

Mission and Purpose of the Proposed .bsky gTLD

The mission of the proposed .bsky gTLD is to create a namespace that advances Bluesky's vision of user-centric digital identity by fostering authentic interactions across the Bluesky ecosystem and supporting the development of new forms of online communication and community participation. Since launching in 2022 as a Public Benefit LLC, Bluesky's mission is to develop and drive large-scale adoption of technologies for open and decentralized public conversation. ICANN's new gTLD program presents a unique opportunity to advance this mission in ways which benefit Bluesky users of the open-source AT Protocol and the broader global Internet community.

Bluesky seeks to operate .bsky as a Specification 13 .Brand TLD, maintaining stewardship and oversight of the namespace while leveraging the unique capabilities of the Domain Name System (DNS) to support authenticated digital identities for Bluesky and participants within the broader Bluesky ecosystem. The Applicant intends for .bsky to serve not only as a branded namespace for official services and operations, but also as a foundation for identity-based innovation that aligns with Bluesky's broader mission of empowering users with greater control over their online presence.

Authentic Digital Identity

On the AT Protocol (which currently is under consideration by an IETF standards working group), user handles are domain names verified through DNS: a user that controls the domain can claim a handle and the user's domain and protocol ID are bidirectionally linked. A handle is a verifiable pointer to a stable cryptographic identity.

Controlling a TLD will give Bluesky control of a whole namespace and can issue *.bsky handles to vetted users. Since anyone can independently verify that a handle ends in .bsky, the handle itself (as a derivative of the TLD) will serve as a portable, self-verifying signal — proof of Bluesky vetting, with no separate badge database or API needed.

The Applicant believes that authenticity and user control are increasingly important on the Internet as users navigate a complex digital landscape that includes impersonation, fraud, and misleading content. Through oversight of the .bsky namespace, the Applicant intends to provide a clear and recognizable indicator that a domain name has been issued, authorized, sponsored, or otherwise approved within the Bluesky ecosystem according to clear, pre-determined criteria that users understand.

By combining the reliability of the DNS with Bluesky governance and policy controls, the Applicant seeks to create an environment that promotes authentic online communication.

Allocation of Domain Names to Bluesky Users

The Applicant envisions that .bsky may become an important component of the identity infrastructure supporting the Bluesky digital ecosystem.

Subject to policies established by Bluesky and compliance with applicable ICANN requirements, the Applicant may allocate domain names to eligible users, organizations, developers, creators, and other participants in the Bluesky community. These allocations would be intended to provide users with meaningful identifiers that can be associated with their participation in Bluesky services and related activities.

The Applicant expects that allocated domain names may serve functions such as:

- Digital identity and account representation
- Creator and publisher identities
- Organizational and community representation
- Authentication and verification purposes
- Development and application-specific services
- Other innovative uses that emerge as the Bluesky ecosystem evolves

Any such allocation program would be administered in accordance with policies established by Bluesky. The Applicant would determine eligibility requirements, allocation procedures, acceptable use standards, dispute resolution mechanisms, abuse mitigation practices, and other safeguards to preserve the integrity of the namespace.

Through this model, Bluesky seeks to promote user empowerment while maintaining accountability and operational stability.

Platform Innovation and Ecosystem Development

The .bsky gTLD will provide a flexible platform for innovation that supports both current and future developments within the Bluesky ecosystem.

The Applicant intends to use the namespace to support official Bluesky operations, products, services, developer resources, community initiatives, and digital identity programs. At the same time, the namespace will provide a foundation for exploring new approaches to identity management, authentication, verification, interoperability, and user-controlled online presence.

The Applicant believes that the Internet is evolving toward greater user control, portability, and transparency. The .bsky gTLD will allow Bluesky to develop and test new models that leverage DNS as a digital identity layer, to mainstream and make DNS more approachable for average who have not previously owned a domain name, while maintaining appropriate oversight and governance.

Security and Stability

Security, stability, and responsible stewardship are fundamental objectives of the proposed .bsky registry.

As the operator of a .Brand namespace, Bluesky will establish policies and operational practices designed to protect the integrity of any domain name registered within .bsky TLD. In managing the namespace, Applicant will implement standards for registration oversight, abuse prevention, authentication, dispute management, and technical operations.

The Applicant believes that a well-governed namespace supports a more secure Internet environment. Accordingly, all registrations within .bsky will remain subject to registry policies and controls designed to protect users, preserve the reputation of the namespace, and ensure the continued stability of registry operations.

Public Interest Benefits

Although .bsky will operate as a Specification 13 .Brand TLD, the Applicant believes the proposed gTLD will provide meaningful public interest benefits.

Through its focus on authenticated identity, user empowerment, and responsible governance, .bsky has the potential to reduce opportunities for abuse and impersonation, and provide users with new mechanisms for establishing durable and recognizable digital identities that they can truly own.

The Applicant believes that user-associated identifiers within a controlled namespace represents an innovative application of the DNS that can contribute positively to the continued evolution of the Internet and the broader domain name ecosystem.

Long-Term Sustainability of the .bsky Namespace

A further objective of the proposed .bsky gTLD is to establish a sustainable and durable namespace that can support the long-term needs of Bluesky, its users, and the broader Internet community.

The Applicant views .bsky as a long-term digital infrastructure asset rather than a short-term branding or marketing initiative. The namespace is intended to provide a stable foundation upon which Bluesky can continue to develop services, identity solutions, community initiatives, and online experiences.

The Applicant also believes that sustainable digital identity is an increasingly important requirement for Internet users. Individuals and organizations often invest significant time and effort in building online reputations and communities. Yet, many existing identity systems are owned by particular applications, platforms, or commercial services. By

responsibly allocating domain names within .bsky, Bluesky seeks to support more durable and persistent identities that can evolve with users' needs.

The .bsky namespace is intended to support the continued growth of Bluesky's ecosystem by providing a consistent and scalable framework for identity, discovery, authentication, and community participation. As the platform expands to serve additional users, creators, developers, and communities, the gTLD will provide a flexible structure for accommodating future use cases while maintaining operational stability.

The Applicant further believes that sustainability is closely linked to responsible governance. Accordingly, Bluesky intends to maintain appropriate policies, technical standards, and operational controls to protect the integrity of the namespace, promote user trust, and ensure that .bsky remains a valuable and reliable resource for participants over the long term.

By combining stable registry operations, innovative identity capabilities, and thoughtful stewardship of the namespace, Bluesky intends for .bsky to serve as a sustainable platform that delivers ongoing value to users, strengthens the resilience of the Bluesky ecosystem, and contributes positively to the continued evolution of the Internet.

Conclusion

The purpose of the proposed .bsky gTLD is to establish an innovative namespace that advances Bluesky's stated public benefit mission, strengthens the authenticity of online identity, and supports the development of user-centric digital presence and communication.

While .bsky will be operated as a Specification 13 .Brand TLD under the stewardship of Bluesky Social, PBC, the Applicant intends for the namespace to extend beyond traditional corporate branding by supporting authenticated participation from users and communities within the defined Bluesky ecosystem. Through the controlled allocation of domain names, robust governance, and a commitment to innovation, Bluesky seeks to create a namespace that empowers users by giving them meaningful ownership and control of their digital identity.