

FreshDrop

The Domain Name Success Guide:
Putting Your Domain Name to Work for You
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The Basics

Most people know what a domain is already, but if you do not, let us explain.

Similar to how a street address helps you locate a home or place of business easily; a domain name allows you to find a website and its content by simply typing its location into your browser.

Although it seems pretty simple on the surface, lurking behind the simplicity of a domain name is a constantly communicating world of codes, networks, and databases.

If used properly, domain names can help you build effective marketing and branding strategies that will not only make your website more search engine friendly, but also increase the value of such an asset.

Highly searched domain names, like Amazon.com, would fetch a hefty sum if ever sold; either alone or as part of their business. A domain name's value is based on how many visitors come to the site.

We have created this ebook to help make certain you know how to find the best domain name for personal or business use. You will learn how to get the most out your domain name. You will also learn how to select a quality domain name, purchase it, and even sell it if the need arises. With this knowledge, you will be able to put your domain to work for you.

What is a Domain Name?

Domain names make it easier for individuals to use the internet and remember where necessary information is located. They are directly connected to what is called an IP address. This address is found in every computer in the world and is a series of hard to remember digits that look like this:

152.27.361.137

(Note: Random ip address used.)

Each computer has an IP address that it uses to connect to the internet. You can think of them as a series of numbers and letters making up license plates on a car.

A word is far easier to remember than a string of letters and digits. Hence the invention of the domain name.

The networks of computers that make up the backbone of the internet, allow you to enter a domain name into the address bar of your web browser to request a website. The

network searches its database, matches up the domain name with the IP address to the server that hosts the information, and like a miracle, the request is processed in a matter of seconds and the site appears on your computer screen.

Now that you have received a brief explanation of what a domain is, we will talk about the specific parts of a domain name and how these components help search engines categorize websites.

Parts of a Domain

Look at a domain name URL listed below and you will see that it is divided into different parts that are separated by dots. The chart shown below supplies the name of each section and this sample will be used as a reference as we discuss these sections in more detail.

URL: <http://www.usfreephone.com>

Domain Name: usfreephone.com

Domain Extension: .com

Domain Root: usfreephone

Subdomain: www

Domain Extension

A Domain Extension, also referred to as a Top-Level Domain or TLD, can be any of the originals like .com, .org, .net and so on or new Top-Level Domain names approved by ICANN, such as:

.asia
.mobi
.tel
.travel
.vn

Though most domain names can be used by anyone, some are exclusive and restricted to specific groups. These include:

.edu
.gov
.int
.mil

An Domain Extension always follows to the left of the '.' within a domain name. Hundreds of domain extensions exist.

Domain Extensions are classified into specific types according to the extensions. We have listed the top extensions below:

.com – This is by far the most popular and most common top-level domain name in use today. Originally a commercial domain designated to profit oriented businesses, it has become the primary TLD in the world of domain names for individuals and various types of entities.

.org – This TLD was initially used to designate organizations, such as non-profits, charities, certain political parties, and government sites. Any individual or entity can register a domain with this TLD.

.net – This was initially used to denote a domain name point to a network of sites or computers and is still used today by network providers. The use of this TLD has spread beyond its original intent and is the second most popular choice for Top-Level Domain names.

.edu – This TLD is reserved for educational institutions and is given out by the U.S. Department of Education to accredited colleges and universities, primarily in the United States.

.info – As one of the newer Top-Level Domains, its use is not restricted and was intended to be an overflow choice for .com users. Obviously, it is supposed to denote informative websites, but is used for other purposes as well.

.gov – Administered by the General Services Administration, it is restricted to government agencies or entities residing in the United States.

.biz – Another domain name created to give businesses more options than using a .com Top-Level Domain, which was reaching a saturation point in terms of good domain names. The registering entity or individual should be commercially based to avoid future registration challenges.

.mobi – Created for delivering Internet content over the mobile network, this domain is backed by the biggies in mobile services, such as Nokia, T-Mobile and Samsung. You may want to consider securing your domain name as a .mobi for future marketing use and to keep others from using it instead (namely, competitors).

Some extensions also denote a country code, such as amazon.co.uk, which is the domain name for Amazon in the United Kingdom.

Country Specific Top-Level Domain Extensions (CCTLD)

The United States is not the only country to have access to Top-Level Domain names. Every country has its own TLD, such as .in (India), .cn (China), .jp (Japan), and .uk (United Kingdom).

Many countries will sell you top quality names using their Top-Level Domain names. This provides a unique way for users to get access to premium domain names without having to pay a premium price. While books.com is long gone, books.in may still be available. If you are savvy, you may be able to create a domain name combination that spells a word, such as photogra.ph.

Domain Root

A Domain Root, also referred to as the Second Level Domain, is the part that comes directly to the right of the TLD. In an ideal world, the domain root would be a descriptive and catchy marketing term. It can be the name of a product, an easy to remember word or simply your company's name.

