

The Network Solutions Personal Internet Name (PIN): A URN Namespace for People and Organizations

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Abstract

This document describes a Uniform Resource Name (URN) namespace that is engineered by Network Solutions, Inc. for naming people and organizations.

1. Introduction

In many cases Network Solutions' maintained directory applications require some unique and persistent way to talk about an individual or organization. For example, white pages style services need to determine if one entry is distinct from another even if some of the data happens to be the same. Also, e-commerce authentication mechanisms needs to identify a user and/or company uniquely and possibly over large spans of time. In many cases a customer relationship can last several decades. Such long term customer relationships can outlast any specific email address, Internet service provider, surname, or possibly even the DNS itself.

The intent for these applications is that they be used and integrated into other, non-NSI maintained applications in much the same way that domain-names that exist in Network Solution's database are primarily used in application that Network Solutions is not involved in. In much the same way that ISBNs are maintained by specific entities but used in widely varying applications, NSI's PIN namespace is intended to be used in many applications where there is a need for a well maintained identifier that names a person or organization.

A URN namespace is uniquely suited to solve the persistent identification needs of these applications since they are also required to be unique and persistent. The availability of a standardized resolution mechanism makes it possible for other applications to reference and resolve PIN URNs in their own systems in an open, non-proprietary way.

This namespace specification is for a formal namespace.

2. Specification Template

Namespace ID:

"pin" requested.

Registration Information:

Registration Version Number: 1
Registration Date: 2000-09-30

Declared registrant of the namespace:

Network Solutions
505 Huntmar Park Drive
Herndon, VA 22070

Declaration of structure:

The structure of the NSS is a flat space of alphanumeric characters which have no knowable structure outside of the context of Network Solutions internal resolver. Future changes to the assignment methods may allow others to assign sub-spaces of the flat namespace but again, this knowledge is only valid internally and should never be inferred or relied upon externally.

Relevant ancillary documentation:

None

Identifier uniqueness considerations:

Identifiers are assigned by Network Solutions proprietary registration system in a way that guarantees uniqueness. At this time the algorithm is to iterate from the last assigned number by some positive integer. In the future this algorithm may change to incorporate a full range of alphanumeric

elements. In either case, the system will compare the newly created identifier with all of the previous ones to ensure that it has not already been assigned.

Identifier persistence considerations:

The assignment process guarantees that names are not reassigned and that the binding between the name and the person or organization is permanent, regardless of any personal name changes, corporate restructuring, death or dissolution.

Process of identifier assignment:

Names are granted via Network Solutions proprietary registration procedures.

Process of identifier resolution:

PIN URNs are resolved via URN resolvers run by Network Solutions. Since a PIN URN identifies a person or organization, resolving a PIN URN will only be able to return information from an electronic proxy that is merely a representation of the actual person or organization being named.

Rules for Lexical Equivalence:

The entire URN is case-insensitive.

Conformance with URN Syntax:

There are no additional characters reserved.

Validation mechanism:

None additional to resolution specified

Scope:

Global

3. Examples

The following examples are not guaranteed to be real. They are listed for pedagogical reasons only.

URN:pin:bs4321234
URN:pin:324kj5hkj45
URN:pin:mm2136

4. Security Considerations

Since the URNs in this namespace are opaque there are no additional security considerations other than those normally associated with the use and resolution of URNs in general.

It is noted however that attempting to resolve a PIN URN through a resolver other than the one provided by Network Solution is error prone. In any case it is not considered authoritative.

References

- [1] Moats, R., "URN Syntax", RFC 2141, May 1997.

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