
Proposed New Service Description

Anniversary Date Synchronization Service

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I. Introduction

Several of our recent discussions with registrars have included a common concern related to the challenges many domain name customers (“registrants”) face in managing sizable portfolios and, in particular, tracking expiration dates for registrations spread throughout the year.

The typical “power user” (customers with over 10 domain names) has an estimated 25 registrations, meaning any given month he or she likely has two or more registrations due to expire and is probably receiving upwards of 50-75 renewal solicitations a year. While many registrars have developed account management tools to ease the burden of keeping registrations organized, there is still a possibility that pending expiration of registrations may be overlooked, leading to the inadvertent loss of a registration. We are all familiar with the difficult and costly process customers face in getting that registration back once it is lost.

VeriSign is developing a new service that will enable registrants to adjust the anniversary date¹ for domain names, consolidating them under a calendar day, or days (e.g., first day of each quarter), of their own choosing. In its simplest terms, the service will provide customers with added convenience and peace-of-mind, always knowing when their names are due for renewal. Taken a step further, the service can allow corporate customers to consolidate registrations and streamline payment processing for registrations within their portfolio.

The following paper provides a description of this proposed new service, which we will refer to here as “ConsoliDate,” and is being provided to registrars to solicit comments and questions regarding the service. Registrar participation in this service will be optional. The topics covered in the paper include:

- ConsoliDate service description and value proposition
- High-level mechanics of how ConsoliDate will be made available to registrars;
- Preliminary ConsoliDate development and implementation schedule; and
- Service pricing

II. Service Description

The ConsoliDate service will allow registrants, through their current registrar, to obtain a specific anniversary date for all of their domain name registrations. This will provide a means to synchronize renewals for large group of names, or even simply set a desired date of expiration for a single registration. While the service has perceived a primary target market of registrants with 10 or more registrations, we believe there is a portion of the smaller registrant community that will opt for this added convenience and choice.

The service will be fulfilled at the registry by the current registrar of record for any given domain name registration within the .com or .net domains. This service will not be available for domain names within the .org TLD. A new command (“SYNC”) will be added to the Registry-Registrar

¹ The anniversary date of a domain name registration is the day within the year that the name is due to expire, regardless of the year. Thus, registrations due to expire on March 1, 2003 and March 1, 2005 have the same anniversary date of March 1.

Protocol (RRP) to allow for automated processing of ConsoliDate service orders. This command will be separate and distinct from any current commands, including the ADD and RENEW commands. For both ADD and RENEW, the options for term remain increments of a year from 1 to 10 years. The Registrar Web Tool will also be updated to allow for processing of this service.

ConsoliDate service orders will be processed by the registry based on the specific anniversary date requested. However, the orders will be tracked and billed based on the number of calendar months that the anniversary date moves plus a fixed service fee (additional details on pricing appear in the Service Pricing section of this paper). There will be a one-month minimum charge for any service order, including a request to move an anniversary date to a day later within the current expiration month, and an 11-month maximum adjustment to an anniversary date. The registry will not charge the registrar for days moved within the new month of expiration.

The following is an example of how the service will impact registrations based on a registrant with five domain name registrations, as listed in the chart below. The registrant wishes to synchronize all five registrations under the anniversary date of DOMAIN C.

| Registration | Current Expiration Date | Desired Anniversary Date | New Expiration Date | Calendar Months Moved | Days Moved within Month |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| DOMAIN A | 1-Mar-03 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-03 | 6 | 14 |
| DOMAIN B | 25-Jun-05 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-05 | 3 | -10 |
| DOMAIN C | 15-Sep-03 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-03 | 0 | 0 |
| DOMAIN D | 10-Sep-04 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-04 | 0 | 5 |
| DOMAIN E | 5-Oct-03 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-04 | 11 | 10 |

In this example, the registrant requests a move of anniversary date for DOMAINS A, B, D, and E to September 15. Following the fulfillment of the service order, the five anniversary dates are synchronized to September 15, thus the registrant always knows that his or her domain names are due to expire on that day within the year of expiration. The service will be billed based on a move for DOMAIN A of 6 calendar months and for DOMAIN B of 3 calendar months. DOMAIN D will be billed for a move of one calendar month, which is the minimum charge for a change to anniversary date. DOMAIN E will be billed for a move of 11 calendar months, because the date cannot be moved backwards to synchronize.