The domain extensions and the domain root combines to make a complete domain name, such as yourcompanyname.com. The full name is what you would register and more than one can be registered as long as the domain extension is different for each, like yourcompanyname.biz and yourcompanyname.mobi. The registration process will be covered in more detail in Chapter 5.

For a marketing boost you can have every domain name point to the same website. They may also be set up to do different things in terms of presentation. For example, one might go to your main website, another to a product

specific site and the other can be formatted specifically for mobile devices.

Subdomains

In the past, subdomains were used to cue different activities. For instance, if you place “ftp” at the beginning of your domain name - **ftp**.yourcompanyname.com - you could access the server or load and retrieve files.

The “www” subdomain - **www**.yourcompanyname.com – has traditionally been used to access web pages you’re your browser.

Subdomains are not mandatory to use. But allows for ways users may access your services via the web.

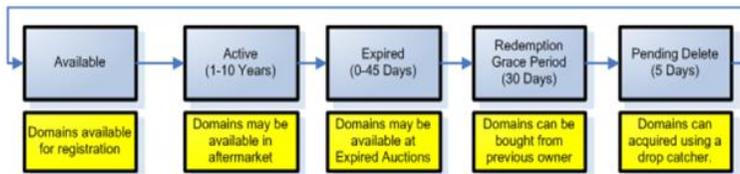
The Life Cycle of a Domain

Note: Knowledge of the Life Cycle of a Domain Name will aid in advancing your searching skills to the next level.

Have you ever wondered what happens to a domain when it expires?

Everyday thousands of domain names become available because their original owners chose not to renew them for some reason or another. They may not need the domain name anymore or simply forgot to renew it.

Here is a layout of the life cycle of a domain name:



Each domain is held by a **registrar**, which is an organization or commercial entity that manages the reservations of Internet *domain* names. Registrar cycles vary, so just use the diagram above as a reference.

Now, let's take a closer look at the different phases.

1. Active

In this phase a domain is active from 1-10 years. It is paid for and going strong. The name cannot be transferred in the first 60 days unless it is to someone using the same registrar. This is called a 'push.' We will talk more about *transfers versus pushes* later.

It is beneficial to know and be aware of your renewal date. Even if you do not have this information, you will be notified when the domain name is about to expire.

You may also want to consider signing up for auto renew. This service ensures the payment will be automatically taken out of your account. Auto renew allows you to not worry about missing the renewal date for your domain name.

2. Expired

At this point the domain name is deactivated and all the services related to the name – websites, e-mail, etc. – will stop functioning. The domain can still be renewed by the owner as long as it has not yet been purged from the registrar's records. This can take between 0-45 days but varies from registrar to registrar.

Some registrars keep names longer than others as an attempt to give their customers more time to renew in case they have forgotten.

A growing trend among registrars is to sell the domain name within a marketplace as soon as the domain name has Expired. This provides a great opportunity for buyers that want to purchase quality domain names as soon as they are available.

3. Redemption Period

A 30 day grace period exists after a domain has expired. This allows the owner more time to reactivate it; however, the registrar will often charge the premium price because they have to get it directly from ICANN - the organization which controls the entire domain naming system. Try not to let this happen.

4. Pending Delete

After the Redemption Period the domain will enter the Pending Delete phase for 5 days. If no action is taken, it

will be dropped and released from the central registry. At this point, you will need to wait for it to drop and registering it again before someone else does or use a Domain Backordering service.

Domain Backordering services, such as Pheenix.com, are services geared around capturing and reregistering a domain name as soon as the domain name is released from the registry. The technology of Domain Backordering services has advanced to the point where it can reregister a domain name within a split second of when it is made available.

IMPORTANT: Maintaining your domain name is important for avoiding loss of ownership. If you ever forget to renew your domain, try catching it before it is too late.

The Importance of Domain Names

Domains names are highly prized and vigorously guarded by their owners. If you buy a domain name that is very similar to a major brand, you could end up with a 'cease and desist letter' from the company's battery of lawyers. You need to choose one carefully.

Select a domain name that not only captures the essence of your brand, but also one that is memorable, descriptive, and catalogs well in the search engines.

Having the right domain name can make you look more professional and trustworthy.

Here are a few reasons why choosing the right domain name is extremely important:

1. **To Gain Credibility:** While picking your domain, it is essential to make sure you always get your own. Some business owners make the mistake of setting up their web presence using a free side-hosting site. We all love free things and it may work for a brand new company that is just starting out with zero funds for marketing.

This method will often give your site an address that looks like this – www.someotherwebsite.com/yourbusiness. This does not look very professional to your visitors. Free site-hosting sites are not the norm these days. Your clients and prospects will get the impression that you are not a serious business and find what they need elsewhere.

