

# Dot-Jobs Legal Dispute Ends With Win for Generic Job Boards on .JOBS

<http://www.ere.net/2012/12/17/dot-jobs-legal-dispute-ends-with-win-for-generic-job-boards-on-jobs/>

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The long-standing legal dispute over the establishment of job boards using the SHRM-sponsored .jobs Internet address has been resolved in favor of the job boards.

This means that the [40,000 site Universe.jobs network](#), run by DirectEmployers Association, will continue to operate, and can even expand if it chooses. Other job boards now will also be able to use that Internet domain, an extension just like the more familiar .com, .org, and .net. A new round of address issuance is scheduled to open in January.



[Industry analyst Kevin Murphy called the decision](#) by the Internet’s addressing authority — [the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](#) — “opening the floodgates for third-party job listings services.”

ICANN, which issued a breach of contract notice in February 2011 over how the .jobs addresses were being used, did not explain its decision. Nor, for that matter, has it as yet posted any official notice of its decision. Instead, it posted the request to end the legal proceedings [sent to an international arbitration group by registrar Employ Media](#). An ICANN spokesman called to say additional details were unavailable today, but there may be some tomorrow.

However, Employ Media this afternoon issued a statement saying the matter was resolved. Tom Embrescia, chairman and CEO of Employ Media, said in a prepared statement, “I am particularly pleased that ICANN has agreed that we are in full compliance as the registry operator of .JOBS. “Resolution of this dispute with ICANN gives us, the .JOBS Universe and those registering existing and future .JOBS domains the ability to move forward with business certainty.”

Now, with the legal issues out of the way, Employ Media says it will open an RFP next month for the awarding of additional .jobs addresses. The announcement says:

There are two classes of domain name registration in .JOBS: Company names such as [www.att.jobs](#) and [www.nissan.jobs](#) and non-company names such as [www.US.jobs](#), [www.marketing.jobs](#) and [www.veterans.jobs](#). Companies are able to apply for their company name directly through their .JOBS registrar. Non-company names have been periodically allocated by Request for Proposal (RFP), such as the process in 2011 that produced the .JOBS Universe by DirectEmployers Association.

Additional details for proposals will be posted at [www.RFP.jobs](#).



Broadening the issuance of .jobs addresses beyond the original terms allowing only real company names to be associated with a .jobs extension had been opposed by a coalition of organizations and job boards, including the [International Association of Employment Web Sites](#). Peter Weddle, the IAEWS executive director, said he

knows nothing more about the resolution than what is available on the ICANN site and what Murphy posted in an article on [Domainincite.com](http://Domainincite.com). The IAEWS was one of several organizations and companies, including Monster and CareerBuilder, that had opposed allowing the use of the .jobs extension for job boards. John Bell, chair of the opposition group, The .JOBS Charter Compliance Coalition, has not yet responded to requests for comment on the development or on possible future action by the group.

Murphy's article includes links to a letter sent by ICANN to Employ Media, which licenses and manages the use of .jobs addresses. In the letter ICANN says it was withdrawing its notice of breach. "All of the issues raised in the Notice of Breach have been resolved to our satisfaction."

What made ICANN decide to settle is unclear; Murphy called the reasoning "a little fuzzy." One reason ICANN gave, [was a letter from the Society for Human Resource Management](#) saying using .jobs for job boards was both acceptable to the organization and even expected. However, that has been SHRM's position at least since its policy committee approved modifications in 2011 to the original agreement creating the .jobs domain.

Writes Murphy:

Nothing seems to have changed here — it's been Employ Media and SHRM's position all along that the registrations were legit.

So did ICANN merely sense defeat in the (arbitration) case and get cold feet?

Unless the .JOBS Coalition decides to take some further action — and it is not at all clear that it even can — the matter is closed. Employ Media's statement did not discuss the settlement or its terms.

Bill Warren, executive director of DirectEmployers Association, said in response to emailed questions,

As you know, we never directly felt we were a part of the dispute between Employ Media and ICANN, but we are happy they have resolved their differences. Our Board is very pleased by the news. We continue to welcome those that want to join us in the ongoing development of the .JOBS Universe in ways beneficial to both employers and job seekers.

This issue began several years ago, not long after Embrescia said he was looking at ways to expand use of the .jobs domain. SHRM and Employ Media had promoted creation of the domain in 2005 as a way to simplify corporate career website access, and to provide a level of assurance that the jobs to be found there would be those of the specific company issued the address.

The original rules for issuing the address — a service Employ Media provides as the registrar — required use of only company names, and with the application coming from an HR professional adhering to a code of conduct. But with only about 15,000 of the names awarded — at an annual fee of up to \$150 — Embrescia and his company were looking to broaden the base. That's when Warren, of the non-profit DirectEmployers Association, proposed creating thousands of job sites using the .jobs domain in conjunction with geographic, occupational, and similar addresses.



In late 2009, the first few hundred of the .Jobs Universe were launched. After ICANN caught wind of them, it began making inquiries and suggested in letters to Employ Media that such uses required a review process through SHRM and changes to the original agreement.

The sites went dark in February 2010, while SHRM launched first one, then another reviews. In early summer,

the SHRM review committee, which included at least one representative of the job board industry, approved the use of non-corporate names. By then, the .JOBS Coalition had been formed opposing the amendments.

In February 2011, after SHRM and ICANN's board approved the changes and the .Jobs Universe relaunched, ICANN issued Employ Media a notice of breach, saying the use of job boards violated the charter under which Employ Media was given the right to issue addresses.

That lengthy process, which was to have gone to arbitration in an international court in Europe next month, ended when ICANN withdrew its objections.

Now, Warren said in an email:

Our next steps include adding new social media elements and expanding internationally. As I'm sure you know, many of our members have operations internationally, with this kind of hiring need to list their jobs free of charge, so expanding the .JOBS Universe this way makes sense for our members long term. We currently have tens of thousands of .JOBS domains registered, generating millions of job seeker traffic per month, over 1 million verified jobs listed daily from over 120,000 participating employers.

For a full history of the so-called DOT JOBS dispute, [look here](#).