For registrations moved at least one calendar month, no additional charge is added for the move of days forward within September. Likewise, the charge is not prorated based on a move of days backwards within the month, as with DOMAIN B. It is worth noting that the registrant can select a date other than the current anniversary date of an existing registration.

Some other key assumptions of the service include:

- There will be no grace period for the SYNC command. Once the SYNC command is processed, the adjustment to the anniversary date is final. This assumption has been set to avoid the added complexity and cost that would result in providing the capability of moving the expiration date of a registration backwards and calculating the portion of the fee to be refunded.
- Through the SYNC command, the anniversary date of a domain can only be advanced. Months will never be removed from an existing expiration date in order to synchronize anniversary dates. Since there is a component of the fee associated with the number of months moved, the idea of charging for months lost off of the registration seems inappropriate.

- The service will only be permitted once per year, per domain, per registrar. Thus, the service cannot be used as a de facto month-over-month renewal for registrations.

III. Service Fulfillment

This section includes a high-level, proposed business flow for service order and fulfillment, and some additional detail on the SYNC command processing.

The following is an example, high-level business flow for the ConsoliDate service, based on current assumptions about the service and how it will be offered.

1. Registrar solicits registrant customer base with service offering.
2. Registrar submits the SYNC command for selected registrations.
3. VGRS processes each SYNC command and updates the anniversary date in the database.
4. VGRS sends confirmation of each successful command to registrar.
5. VGRS debits registrar account balance for each SYNC command (see Proposed Pricing for details).
6. VGRS adds SYNC transactions to the daily transaction report for each registrar.

SYNC Command

The SYNC command allows a Registrar of Record to move the expiration date of a domain name forward to a specific month and day. The following rules apply:

- The request to synchronize a domain name MUST contain the following data:
 - The "EntityName" parameter set to value "Domain".
 - Fully qualified second level domain name in the "DomainName" parameter.
 - The "Date" parameter to identify the month and day
- The Date must be specified in the format mm-dd (e.g., 01-05 for January 5th).
- The system extends the domain name forward to the date specified by the registrar. If the domain name SYNC is completed successfully, the system returns the new registration expiration date in the "RegistrationExpirationDate" attribute in the response.

System Calculations for SYNC

The system will only allow a registrar to execute the SYNC command once for each domain name, per year, per registrar. To allow a new registrant to synchronize a domain that was synchronized within the past 1 year, the registrar may execute a renewal or self-transfer, which will reset this limitation.

In the following example, a registrar synchronizes a domain name to January 5th. A client (a registrar) types the lines beginning with "C:" and a server (the Registry) returns the lines beginning with an "S:"

```
C:SYNC<crLf>
C:EntityName:Domain<crLf>
C:DomainName:example.com<crLf>
C>Date:01-05<crLf>
C:.<crLf>
S:200 Command completed successfully<crLf>
S:RegistrationExpirationDate:2006-01-05
10:27:00.000<crLf>
S:.<crLf>
```

The following rules apply:

- A registrar can initiate the SYNC command through the RRP or the Registrar Web Tool.
- Domain names are always synchronized forward to the date requested.
- The domain name RRP status must be “Active,” as defined in RFC 2832. This follows the rule currently in place for RENEW.
- During the synchronization process, the SYNC command is rejected with an error response code if the “Date” is the same as the current anniversary date. (This eliminates the possibility of executing a repeated SYNC command.)
- During the synchronization process, the SYNC command is rejected with an error response code if the "Date" is not provided.
- During the synchronization process, the SYNC command is rejected with an error response code if the "Date" is invalid. For example: 15-01, 01/15, or 01-15-2006.
- The SYNC command may not extend a domain name registration beyond the 10-year registration limit.
- The SYNC command will not accept a request to move the anniversary date to February 29.