If you are not willing to invest money in having your own domain name, why would the customer think you have the resources and assets to meet their needs?

2. **Shows that you are Media Savvy:** Having a website is really the baseline of marketing and many

customers will go to the Internet first to research you before they pick up the phone or take the time to send an e-mail. If you are not managing a site but your competitor is, you do not have to guess about who will most likely get their business.

3. Increases foot traffic: Traditional business owners may think that they do not need a website. They believe that they are able rely on foot traffic alone. This was true at one time, but not anymore.

With the mapping technology we have available these days, customers are increasingly buying online and using their smartphones or tablets, such as the iPhone or iPad. Travelers may be looking for a place to eat, get a cup of coffee, or go to the nearest bookstore.

4. To protect your good name: If you have a particular business name you want to keep to yourself, the domain name should be registered as quickly as possible. This can keep competitors or companies, in a different line of work, from getting it.

You do not want to end up having an adult entertainment site with the same domain name as your company. The possibility of these unwanted sites popping-up in the search engine every time

someone searches online for your company name can be a big problem.

Here is the good news! Once you make the domain name your own, it is yours and only yours for as long you want. No one else will have access to it.

5. Supports your brand: Since this book is not about branding, I will just give you a quick note.

A brand is the sum of your business. It is your name, your goodwill, and the experience each customer has with you from the first encounter to the last.

Companies with brands you may know include Nordstrom, Starbucks and Apple. When you think about these major businesses, what comes to mind? That is how branding works.

By making your domain name the same as your business name or using a keyword or phrase that is closely associated with your business, customers will find you much easier online. It reinforces your brand and helps your customers remember you.

Knowing the importance of a domain name is vital if you are starting a business or looking to market a service on the web. Choosing the right one can boost your visibility, drive more customers to your business, reinforce your reputation and increase your marketing reach.

Types of Domains

You have been given the basics of a domain name and shown how it helps with the effective marketing and branding of your company. It seems simple, right? Still, there is more than meets the eye.

Understanding the different types of domain names will help you make the best possible choice when you are ready.

IMPORTANT: All Domain Names are Not Created Equally

It would be nice if all domains were equal, but they are not. Inevitably, some are more valuable than others. By knowing the difference, you will be able to invest in domain names more wisely.

1. Premium domains

The most popular and effective domains are single dictionary words, such as: books.com, cars.com and homes.com.

Not only are they memorable, but the names themselves are catalogued as keywords.

***Keywords** are terms used by marketers or visitors using search engines to find information on a specific topic.*

A really good premium domain name can resale for a lot of money. For example, candy.com is rumored to have been sold for \$3 million.

2. GeoDomains

These domains refer to a particular place in the world, such as seattle.com, mayanruins.com or bangkok.com. They can also refer to activities in a specific area, like hikeeverest.com, cruiseurope.com or surfhawaii.com.

Domain Names such as these have high value because they are so easy to remember.

Many of the more obvious ones are already taken, but you may be surprised at what you can find out there, especially if you get a domain early by finding a geographic location or destination that is just beginning to become popular with travelers or visitors. This method has been used by many successful online businesses.

3. Generic domain names

These are domain names that have several keywords combined. Hopefully they will turn into a phrase that is easy to remember and eye-catching. This is not always possible, nor is it always the case, but it is the ideal.

With generic domain names, like allaboutcomputers.com and floridarealestate.com, it is easy to see why they catalog well for searching, since “florida”, “realestate” and “floridarealestate” are all popular as single domain names. The value of these names varies greatly depending on the string of words and the demand they will generate in terms of traffic.

2. Brandable domain names

Typically, this would be the name of your company, product or service. It could also be an alternate version that has a typo or misspelling. The nice thing is that it can be shorter than a generic term, since your company and its product/service are unique.

The downside is that they usually have little to no resale value, because they are so specific. Unless the name is properly developed overtime, your only option is to sell it along with your company. Examples of this type of domain include ford.com, nationalgeographic.com and bestbuy.com.

3. Misspelled words

Another option is to discover a way to cleverly misspell a popular domain name, for example, playbuoy.com. Again, *Make sure that it is different enough to avoid an attorney’s letter from playboy.com.*

The courts are filled with these kinds of “tug of wars” and there is no definitive answer as to whether a domain name

conflicts or not. Other good examples of misspelled domains include topix, flickr, dig and del.iciou.us (the latter is another great example of how to use a country top-level domain to make an impressive name).

4. Compound domains

Names like ImageWorks, JumpStart, PhotoBucket, YouTube and SmartCar are all good examples of compound terms. They can be combined terms that are entertaining and descriptive of your product, service or company. A limitless selection is available for creating highly memorable and valued domain names.

