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Author: **David Perera**

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## **Got .gov? That'll be \$125**

BY David Perera

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A growing number of state and local agencies clamoring for a .gov Web domain name has led the General Services Administration to levy a \$125 fee for the privilege.

Federal rules which allow GSA officials to assess the fee set the upward limit at \$1,000 for registration and \$500 for renewal. "\$125 to support the overall registration process is actually very reasonable," said Keith Thurston, assistant deputy associate administrator in GSA's Office of Electronic Government and Technology.

The domain charge went into effect on Aug. 1. The fee — the same for registration and renewal — was set under the assumption that the number of .gov URLs will continue to steadily increase, according to Mary Mitchell, deputy associate administrator of GSA's office of electronic government and technology. "We set the fee on a growth assumption so we wouldn't have to be adjusting the fee up and down," she said.

Until recently, the .gov domain was restricted to federal agencies -- state and local governments were encouraged to register for a .us URL, Mitchell said. "Citizens didn't like it, because they don't differentiate between different levels of government," she added.

The federal government's exclusive use of the domain name began to loosen in April 2002, when federally recognized Indian tribes were granted .gov privileges. In March 2003 the gate was opened to all governments at any level. Since then, nonfederal agencies have come to account for almost 60 percent of the 3,400 public entities using a .gov domain name, according to GSA officials.

No one has called or written yet to complain about the fee, although there have been inquiries about how to pay it, Mitchell said. GSA accepts credit cards, she said.

Federal agencies also must pay to renew their .gov URL. Thurston said officials don't expect any federal opposition to the fee.

"They pay their bill regularly," Mitchell added.

In the past, agencies paid for .gov registration through a charge GSA levied in government long distance bills, a practice that ended about 18 months ago, Thurston said.



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## **Dot-gov domains to cost \$125**

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By Jason Miller,

Federal agencies and state and local governments renewing .gov domain names or wanting new ones should be prepared to pay \$125 a year starting July 31.

The General Services Administration today announced it will start charging the agencies that run more than 3,400 Web sites by the end of the month.

GSA issued a rule May 2003 that allowed state and local governments as well as American Indian tribes to use the .gov extension, but also reserved the right to charge them for using it (May 19 GCN story).

Previously, the agency did not charge for managing the .gov registry.

GSA has controlled the .gov registry since 1977, when 100 federal agencies used the suffix.

Since the agency let other government entities use it, the registry has grown significantly.

GSA's need to defray the costs of maintaining the register is one of the main reasons for charging agencies, agency officials said.