Grace Periods and the SYNC Command

There is no SYNC Grace Period. If SYNC is successfully executed during an Add, Renew, Auto-Renew, or Transfer grace period, the following rules apply:

- **Add:** A domain can be synchronized within the Add Grace Period. If the domain is deleted during the Add Grace Period, the sponsoring registrar is credited for the amount of the registration only and not the SYNC.
- **Renew and Auto-Renew:** A domain can be synchronized within the Renew and Auto-Renew Grace Period. If the domain is deleted during the Renew or Auto-Renew Grace Period, the sponsoring registrar is credited for only the renewal or auto-renewal and not the SYNC.
- **Transfer:** A domain can be synchronized within the Transfer Grace Period. If the domain is deleted during the Transfer Grace Period, the sponsoring registrar is credited for the amount of the transfer only and not the SYNC.

Note: A domain cannot be synchronized while in a Transfer Pending status. A registrar must first NAK the transfer before executing the SYNC command. This is consistent with the current rules surrounding explicit renewals for a registration within the Transfer Pending status.

IV. Development and Integration Schedule

VeriSign plans to include the new SYNC command in the upcoming RRP release, scheduled for January 2003. Implementation of the SYNC command is optional, and RRP will remain backward compatible for registrars who choose not to implement the new command. The following tentative schedule highlights key milestones in development and points of interest for registrars wishing to implement the ability to process this new RRP command.

- 9/16/02: 90 day Notice to Registrars of RRP change
- 9/16/02-12/17/02: Technical Requirements, Development, and Testing
- 12/16/02: SDK for RRP Changes Available to Registrars
- 12/18/02: OT&E Environment Opens
- 1/25/03: General Availability

V. Service Pricing

VeriSign would apply a billing model for the ConsoliDate service that includes a fixed service fee per successful transaction plus a variable fee based on the number of months that the anniversary date is moved. The pricing for the fixed service fee would be initially set at \$2.00 and the variable fee would be initially set at \$1.00 per month moved. The chart below provides the complete wholesale fees that would be applied to service requests based on the number of months the anniversary date is moved.

| Months Moved | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Wholesale Fee | \$ 3.00 | \$ 4.00 | \$ 5.00 | \$ 6.00 | \$ 7.00 | \$ 8.00 | \$ 9.00 | \$ 10.00 | \$ 11.00 | \$ 12.00 | \$ 13.00 |

With these fees, the total cost for the registrant example on page 4 would be as follows:

| Registration | Current Expiration Date | Desired Anniversary Date | New Expiration Date | Calendar Months Moved | Days Moved within Month | Wholesale Fee |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| DOMAIN A | 1-Mar-03 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-03 | 6 | 14 | \$ 8.00 |
| DOMAIN B | 25-Jun-05 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-05 | 3 | -10 | \$ 5.00 |
| DOMAIN C | 15-Sep-03 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-03 | 0 | 0 | |
| DOMAIN D | 10-Sep-04 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-04 | 0 | 5 | \$ 2.00 |
| DOMAIN E | 5-Oct-03 | 15-Sep | 15-Sep-04 | 11 | 10 | \$ 13.00 |
| | | | | | | \$ 28.00 |

For a limited time, VeriSign will be offering introductory promotional pricing for ConsoliDate. The regular service pricing will be based on a fixed transaction fee (\$2) plus a variable monthly fee (\$1) for each month moved per name. For the first three (3) months of availability (February-April), VeriSign will waive the \$2 fixed transaction fee.

This will allow you to offer customers with significant domain name portfolios a high-value service at a low introductory price. This important customer segment can then maximize full value of the service by synchronizing a larger number of names, helping to organize their portfolio.

Fees for the ConsoliDate service will be debited from the requesting registrar's primary pre-payment account upon completion of the transaction. Regular transaction reports will be provided to the registrars to include the number of domains serviced and the number of months

moved for each. These reports will allow registrars to check their monthly invoices against the regularly reported transaction volume and detail.

VI. Conclusion

The .com and .net customer base is among the largest and most stable in the domain name industry. Changes that improve the overall customer experience and address their existing challenges present real opportunities to increase renewal rate and the average value of this customer. We believe the ConsoliDate service concept addresses one of the most often cited challenges related domain name portfolio management, generally increases customer choice for administration of their registrations, and will likely reduce the common occurrence of names being inadvertently deleted. We welcome your input on the details of the planned service as presented here. Comments and questions should be sent via e-mail to info@verisign-grs.com.