5. Phrases

These domain names are basic phrase structures and can hold many words that are connected, but not compounds. GetARoom.com and FreeCreditScore.com are examples of a short phrase that is memorable. A phrase can also double as its own brand name, such as Yahoo Answers or Microsoft Expo.

6. Blended domains

Connecting sections of two different words can be a good way to come up with an effective domain name. Microsoft (microcomputer + software) is a good example, as are Wikipedia (wiki + encyclopedia) and Synnovation (synergy + innovation). If you incorporate some melodic qualities, it will be even easier to understand and remember.

You do not want to end up with an awkward or obscure blend that leaves people scratching their heads and asking, “Why?”

8. Tweaked domains

These have a little extra twist to them, such as rugz.com and se7en.com. They become distinctive because of the addition or change of a letter.

8. Words with prefix or suffix

A prefix is placed before a word and a suffix is positioned after a word. They can be numbers, letters, or other words. The suffix, “*ster*”, is a common example that is almost too common these days. Think of Friendster, Browster, Napster and Feedster and you will get the idea.

These can be very original and memorable, but you need to make sure they sound natural and not contrived. Also, make certain you have an understanding of the correct meaning for the considered prefix or suffix. Using the wrong one can create confusion or worse, embarrassment.

9. Obscure or original words

This naming approach can be a great idea, but often entails a vast amount of work. One way to find a domain name is to use a word from a foreign language or an archaic version of a current word. While these can be very distinctive and more easy to trademark, you need to make certain the meaning of the word is correct. If it is a foreign

word, perform the necessary research to make sure you know what it really means in that language.

The other option is to simply make up a new word; however, you will need to make certain it is a word that has not been thought of before. To figure this out, perform a search on google.com and TESS (the U.S. Trademark Registry).

10. Names of people

Many fan sites tend to use the name of the celebrity with the domain name. You may also want to register your own name in order to have a personal website.

11. Initials & Acronyms

If you have a very long business name, you can do what IBM did and go with an acronym. Instead of typing out internationalbusinessmachines.com, visitors just have to key in ibm.com. Sometimes, an acronym can form a new name entirely, such as peta.org which stands for “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.”

12. Numeric names

Finally, you can use numerical names, such as 123.com, 98124.com (a ZIP code), 8778952848.com (a toll-free phone number).

Using a combination of numbers and letters can be particularly handy if you are marketing a product with a

number included in the name, such as camaroZ28.com. The website is dedicated to the introduction of the new Camaro with the exact same name. This strategy creates highly targeted domain names.

Even though there are some 200 million domain names already registered, there are still plenty options left. From using common names with country specific TLDs to creating your own name and number combination, the choices are endless.

The goal is to pick a domain name that adds value to your brand, so make sure it is highly memorable. Who knows, it could be worth money someday!

Gauging the Value of a Domain Name

Now that you understand the importance of a domain name and the various naming strategies, you are probably wondering how to decide which one has the most potential value.

With or without the right tools, it is easy to make a mistake. Choosing a domain name capable of working the way you intend it to can be a tricky task. Often, a great name, at least one you think is great, does not have any intrinsic value. At first others may not appear to be useful at all, but end up having lot of promise in the long run.

Thankfully, sophisticated analytics and analysis tools are available to help you. And if they seem too complex or overwhelming, professionals are always available to help with the decision as well. Go to the support tab at www.freshdrop.com for assistance, we will be glad to assist you. For now, we are going to show you a few ways to gauge the potential value of a domain name.

General Indicators

1. Page Rank (Primary Indicator)

When a site is updated with new content, it helps Google's spiders determine the frequency of visits. This amount is used to establish if the site is a valuable source of ever changing information. Domains with higher page rankings are spidered and ranked more often.

2. Domain Age (Primary Indicator)

The domain age indicates how long a domain has been active. The longer a domain has been active, the more it is trusted as a good source. A new site is often placed in the 'Google Sandbox' for a specific timeframe and is not indexed at all. This keeps spammers from creating fake sites just for indexing purposes and to gain higher ranking. The waiting period is designed to curtail the use of bogus sites for ranking increases.

Domain age is determined by the number of unbroken years the domain has been registered. Unfortunately, if there is a period in which the domain lapsed and was renewed again, the domain age is calculated from the renewal date, not the original registration date.

3. Yahoo Backlinks (Primary Indicator)

Yahoo uses backlinks (links to your site from another) to determine the worthiness of the site. The more backlinks

your site has the higher the value. This is a highly respected indicator because Yahoo's search engine is exceptionally good at detecting backlinks.

4. Fake Page Rank (Secondary Indicator)

This indicator is not extremely helpful if used alone; however, when used in combination with the Page Rank indicator above, it helps determine if the page rank is real.

This is how it works:

When a site is spidered by Google, it may rank higher because it is automatically forwarded to another site (like amazon.com) which is rich in content, unfairly affecting the ranking. To help prevent this scenario, the Fake Page Rank crosschecks the spider to make sure the site is not bogus.

