

Q133 Supporting Information – Meaning and Cultural Context

.neko

This attachment offers further context on the meaning, global relevance, and long-term sustainability of .neko, supplementing the Applicant’s response to Question 133.

“Neko” (猫 / ネコ) is the Japanese word for “cat.” The term reflects Japanese linguistic and cultural roots while linking to the global appeal of cats as companion animals, cultural icons, and subjects of online content, creative expression, commerce, and animal welfare efforts.

Although “neko” originates in Japanese, the term appears in international consumer and Internet culture. Cat cafés are a well-known example. Japan’s first cat café, Neko no Jikan (猫の時間), opened in Osaka in 2004, and the concept has since spread across North America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia, and other markets. The continued visibility of cat cafés shows how cat-related culture can travel globally while retaining recognizable Japanese-origin terminology.

Japanese-origin cat-themed games and various consumer products have also introduced the word “neko” to international audiences, often retaining the Japanese term in English-language titles rather than translating it.

In Japan, cat culture has a strong public presence. Cat Day (猫の日, neko no hi) is observed annually on February 22, a date associated with the Japanese cat sound “nyan-nyan-nyan.” The event is widely recognized in Japanese media and commerce, reflecting the continuing relevance of cats in Japan.

The term also appears in Japanese-origin cultural vocabulary used internationally. The compound “maneki-neko” (招き猫, beckoning cat) is recognized as a Japanese-origin English loan-compound. The compound “nekomimi” (猫耳), meaning “cat ears,” is widely used in anime, manga, character design, cosplay, and kawaii-aesthetic contexts. These examples show that “neko” and related compounds are not limited to domestic Japanese use, but appear in international cultural, consumer, and Internet vocabulary.

.neko is not intended as a restricted namespace. Instead, it is designed as an open, distinctive, identity-focused space for registrants who want to associate their online presence with cats, cat culture, cat-related content, animal welfare, creative expression, or related commercial and community activities.

This context supports the Applicant’s view that .neko has a clear meaning, strong cultural roots, and a sustainable foundation for long-term use as an open generic top-level domain.

Sources Consulted

The Applicant consulted public reference materials on the meaning and cultural usage of “neko,” including dictionary and cultural-reference entries for terms such as “maneki-neko” and “neko,” public information on cat cafés and Cat Day in Japan, and references on Japanese cat-related vocabulary in anime, manga, consumer products, and Internet culture. These sources were used only to provide linguistic and cultural context for the applied-for string.