

City sets its sites on 'nyc' Web domain

By JENNIFER FERMINO

It's the 21st-century equivalent of the 212 area code.

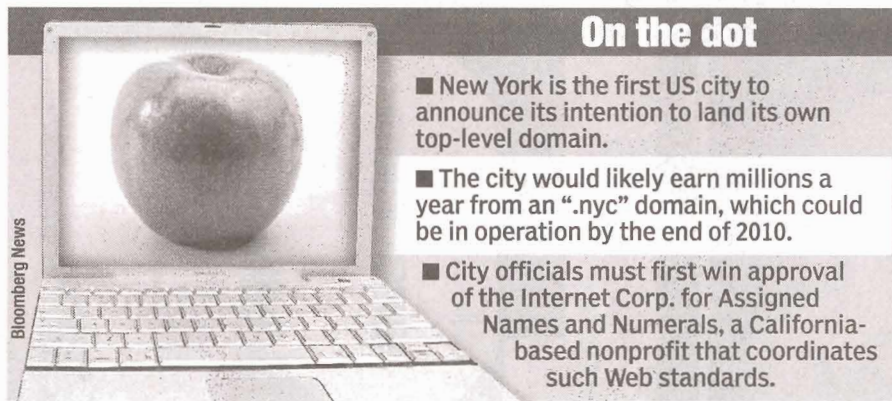
New York City is on the verge of getting its very own Internet domain that will give area Web sites the option of putting an ".nyc" rather than a ".com" at the end of their addresses.

City officials yesterday announced they were looking for private firms to help them apply to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numerals — the world body that coordinates Web naming — and to operate the .nyc domain.

The ICANN recently changed its rules so that anyone could apply to buy a top-level domain, or Web address suffix.

New York City is the first American city to announce its intention to land its very own top-level domain.

Barcelona and Paris are working toward getting their own domains, and former Vice President Al



Gore is backing a plan to create a ".eco" domain for green products.

"Through .nyc, we hope to make the search for New York City-related content easier than ever by providing individuals, organizations, nonprofits and others a chance to own a virtual piece of the greatest city in the world," said Paul Cosgrave, commissioner of the city Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications.

Officials believe the domain will give New York

City businesses a leg up and also generate much-needed revenue for city coffers.

DotNYC LLC — a company that has been in talks with the city to operate the domain and has the backing of former Mayor Ed Koch — has estimated that the cost to have .nyc attached to the end of your Web site would be around \$10.

The city would likely earn millions a year from the .nyc domain, which could be in operation by the end of 2010.

"A top-level city needs a top-level domain, that's why finding a partner to join the city in making .nyc a reality for small businesses in New York is vitally important," City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said.

Quinn initially floated the idea for .nyc in her State of the City speech in February.

"Once the .nyc program is launched, local business owners will be able to uniquely associate themselves and their business with their home, and the

NYC brand," Quinn said.

The ICANN will begin taking applications from anyone interested in purchasing a top-level domain in early 2010.

"New York City, like many of its global competitors, plans to apply for a top-level domain name. I hope that this [domain] will assist local merchants based in New York City to be able to brand their businesses as located in the five boroughs," Councilwoman Gale Brewer said.

A host of cities are expected to rush to get their localized domains, as well as large companies and specialty entrepreneurs who will want to shell out to get a domain like .movies or .watches.

But becoming a Webmaster of your own private domain won't be cheap.

The application alone costs \$185,000, and estimates put the cost of the entire process, including legal fees and the level of technology needed to run your own domain, at \$1 million.

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