Bordeaux 2016 Abstract Submission

**Title**

Development of a regional digital strategy: case of the « wine.alsace » domain name

**I want to submit an abstract for:**

Conference Presentation

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**Keywords**

Digital strategy, E-marketing, Alsace, domain extension, information system

**Research Question**

What would be appropriate E-marketing strategies, which successfully promote Alsace Wine Brand online, increase visibility and generate traffic to the « wines.alsace »?

**Methods**

Building on the literature and relying on experts inputs, the objective of this research is to study possible E-marketing strategies for the CIVA to develop in order to take the most advantage of this gTDL « wines.alsace » in terms of promotion and communication of the Alsace Wine brand.

**Results**

Possible findings suggest several successful E-marketing strategies alternatives for the CIVA to follow which could appear as the foundation for proposing a wine industry e-marketing model for developing territorial gTDLs like « wines.alsace ».

**Abstract**

According to the World Internet Stats, there is an estimated 3.3 billion Internet users worldwide. The Internet has gone from a few networked computers to a network accessed by billion people, from Western phenomenon to a global one, and from research roots to an engine of commerce accounting for trillions of dollars in commerce (World Internet Stats, 2015). Diversity, choice and competition are key to the continued success and reach of the global network. In this context, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), founded in 1998 as a not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization is dedicated to manage and coordinate the Domain
American Association of Wine Economists

Name System (DNS). ICANN foundational principles are to organize the Internet’s unique identifiers around the world and to promote competition in the domain name marketplace while ensuring Internet security and stability. In other words, its role is to ensure that every address is unique, that all users of the Internet can find all valid addresses and that each domain name maps to the correct IP address. Without that coordination, it would not be possible to have a global Internet. ICANN is also responsible for accrediting the domain name registrars. It is a public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. There are currently 21 generic top-level domains (gTLDs: .com, .net, .org, info...) names, which identify the nature of an organization operating a specific website. For example, a website with a dot-com address usually indicates a commercial organization. There are around 250 two-letter-country-code TLD (ccTLDs: .fr .de .it .es...), which identify a country or a territory. For example, the Internet extension dot-for corresponds to France, while dot-eu corresponds to the European Union. In 2010, ICANN has decided to expand the number Internet extensions, or gTLDs names. Under this initiative, more extensions will be created (approximately 1900). You can find different kind of new gTLDs: Brand TLDs, those TLDs are not available on the market, brands create their own domain name (.total .google .airbus .bnparibas .bmw ...). Generic TLDs (.bio .guru .xyz .science .club...). Geographic TLDs (.alsace .paris .berlin .london .nyc ...). Today 790 new gTLDs are on line and more to come, this represents more than 9.6 millions domains.

At the same period, the Alsace Regional Council created a shared brand “Imaginealsace” supported by all the public and private institutions in the region. Alsace is one of the first regions in France to make such a progressive move. The development of Alsace as an attractive territory needs to be clearly anchored in a strong regional identity and in the perception of that identity by regional stakeholders and external partners. In this perspective, the Alsace region (in the East part of France) has decided to register for the gTLD « .alsace » as it appears as a strong symbol and one of the most relevant tool to convey the Region’s image, culture and identity and to reinforce the Region’s economic attractiveness. The Region Alsace is one of the four French communities (beside Regions Brittany, Corsica, and of the city of Paris) to develop its own domain name. The launch of the « .alsace » started in January 19th, 2015 with the Alsace Regional Council’s website becoming « www.region.alsace » (former «www.region-alsace.eu »). The ambition is to make the Alsace region recognized as a unique digital territory. The gTLD « .alsace » facilitates search of specific products, services, and craftsmanship available in Alsace. With this dedicated regional digital identity, future « .alsace » domain name holders on the Internet can enhance their global visibility and be able to assert themselves clearly as Alsatian, which is not possible with existing generic extensions. The gTLDs « .alsace » are allocated according to the rule of the « first come, the first served» as .fr or .com. Anyone who deposit a domain name «.alsace » still available become the legal owner. The Alsace Region is the official owner of the gTLD « .alsace » and can decide on registration and the launch of policies. The Alsace Region decided to protect some sensitive domains (vin.alsace, hotel.alsace....) and to sell at a higher price other domains (credit.alsace, rentcar.alsace pizza.alsace....). Once the rules and domain lists have been defined, « .alsace » could be launched. From January 19th to March 20th 2015, only trademarks, local companies, associations, local public and para-public entities could buy gTLDs « .alsace ». General availability (open to all, first arrived, first served) was given on the April 7th 2015. Alsace Region have sold approximately 2000 domain names, most of them registered in Alsace. The rest is registered in other French regions (approx. 160 domains) and in foreign country (approx. 90 domains USA, GB, CH, LU...). Sensitive domains are sold to companies or public/para-public entities that have respectable projects or services for the image of Alsace region, or which are aligned with community concerns. For example, « .alsace » attributed vin.alsace wine.alsace muscat.alsace riesling.alsace.... to Alsace Wine Council (CIVA) as this entity represents the Alsace wine community.