4. DMOZ Listed (Secondary Indicator)

A site is far more trusted if DMOZ.org has a backlink to it. This can increase rankings and result in more pages being indexed.

5. Yahoo Directory Listed (Secondary Indicator)

If the Yahoo Directory has a backlink to the site, it is considered more reliable and trustworthy as well. Part of the reason is that owners must pay to be listed here. The financial commitment adds legitimacy to the site.

6. Google Directory Listing (Secondary Indicator)

This can affect trust (and value as a result); however, there are not many metrics available to support its viability or effectiveness as a rank indicator.

7. Google Index (Secondary Indicator)

Look for this indicator if you want to know how many pages on the website are currently indexed in the Google search engine. A zero value means there is a good chance that Google has banned the domain for some reason. A value between 1 and 100,000 means the site has not been banned.

8. Google Backlinks (Secondary Indicator)

Like Yahoo, the more backlinks present, the better it is for the website. The search engine will spider the site more often because it is perceived as having value.

The actual data here can be misleading. Often, a popular site will come back with a very low value. This happens because it is thought that Google does not divulge this information or that they are simply reluctant to share it.

9. Alexa Backlinks (Secondary Indicator)

This is the next best place to validate the number of backlinks and it is always a good idea to check more than one source for this information. Sometimes Yahoo shows a higher score for backlinks than Alexa. A variation in scoring

for backlinks should raise a few red flags. Alta Vista is another good source for checking backlinks.

10. Backlinks from .edu and .gov (Secondary Indicators)

Since these are managed by the government and educational institutions, any backlinks to your site are perceived as having a high level of value because these entities have determined that the site is worthy of a link.

Traffic Indicators

1. Alexa Popularity & Alexa Reach (Primary Indicator)

Alexa ranks site traffic based on sites around the world. For example, amazon.com ranks (at the time of this writing) 19th in terms of worldwide traffic and 5th in U.S. traffic. Nearly 300,000 different sites are linked to it.

2. Fake Alexa (Secondary Indicator)

This indicator validates the Alexa traffic score by crosschecking the domain to make sure it is NOT forwarding to another domain name with a higher ranking, thus skewing the rank deceitfully.

3. Quantcast Traffic (Primary Indicator)

Quantcast rates the amount of U.S. traffic going to a domain name on a monthly basis. It is not used as an internal scoring system and the information is public. The representation is much smaller than other sites, since the database of names is not all encompassing.

4. Way Back Machine (Primary Indicator)

Archive.org has been keeping historical records since the mid-1990s. The more times your site has been archived over the years, the more likely it has been changed and updated. This should increase its value.

Domain Sales Indicators

1. Google Results (Primary Indicator)

This tool measures the number of results returned by Google for a specific domain and is useful for evaluating the popularity of a domain name. Although, this indicator was widely used in the past, it has become less important today because most of the good names have already been registered.

2. Google Results without the Extension (Primary Indicator)

Similar to the tool above, it gauges the value of a domain based on how many results are returned by Google and can be used to determine the keyword popularity of a name. For instance, if people are searching often for “this keyword and that keyword,” then “keywordkeyword” may be a valuable domain name.

3. Number of Registrations with Other Extensions (Primary Indicator)

Six key TLDs are tracked -- .com, .net, .biz, .org, .info and .us -- to see how many are being used in conjunction with the same registered domain name. For example, if yourdomainname.com, .net and .org are taken, it may be prudent to purchase.biz and .info as they may have value on the market, due to its popularity in other places.

4. Word Tracker Searches

Utilizing word tracker searches to determine the potential success of a term is another great tool. Overture.com used to be a great place to do this, but since it was purchased by Yahoo, it has virtually disappeared. Try wordtracker.com as a good substitute. It contains a smaller database, but it can give you a reasonable approximation of how often a word is searched.

5. Google Searches

This indicator works like Word Tracker; however, the results are more current because it taps directly into Google's database.

6. Google Cost-Per-Click

If you want to know how much an advertiser is willing to pay for a domain, Google cost-per-click can provide you with this information and is a great way to determine the value of a domain. For example, if an advertiser is willing to pay 'X cents or dollars per click' for "this set of keywords," then thissetofkeywords.com may be a smart domain name to purchase.

7. Google Clicks-Per-Month

Google clicks-per-month tells you how many times a search term has been clicked. Highly searched terms show that people may be interested in visiting a domain that has the same name.

The last two indicators work together to assess the value of a term. A word that gets \$15 a click but only 4 clicks a month may be more valuable than one that receives 100 clicks per month at 10¢ per click.

8. Google Advertisers

Advertisers bid on search terms and Google Advertiser will give the total number of advertisers bidding for a particular word. This can be a key indicator of a brandable term that will be more popular and valuable.

