



Public Perceptions of Policy Review for .nz:

A Qualitative Study – In-depth interviews
November 2019

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Introduction

1.1 Background

InternetNZ is a non-profit organisation that supports an open and secure internet for all New Zealanders. It is the steward of .nz providing the infrastructure, security and management support. The domain name system is a vital component of the internet and funding from the sale of .nz domain names is used to support the development of New Zealand's internet through policy, community grants, research and events.

InternetNZ is currently undertaking a comprehensive review to assess the performance of the current environment, principles and policies. The aim is to identify how the internet and .nz can improve and have principles and policies that are robust and reflect the wider needs and expectations of the .nz internet community and the wider New Zealand public. The review is being conducted by InternetNZ and an Advisory Panel (the Panel).

The purpose of the Panel is to provide technical and operational input as well as wider stakeholder views and advice to help InternetNZ identify issues, develop options and solutions and lead community engagement.

InternetNZ and the Panel have already canvassed opinion among its stakeholders via an online survey. InternetNZ on behalf of the Panel has commissioned additional qualitative research to explore views of the .nz domain name space among key audiences not covered in the online survey. The qualitative research comprised of two stages, one among the general public and the other among specified community groups and organisations. This report summarises the findings from the research conducted among community groups and organisations. The qualitative research among the general public is outlined in a separate report.

1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of this stage of research was to explore views and understanding of issues in the .nz domain name space across a range of community groups and organisations.

The groups and organisations have not been canvassed in previous research conducted by the Panel.

1.3 Research design

This report is based on qualitative in-depth telephone interviews. Qualitative research concentrates on words and observations and involves the encouragement of disclosures in a nurturing and unthreatening environment.

The in-depth interviews were conducted after the general public focus groups. This report is based on seven in-depth interviews. The depth interviews were conducted from 1 to 8 November 2019.

1.3.1 Interview specifications

The duration of each interview was around 30-45 minutes. The interviews were conducted amongst the following audiences:

- 2x depth interview – organisations supporting ethnic communities/ immigrants/ refugees
- 2x depth interviews – senior advocacy groups
- 1x depth interview – community organisation
- 1x depth interview – Māori community group
- 1x depth interview – rural community group.

1.3.2 Discussion guide

The discussion guide was based on the research objectives and was developed in consultation with the Panel and InternetNZ.

A qualitative question schedule is not like a quantitative questionnaire where questions are ordered and fixed. In qualitative research, question schedules are used as a guide to encourage participants to discuss and explore ideas and thoughts they have on the topic being researched. A strength of qualitative research is that lines of questioning are flexible and allow for additional questions to be asked while conducting the interviews.

1.3.5 Analysis

Transcriptions and notes from the interviews were searched to identify key themes.

While qualitative research can be used to identify a range of issues and assess the intensity with which views are held, quantitative research is necessary to establish with certainty the extent to which views expressed are held throughout wider populations.

Executive summary

2.1 Views of the internet

The internet played an important role for all participants interviewed. There was some interest in news relating to the internet if it was relevant to the community group.

All community groups interviewed operated a .nz website. Most indicated that the .nz domain was aligned with their organisation and said they would not have considered having a .com or any other domain.

2.2 Perceptions of .nz

Three out of the seven participants interviewed could nominate InternetNZ as the organisation who manages the registry for .nz domain names. Among those who could not name InternetNZ, they assumed and hoped that it was run by a New Zealand based organisation.

When asked whether the organisation that manages .nz was doing a good job, many felt they did not know how to judge performance as they had limited knowledge of what the job involved. Participants leaned more towards a positive view of performance since they had not had any issues.

The perceived role of the managers of .nz was seen to include: security, pricing, availability of domains, limiting offensive language and hate speech.

None of the participants interviewed had interacted with .nz policies.

2.3 Policy areas

- Security

Overall, most participants felt that .nz was secure, although a few did mention that nothing online can be 100% secure. The .nz domain name appeared to provide some reassurance as they felt that if it was run by a New Zealand based organisation there would be greater responsibility and care taken to protect these New Zealand sites. Participants expected InternetNZ to be constantly updating security to meet rapidly changing technology.

- Openness

Some participants had difficulty in understanding what 'openness' meant in relation to .nz. Since many were not aware of InternetNZ, there were suggestions to raise awareness of .nz to New Zealanders so that they understand the benefits of having this type of domain. It was suggested that InternetNZ works with communities to understand each community's needs.