The wine industry is one of the major industries in the Alsace region as it represents 15600 hectares of vineyards produced in AOP in 119 wine villages. 92% of the wine produced in Alsace is white and there are 1,15 million hectolitres produced annually in AOP (150 millions of bottles); 25% of total wine sell is done on the export market (CIVA, 2015). This regional industry is part of the French wine industry, which is important both economically and commercially. Worth around 9.5 billion euros in 2012, compared to 5.5 billion euros in 2003, wine generates the second largest export revenue in the French economy, just behind aeronautics at €20 billion (FEVS, 2013). With a production of 46.2 million hectolitres of wine in 2014, France remains one of the three largest wine-producing countries, along with Italy and Spain (OIV, 2014). 30% of the wine produced in France is
exported, mainly to European countries, with sales of 13.7 million hectolitres representing an export turnover of 7.6 billion euros in 2013 (Vin et Société, French customs data, 2014). Although France is ‘only’ the second largest wine-drinking nation in the world, after the United States, consuming 28.1 million hectolitres (OIV, 2014), wine remains a national drink. In this matter, France has endorsed a special protection for its « wine and viticultural terroirs » by incorporating them into France’s cultural, gastronomic and landscape heritage (OIV, 2014). Vines occupy 3% of total land area in France, which makes it the world’s second largest vineyard area after Spain, with 755 000 hectares of vines grown in the country in 2013 (France Agrimer, 2013).

The wine sector is in total transformation, in particular on the international stage. Thus wineries have to face a certain number of challenges (Hannin and al, 2010). They have to take into account not only the emergence of mass marketing and changes in consumption practices but also the important competitive density and the strict legislation, which differs from one country to another, when producing and selling their wines. Other constraints, more local can be added, such as difficulties of settling down and transmission, land pressure or soils constraints (irrigation in particular). It appears to be necessary for the wineries of the Alsace wine industry to be aware of their environment to be able to understand and anticipate strategic issues they are facing or will be facing in the coming future.

Besides, these wineries evolve within a local sector, which is characterized by an inter-organizational complex and fragmented context including various regional entities called professional wine organizations (OPV). Wine councils (AOP: appellation of certified origin and IGP: protected geographic indication), appellations labor unions, federations of independent wine growers and cooperative cellars, and public administrations are brought to exchange economic and declarative information, knowledge, know-how and innovations, but also to communicate information to their members.

In this context, an organism with regional vocation, the Alsace Wine Council (CIVA) is commissioned to lead various axes of development of the sector. The CIVA represents both professionals of wine production and of wine trading. The general objective of the CIVA, defined by statutory missions, is to gather and share means to increase weight of the Alsace wine sector, to value specificities and characters of every « terroir » in Alsace through the implementation of interregional projects and global promotion of the Alsace Wine through an umbrella Brand “Vins d’Alsace”. In order to achieve its mission, the Professional Wine Body of Alsace (CIVA) has decided to buy the gTLD « wines.alsace ». So far, they have not decided on a particular strategy to develop this new Internet extension and are still using generic extension “vins d’alsace.fr” or even a dedicated blog.

Building on the literature and relying on experts inputs, the objective of this research is to study possible E-marketing strategies for the CIVA to develop in order to take the most advantage of this gTDL « wines.alsace » in terms of promotion and communication of the Alsace Wine brand. In other words, what would be appropriate E-marketing strategies, which successfully promote Alsace Wine Brand online, increase visibility and generate traffic to the « wines.alsace » in comparison to existing social media and generic internet extension. How to make « wines.alsace » a competitive advantage for the Alsace wine industry?

Possible findings suggest several successful E-marketing strategies alternatives for the CIVA to follow which could appear as the foundation for proposing a wine industry e-marketing model for developing territorial gTDLs like « wines.alsace ».