There are many ways to determine if a domain has potential for success. Use several indicators to help narrow your search. Check the amount of traffic and sales a term receives. The page rank and how many times visitors click on or search for a term or phrase are important as well. These indicators will help to get you closer to choosing a domain that will work for you.

After you have picked a name and extension, it is time to put your plan into action and get the domain name registered before someone else does.

Domain Registration

In the past, Network Solutions was the only registrar available and charged up to \$100 a year for its services. Fortunately, now you can register domain names for just a few dollars a year.

A **registrar** handles the reservations of domain names. Visit www.phoenix.com if you are looking for a good domain name Registrar. Here you can compare prices, features and services.

“Always register your own domain name.

Don't allow your web designer, friend or anyone else to do it for you. There are countless horror stories of businesses and individuals who discover that the actual owner of a site, they believed they owned, is the webmaster they just fired or their one time friend that they just had a falling out with. If your designer or webmaster offers to do the registration for you, simply thank them politely and proceed to register it on your own.”

Registering a domain name is very straightforward and only takes a few minutes of your time. You will need the following information to complete your domain name registration:

1. **Registrant Information** - Your name, address, phone number and e-mail are usually required.
2. **Administrative Contact** - This can be you or anyone you want to serve as the day-to-day contact for the management of your domain name.
3. **Technical Contact** - This is the person who will be managing your server issues, such as changing the DNS servers.

You can be all three people if you would like. There is no restriction on who can serve in these three capacities.

While you may worry about privacy, don't be tempted to use false names, addresses or phone numbers. **It is not legal**; however, if privacy is really important to you, registrars offer a private registration option. This conceals your identity and keeps your e-mail address out of the spammer's hands.

If you are setting up an account for the first time, you will usually be asked to create a master account with the Registrar first. Keep your login and password in a safe place because you can renew a domain name for multiple

years and it could be a long time before you need to return to the registrar to login to your account again.

Eventually, you will need it, so keep it in a secure location. Do not store it on your computer, since hard drives are capable of failing at any time without notice and will take this important information with them.

Tips on Choosing a Password

1. Your password needs to be complex. Do not use your usual favorites.

The Registrar's site is a gateway to your domain name. If you make it too easy to access your site, a hacker can break in and try to steal your domain name right from under you.

Additional Domain Services

In addition to Private Registration, you may be offered services that can come in handy.

1. **E-mail Forwarding** - This allows your e-mail to be sent to another account. Instead of having multiple e-mail accounts to set up, you can

simply have all of your e-mail addresses forwarded to one email account. You will still have a nice vanity e-mail address using your domain name (yourname@domainname.com), but it will automatically go to your existing account, such as a gmail or hotmail address you already use often.

2. **Website Forwarding** - This feature lets you redirect multiple domains to a single website. If you have multiple domain names for your company – which is recommended – you can still have just one website.

Facts about Domain Registration

You cannot really “buy” a domain name. It is only yours as long as you register it and renew it. To secure a name you have to visit a Registrar to see if your name is available. You can also find out if a registered name, you would like, is going to expire soon and buy it.

Here is how the whole process works:

ICANN is the umbrella organization that manages the entire domain name system. They make the policies, decide on the rules, select who can register which TLDs and how domain name disputes are resolved.

A domain **Registrar** is the gateway through which you reserve domain names. Some of the most common are NetworkSolutions.com, GoDaddy.com and Pheenix.com. Here you can search for domain names, select available ones and register them for an annual fee. The Registrar is also how you would point your domain name to the server you are hosting content on (known as name servers).

Every time you change a server host, you need to change the DNS to point to the new server.

In some cases, you may use the services of a **Reseller** instead. Some Registrars resell their services to other companies. Most often, resellers are hosting companies or individual webmasters who offer registration as an added-value service to their clients.

Going with a bargain basement Registrar may not give you all the features you want, such as being able to transfer your name to another party easily if you sell it or your company.

If an organization or person decides to use a registrar to buy, or more accurately, lease a domain name, they become the **Registrant**.

Managing Your Domain

Domain Renewals

The day will come when it is time to renew your domain--even if you have registered it for 10 years.

If you are satisfied with your existing Registrar it is easiest just renew with them. Moving a domain name from one Registrar to another can be cumbersome at times, so there is no need to do it unless you have found a superior registrar.

Letting Your Name Lapse

Since you are leasing your domain name, you are under no obligation to keep it forever. You can simply choose not to renew the name when the time comes. In most cases, an expired domain name goes into limbo for a certain period of time. Afterwards, anyone can buy it.

“Think twice before giving up a domain name. You may unknowingly create another competitor, especially if the domain name is a good one.”

If you do not want to renew, but have your account set to auto renew with your Registrar, remember to turn this feature off to ensure your credit card will no longer be automatically charged.