- Access

Most felt that .nz was relatively easy to access and could not easily think of barriers. Some thought of access in terms of a physical connection and so this term had associations with telecommunication companies. When asked specifically about access to .nz, most felt it was easy to access and the main barrier raised was cost, in terms of both the cost of the domain and the cost of an internet connection.

- Privacy

There was a low awareness of privacy issues in relation to .nz. Most privacy issues mentioned were outside of the .nz scope, with participants citing poor password protection and other data issues. No one raised privacy in terms of the information held about owners of domain names. When prompted on this, most did not see any issue with this as most of the information about their organisation was available via their websites already.

- Treaty of Waitangi and Māori language

Many felt that the management of .nz should appropriately reflect the partnership intended by the principals of the Treaty of Waitangi. There were mentions of InternetNZ working collaboratively with iwi leaders by showing respect and acknowledging cultural practices.

Most felt that the use of Māori language was very important and that Māori language needs to be protected.

- Human rights

Although most acknowledged that it was not solely InternetNZ's responsibility, there was support for limiting or banning hate speech on .nz sites.

Most felt this was very important and there was a suggestion for InternetNZ to consult and work in partnership with the Human Rights Commission.

- E-commerce

All participants felt that .nz is supporting New Zealand businesses and organisations in being successful. There were many mentions of leveraging the New Zealand brand when using a .nz domain name.

Again, there was a perceived need for improvements to education and raising awareness of the benefits of a .nz domain name, especially amongst new migrants as they may not be aware of this option or its advantages.

2.4 Policy focus

At the end of the interview, participants were asked what they felt were the key areas that InternetNZ should focus on. Most felt the current policies were still very important but that other areas are worth focusing on too.

Additional areas to focus on included, raising InternetNZ's profile, educating the public and community groups around the benefits of using a .nz domain, and creating partnerships with other organisations.

Views of the internet

Most participants stated that the internet was vital to their community and the organisation they work in. As found among the general public, the community groups and organisations identified 'connection and communication' and 'knowledge and education' as important benefits of access to the internet.

Similar to the findings in the focus groups, only a few participants showed interest in new stories related to the internet but did indicate that it was just out of curiosity, personal relevance or if the topic was related to the community they represent.

Most were aware of basic internet-related terms like 'website', 'email address' and 'domain', only one participant requested a definition of 'domain name'.

All community groups interviewed operated a .nz website. Most indicated that the .nz was aligned with their organisation and said they would not have considered having a .com or any other domain.

All community groups used the internet in their role and indicated they use a variety of software to connect with their community. All used email, some used messenger apps such as WhatsApp, Teams or Skype.

Perceptions of .nz

2.1 Managers of .nz

Three out of the seven participants interviewed could nominate InternetNZ as the organisation who manages the registry for .nz domain names. Of those that did not name InternetNZ, two participants guessed that it was “Domainz”. As found with the general public, those who could not name InternetNZ, assumed and hoped that it was run by a New Zealand based organisation.

Not aware who manages the registry. Hope and assume it is an NZ based company or a government organisation.
(Māori community)

When asked whether the organisation that manages .nz was doing a good job, many felt they did not know how to judge performance as they had limited knowledge of what the job involved. Participants leaned more towards a positive view of performance since they had not had any issues.

In the absence of hearing they are doing a bad job, yes, I consider they are doing a good job. (Senior community)

Don't know what a bad job would look like. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

There were calls for InternetNZ to raise awareness of their role and that they are in fact a New Zealand organisation.

2.2 Unprompted policies

Participants were asked what they perceive the role of the managers of .nz to be, the following were raised:

- Security, communicate on updates to security measures
- Pricing and availability of domain names
- Limiting offensive language and hate speech
- Monitor illegitimate websites or emails and assess risks
- Keeping business in New Zealand
- Making sure that traffic is New Zealand based
- Transparency of processes so New Zealanders understand what is achieved by InternetNZ
- Consulting with communities and trying to reach wider communities.

None of the participants interviewed had interacted with .nz policies.

Policy areas

3.1 Security of .nz

Overall, most participants felt that .nz was secure, although a few mentioned that nothing is completely secure, but they felt safe using a .nz domain. Some were assured by the .nz domain name as they felt that if it was run by a New Zealand based organisation there would be greater responsibility and care taken to protect these New Zealand sites.

