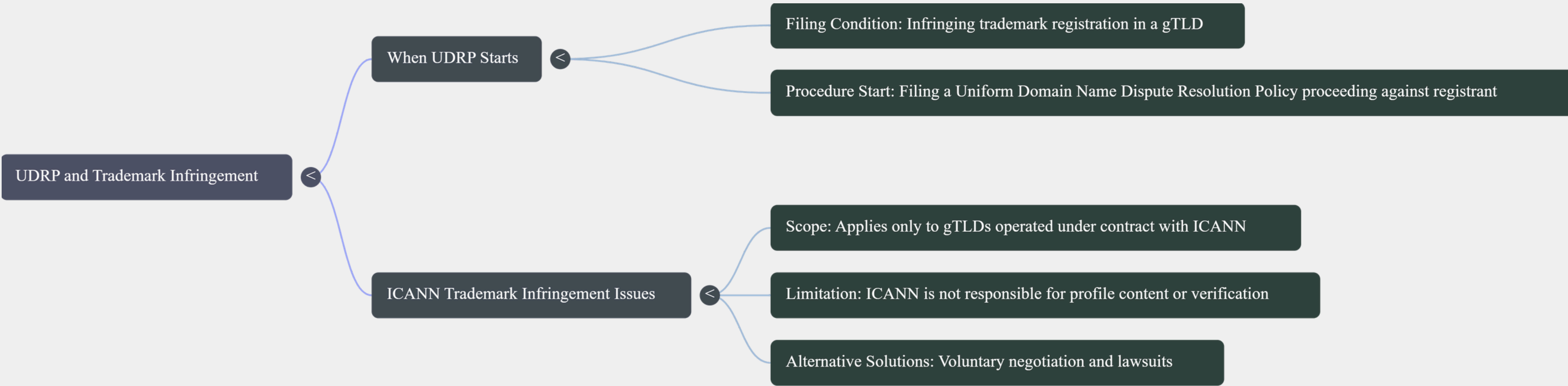
gTLD registries/registrars gained clearer obligations around actionable DNS-abuse reports and mitigation.

Data & Measurement

Domain Metrics and Identifier Technology Health Indicators (ITHI) providing centralized, fact-based trend analysis.
Contractual Compliance Audit Program ensuring registries and registrars to adhere to consensus policies

Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH)

A central database that alerts brandowners during Sunrise periods when matching domains are registered.



**Then, What is the
Problem?**

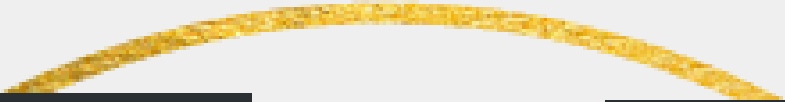
The limitation of our current architecture

- While the UDRP is a forum to enforce trademark rights, it has its own unique and limited purpose: to resolve cases of cybersquatting.
- Redacted WHOIS and privacy shields make it harder for trademark owners to identify cybersquatters and counterfeiters



Proactive Verification **VS** Reactive Suspension

- **Mandatory KYC & Operational Validation**
- **Implement API Access Guardrails**
- **Restrict Abusive Discount Pricing**
- **Regulate High-Risk Payment Methods**
- **Implement a standardized, expedited Pre-Complaint Registrant Verification Mechanism**
- **Introduce an optional, low-cost UDRP Mediation Track hosted by dispute resolution providers**



**DNS abuse and trademark
misuse are not exactly the
same problem.**

**But they can intersect
within the the same
domain name ecosystem.**



*Thank
You*



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NextGen, 2026
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