Domain Transferring vs. Pushing

When you **transfer** a domain name, you are moving the domain name from one registrar to another registrar. You can transfer the ownership rights of a domain name to another business or individual who is using a different Registrar.

Note: A domain name can only be transferred once every 60 days.

Domain Transfers take up to 5 days to be performed.

Pushing is a process in which you change ownership with someone else who uses the same Registrar as you. This is a quick process that usually entails no waiting period. You do not have to go through the hassle of proving ownership or your right to transfer the domain name to another.

Pushing is an easy way to accomplish a change of ownership. If the other party does not mind setting up an account with your existing Registrar it is a virtually painless process.

If you cannot push the domain name within your own Registrar, then you need to initiate a transfer instead. In most cases, this has no effect on your website, e-mail or DNS.

Before you can initiate a transfer, you need to first make certain that the domain is rightfully yours. Check the **WHOIS**, which is a database that contains a master list of domain names. It can tell you if your domain name record is correct. The transfer will go more smoothly because the main records (the Registrant and/or Administrative Contact) show that you are the owner.

Before a domain name can be switched to a new Registrar, the authenticity of the request has to be confirmed. If there is no response within five days, the request is automatically cancelled. This is why it is important for your records to be up-to-date and that you monitor your e-mails for the authorization before initiating the change. If you do not see it, check your junk mail to see if the request is in there before contacting your Registrar.

A transfer will not take place at all if you are in a legal dispute or in the midst of bankruptcy proceedings.

If the domain transfer request is successful, it can take up to 10 working days to be completed. The fee to transfer varies by Registrar and some even offer a free transfer service as part of their packages.

DNS and Name Servers

We have referred to these two terms before and although they are not interchangeable, they are interdependent.

For a domain name to resolve to an actual website, it needs to be pointed to a specific server and this is where **name servers** come in. Each domain has two or more name servers that tell the Internet where the website is actually located.

When you want to see a particular webpage, you will enter the domain name into your web browser. The request then travels from server to server until one of them says, “oh yeah, that domain name is at this name server,” then instantly connects. An average request for a web address stops at between 12 and 20 different servers all in the time it takes for you to make the request and the page to load.

When you change the host for your website you will need to change the name servers with your Registrar. This will set off a master update of all the other servers in the network so the next time a user types in your web address, the request will go to the new server and not the old one.

A name server update can take up to 24 - 48 hours, though it can change over in as little as 4 - 8 hours. During this lag

time, you may see the old site while others see the new one (or vice versa).

What is the WHOIS?

Whois is a set of databases that contain contact information about the owner and administrative, billing and technical contacts. Each Registrar has its own WHOIS service.

The Whois service will show important information about the domain name, including:

- The Registrant's name, address, phone number and e-mail address.
- The Administrative, Billing and Technical contacts for the domain name, along with their contact information.
- The date the domain name was first registered and its expiration date.
- The name servers the domain name has been assigned to.

This is the place to go when desiring to see if the person you authorized to register your domain did it correctly. If the information is wrong, correct it immediately.

Maintaining Privacy

Ordinarily, all information related to a domain name registration is public. If you do not want this information to be seen by anyone who perform a WHOIS search, then you will want to sign up for Whois Privacy Shield services, if it is offered by your Registrar.

This service is usually offered at an additional fee. You can add it when you order your domain name or change it any time after. You can purchase privacy for multiple years, so that it renews each time your domain name does.

In certain circumstances, registrars may be obligated to divulge real Whois information under certain conditions, such as the presentation of a search warrant or specific legal proceedings.

Making Profit From Your Domain

In the early days of the Internet, you could dream of cashing in on the land grab of domain names and retire if you got “the one.”

Well, this does not happen as often these days; however, if you make the right decisions and do the necessary legwork, you can profit from your domain name. There are several options open to you after your domain name has been registered. Let’s look at each strategy more closely.

Parking Your Domain

Domain Parking is pretty common. Once you purchase a domain name, it is usually automatically parked. This is because you did not enter any name servers to tell the name where to resolve to, so it just sits in Internet limbo.

If you plan to keep your domain name parked for any length of time, you may want to think about parking it

with a domain parking service capable of helping you generate revenue for it.

Here is how it works: When a visitor enters your domain name, it goes to a special page with links on it (ads). When a link is clicked you receive a percentage of the revenue.

An average domain name may get only 10 hits a month, but if you have a great domain name and you get thousands of clicks, this could be a good strategy.

You do not have to do a single thing with your parked site, except set it up with the parked domain service and monitor their activity reports on traffic and ad click-through.

Developing Your Domain

You can choose to build your site and load it with content that increases its worth. This effort can greatly increase the value of your domain name because the content is original, unique, and has its own significance.

It is going to cost you to build a good website. This is not the cheapest route and a return on your investment may not be possible until a buyer comes along or you are able to monetize the website.