Can't really judge whether .nz is secure, except I think that everything in NZ is safe. It's kind of that kiwi 'New Zealand made' sticker, feels like anything with a .nz on it is safe. (Māori community)

A few participants indicated they expected a certain amount of spam and/or phishing. They conceded that these risks seemed to be part of being online, although there were those who indicated these risks were not due to the .nz domain.

Part and parcel of the treachery of belonging to the internet. (Senior community)

Phishing pops up occasionally, lots of minor phishing attempts but have never seen anything to suggest that these issues were because of the domain we are using. (Community group)

Suitably secure, not any less secure than any other domain such as .com or .uk. We do get a little bit of spam but think that is kind of unavoidable. (Community group)

There were calls for InternetNZ to work to protect those using a .nz domain. This could be by filtering out spam and phishing attacks.

So far we have the phishing attempts in hand, but eventually someone is going to fall for it, so if there is anything they (InternetNZ) can do on their end to prevent phishing attacks or cut down on spam emails that would be great, it would be a load off my mind. (Community group)

Participants expected InternetNZ to be constantly updating security to meet the rapidly changing technology.

We all need to be continuing to think about security as the changing environment is adapting, we don't know what we don't know so I would like to think that they are reviewing the security systems on a regular basis. (Senior community)

One participant raised the idea of having a 'Made in New Zealand' sticker that identified a website as a certified safe site that is checked by InternetNZ as a way to increase confidence in security.

Knowing that an org that has a .nz domain name that it is supported by InternetNZ. Having a disclaimer that says, "This site is a .nz site and here is the made in NZ sticker and here is our security policy to show we are safe." (Māori community)

In terms of being reassured about security issues one participant suggested updates from InternetNZ via a newsletter.

Regular updates (from InternetNZ) would increase confidence in the security of .nz. (Rural community)

3.2 Openness of .nz

Some participants had difficulty in understanding what ‘openness’ meant in relation to .nz. Since many were not aware of InternetNZ, there were suggestions to raise awareness of .nz to New Zealanders so that they understand the benefits of having this type of domain. It was suggested that InternetNZ works with communities to understand each community’s needs.

Working with us to meet the needs of our community (senior community). Making sure they have the right information to create tools, activities, whatever they need to create online to provide the options for older people but at the same time providing the security for older people. (Senior community)

Education was mentioned by many as a way for InternetNZ to raise their own profile while helping communities understand the benefits of choosing a .nz domain. This could be in the form of small workshops or having an InternetNZ representative attend community meetings.

We would like to support digital literacy improvements, increases in knowledge and education around the use of the internet and the opportunities for them, how you can do things securely and find information that you can trust. (Senior community)

A person makes the difference - in-person education, could be a workshop with partnership organisations who could be InternetNZ's voice to spread your (InternetNZ's) message further. Create a relevant message to specific people within those ethnic groups to help inform others. Allow people to ask questions and communicate ideas. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

It was important for InternetNZ to tailor the education methods and terminology to suit each audience. There was also a suggestion to provide the information in a variety of ways to cater to different learning styles, for example, some infographics, videos and short one-page information summaries.

Right language for the right audience. (Senior community)

One participant mentioned having access to a support contact from InternetNZ who could help users to understand that using a .nz domain is safe and secure.

Giving the customer that confidence to feel safe and secure online. (Māori community)

In order to increase openness, InternetNZ could look at the costing structure and investigate if there are ways to make rates more affordable for charities or other communities who would benefit from the support.

Provide a different rate (for domain) for charities. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

Also, InternetNZ could look at payment structures to help those individuals on lower incomes or smaller businesses so that they can pay a monthly fee rather than a yearly fee.

Could offer a good reduced rate to set up a .nz website for start-up Māori businesses, even if it was only for the first year. It's about helping our wahine and whanau businesses can contribute to equitably our nation's economy. When we can help them, they will help their whanau and it will carry on from there. (Māori community)

3.3 Access to .nz

Most felt that .nz was relatively easy to access and could not easily think of barriers. Some thought of access in terms of a physical connection and so had associations with telecommunication companies. When asked specifically about access to .nz, most felt it was easy to access and the main barrier raised was cost, in terms of both the cost of the domain and the cost of an internet connection.

One community representative that thought of access in terms of physical access rather than online access of .nz was the rural community. This was especially important as some rural New Zealanders do not have access to high-speed internet or mobile coverage. Although InternetNZ was not perceived to be responsible for this, limited infrastructure was thought to be an important issue for telecommunication companies to work on. InternetNZ could help by lobbying for improved infrastructure upgrades in rural areas.

We support entrepreneurs, especially rural women-owned businesses and if they don't have good technology, they can't have a website, regardless of whether it is .nz or anything else. (Rural community)

When asked what could be done to increase access, lowering access costs and raising awareness were the suggestions raised. A few participants indicated funding would be beneficial for their communities, whether this was via full funding or a sliding scale where the fees were reduced for community organisations. Improving awareness amongst these groups may also lead to more opting for a .nz site, as currently the benefits may not be known by potential users of a .nz domain.

3.4 Privacy in relation to .nz

There was a low awareness of privacy issues in relation to .nz. Most privacy issues mentioned were outside of the .nz scope, participants cited poor password protection, and other data issues. No one raised privacy in terms of the information held about owners of domain names. When prompted on this, most did not see any issue for community groups with this as most of the information was available via their websites already so there were no concerns raised.

Concerns were raised around privacy in relation to client information that was extremely sensitive in nature. A refugee community group noted that they store extremely confidential personal information about their clients, and they were worried about having that information hacked. Although this was a concern about protecting privacy, it was not specifically related to .nz, more about the risk of a leak via malicious activity. This participant felt that there was a need to educate people about the risks of storing private personal information. They suggested training via a workshop that could incorporate other topics such as security.

In terms of being reassured about privacy issues one participant suggested updates from InternetNZ via a newsletter, combined with the security update mentioned earlier.

One participant thought that InternetNZ should consider partnering with other New Zealand based organisations that are working in a similar space e.g. CERT NZ (Cyber Security).

Partnerships. They (InternetNZ) can do it on their own, they cannot operate in isolation they are one of the many cogs in the whole field, if they try to do things on their own, they will come unstuck. (Senior community)

3.5 Treaty of Waitangi and Māori language

Many felt that the management of .nz should appropriately reflect the partnership intended by the principals of the Treaty of Waitangi. There were mentions of InternetNZ working collaboratively with iwi leaders by showing respect and acknowledging cultural practices.

There should be an acknowledgement that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is our founding document and that there is a partnership with tangata whenua. (Rural community)

Should be well documented to include the collaborative approach and to make sure that the population has had a say, inclusion of the people for decisions. (Senior community)

Making sure iwi leaders are aware and they can be the voice within their communities. Establish a good network between iwi and InternetNZ. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

Has to have an understanding of the treaty, it is a special thing, we are one of two indigenous cultures in the world that have a treaty with the crown. We need to respect each other and acknowledge the culture (te reo, the way we do things). (Māori community)

However, a few failed to see any connection between the Treaty of Waitangi and .nz.

The usage of Māori language was viewed as very important by most participants. Most felt that the Māori language needs to be protected.

Definitely think that Te reo needs to be protected, can't just slap a Māori name onto just any website. Should be by Māori for Māori. (Māori community)

Protect things that are uniquely ours. (Community group)

Some mentioned the use of macrons to ensure the correct spelling is used any time te reo is used.

A Māori community participant highlighted the importance of being consulted when it came to the use of te reo.

When it comes to Māori things, reo and language, we need to be consulted and have that kōrero, it is part of our tikanga and our cultural practices, we need to be at the table when it comes to making those decisions. Needs to be for Māori by Māori. (Māori community)

One participant felt that the use of Māori language may create the space for better representation of New Zealand's diverse population online by encouraging other ethnic communities to promote their language.

Using Māori language properly may provide more openness to other ethnic communities who have similar ways of doing things. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

3.6 Human rights

There was one mention of access to the internet being a human right. This participant also highlighted the importance of access to the internet in relation to women in rural communities.

Very important (human rights in relation to .nz), especially for women because women are disadvantaged by not having access to the internet. (Rural community)

Although most acknowledged that it was not solely InternetNZ's responsibility, there was support for limiting or banning hate speech on .nz sites.

The internet will always have its dark corners but that doesn't mean we can't stop some from publicly being available. They don't need that space. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

Most felt this was very important and there was a suggestion for InternetNZ to consult and work in partnership with the Human Rights Commission.

3.7 E-commerce

All participants felt that .nz is supporting New Zealand businesses and organisations in being successful. There were many mentions of leveraging the New Zealand brand when using a .nz domain name.

Having .nz does make NZ businesses more recognisable, certainly can help in marketing yourself as a kiwi owned and operated. (Community group)

Again, there was a perceived need for improvements to education and raising awareness of the benefits of a .nz domain name, especially amongst new migrants as they may not be aware of this option or the benefits it provides.

A lot of wahine need websites, a lot of wahine are selling on Facebook and so they could do with help getting a .nz domains. Could do workshops, open to any support, need tech and digital specialists. Need to raise awareness amongst their clients (wahine run businesses) about the options such as .nz, we would like some support if they are willing to have a kōrero about that. (Māori community)

Workshops or talks with businesses and charities to understand .nz policies. Could do a combined workshop where a few staff from multiple organisations come together. Maybe one in each big city e.g. Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. (Refuge community)

3.8 Communications

Overwhelmingly, email communication was preferred by those interviewed. Participants would be happy to receive a summary or short overview of the policy review via a link in an email.

Participants highlighted that it was important to use language that was easy to understand, they also suggested multiple formats to present the information e.g. short one-page summary, or a short video.

A few participants would like to receive regular updates in a newsletter email.

Policy focus

At the end of the interview, participants were asked what they felt were the key policy areas that InternetNZ should focus on. Most felt the current policies were still very important but that other areas are worth focusing on too.

Among the policies already established, the majority mentioned security as one of the most important policies that InternetNZ should focus on. Followed closely by access and privacy. Policies relating to the Treaty of Waitangi, the use of Māori language and human rights were also raised by a few as the top areas to focus on. One participant was unable to choose particular areas to focus on as they felt the issues were closely related and all essential to get right.

The additional areas to focus on are as follows:

- There were many who felt that InternetNZ should raise their profile and have transparency around its role.
- Educating the public and community groups was seen as important. This could be via workshops among community groups. There was one suggestion to use a collaborative approach and contact local boards or regional councils to reach a wide audience to spread the message around the benefits of using a .nz domain.

Could look at working with local boards or regional council as they have contacts with community groups as they provide funding to some groups. There are also networking meetings that would be a good way for InternetNZ to approach a large audience at once. (Refugee/ Recent migrant community)

- There was a suggestion to consider partnering with other organisations working in a similar space as InternetNZ such as CERT NZ (Cyber security).

Partnerships. They (InternetNZ) can do it on their own, they cannot operate in isolation they are one of the many cogs in the whole field, if they try to do things on their own, they will come unstuck (Senior community)

Conclusion

All community groups believed the internet played an important role, however, interest in news relating to the internet was generally limited to information relevant to the community group.

Three out of the seven participants interviewed could nominate InternetNZ as the organisation who manages the registry for .nz domain names and none had interacted with .nz policies. Most were unsure of the performance of InternetNZ but leaned more towards a positive view of performance since they had not had any issues.

The role of the managers of .nz was seen to cover security, pricing, availability of domains, and limiting offensive language and hate speech.

Overall, most participants felt that .nz was secure. The .nz domain name provided some reassurance as they felt that if it was run by a New Zealand based organisation there would be greater responsibility to protect these New Zealand sites.

Some participants had difficulty in understanding what 'openness' meant in relation to .nz. There were suggestions to raise awareness of .nz to New Zealanders so that they understand the benefits of having this type of domain. It was suggested that InternetNZ works with communities to understand each community's needs.

Most felt that .nz was relatively easy to access and could not easily think of barriers. Some thought of access in terms of a physical connection and so had associations with telecommunication companies. On prompting, most felt it was easy to access .nz with the main barrier being cost (both the cost of the domain and the cost of internet connection).

There was a low awareness of privacy issues in relation to .nz. For community groups, there were no concerns about privacy in terms of the information held about owners of domain names as this information was readily available.

Community groups were more likely than the general public to see how the Treaty of Waitangi may be relevant to .nz. Many felt that the management of .nz should appropriately reflect the partnership intended by the principals of the Treaty of Waitangi. There were mentions of InternetNZ working collaboratively with iwi leaders and that Māori language needed to be protected.

Although most acknowledged that it was not solely InternetNZ's responsibility, there was support for limiting or banning hate speech on .nz sites. Unequal access to the internet was also seen to be a potential human rights issue.

All participants felt that .nz is supporting New Zealand businesses and organisations in being successful. However, there was a perceived need for improvements to education and raising awareness of the benefits of a .nz domain name, especially amongst new migrants as they may not be aware of this option.

Most community groups were comfortable with the current policies in place but that other areas are worth focusing on too. These included raising InternetNZ's profile, educating the public and community groups around the benefits of using a .nz domain, and creating partnerships with other organisations.