On the other hand, a good website does not have to run into the thousands of dollars or even tens of thousands anymore. Today's options for site development include offshoring the design and development, website templates, content management systems, or using the site design services offered by your website host can tremendously reduce costs.

Let's look at how each design and development option works:

Offshoring

Thanks to the global economy, you can hire a design/programming team from halfway across the world to do all the work for you. There are many highly skilled design companies to choose from. You can find them on places like elance.com or guru.com. These services allow you to review their portfolios, post a job for competitive bidding, select a vendor and handle all the development work through an online workspace. You can even pay for the work as you go by using milestones and the Escrow system. This protects you and the vendor.

Many of these companies are very professional and highly experienced, yet charge much less than domestic designers. Finding them on your own used to be a nightmare, but with these bidding houses, you can review their ratings, read the testimonials of satisfied clients and make an informed decision right from your computer.

Website Templates

Places like templatemonster.com offer affordable templates that you can then modify yourself, if you have some experience working with Dreamweaver or a similar web design program. The templates are very professional and can be loaded into Photoshop. This makes it easy to add your logo, customize the look, and then port it over to Dreamweaver to finalize all the linking and creation of additional pages, online forms, etc. Other good sources of templates are dreamtemplate.com and templateworld.com.

Content Management Systems

WordPress offers you an easy solution by letting you choose a template and automatically entering content through their control panel. The hosting is very inexpensive as well. You can find a WordPress host for under \$10 a month and this includes the WordPress functionality.

Some companies even offer premium WordPress templates, which are professionally designed and look just like a regular website in terms of quality, functionality and finish. Setting up a WordPress site is easy. You can just drop the theme folder into your content directory. Then select it in the admin section and voila! The new look is up and running instantly. From there, you can customize it to your specific needs.

Server Host Solutions

Many hosting providers offer you a content management solution that allows a site to be set up on their server. It can start out basic and later you can use their provided templates to fill-in-the-fields for customization as you go.

Selling Your Domain

Another option is to sell a domain name. The value depends on many factors such as the primary indicators, secondary indicators, sales, and traffic indicators mentioned in the previous section. Domain names with the .com TLD are still the most sought after, followed by the other original Top-Level Domains, .net and .org, then .info and .biz. Domain names from certain countries also sell well, particularly .de (Germany) and .co.uk (United Kingdom).

A good idea is to post content on the site announcing that it is for sale.

“Website for sale!”

This will let everyone know that the domain name is available and offers several distinct advantages over the “do nothing” method.

- Anyone who visits the site, either through a search engine or keying in the domain name in the address bar of the browser instantly will instantly know that the domain name is for sale and be more likely to contact you.
- It will be even more effective if you add your e-mail address to the page so the visitor can just click on it and contact you immediately. This way, the visitor

does not have to undergo the process of finding you through WHOIS.

If you do not want to sell your own domain yourself, you can enlist the services of a domain name broker who can handle the marketing and sale for you. They make their money through a sales commission or pre-determined fee, similar to a real estate agent who sells your house.

You will need to ask the broker about the fees and commissions before making any final decisions.

If you choose to sell it yourself, it will take more time and effort on your part, but at least any profits are yours and yours alone.

Finally, you can just park the domain name and do absolutely nothing. Someone may want your domain name down the road and make an offer. On the downside, you have to assume that someone will be looking for that unique keyword or phrase and will take the time to look up the WHOIS record to contact you.

Potential buyers

Prospective buyers can come from all walks of life. Here are a few possibilities:

- **Nonprofits** – You may have a domain name that fits their latest cause, such as vegetablescancurecancer.com or some other name that you have come up with through your research.
- **Project Based Buyers** – Occasionally, the name you have may match a project that a potential buyer is developing. For instance, you may have manhattanskyscraper.com or jennabushforpresident.com. This can also happen with movie titles that studios may want to buy.
- **A Prospector** – This is a company or individual who likes to buy domain names on spec in hopes of gaining a profit down the road by buying low (from you) and selling high (to someone else).
- **SEO Agents** – These folks may buy your domain name so they can park links to other domains they own or represent. Alternately, they place lots of keyword rich copy on your site and direct others there in the hope of boosting rankings.
- **Corporations** – They may call if you have purchased a domain name that is their company name, but with a TLD. This is particularly true if you have snatched up a great domain name with a country specific TLD.
- **Bloggers** – These individuals may be interested in a domain name if it represents their point of view, their personality or the subject matter they write about. A blogger for the electronics industry may

want allthingselectronic.com or
thefutureisnow.com.

There are many different types of domain name buyers who may be interested in purchasing your site. Try to use all of your available marketing tools and strategies to market to buyers most likely to consider your site as their next acquisition.

Putting it All Together

And there you have it. Everything you need to know about making your domain work for you. You have learned about the importance of a domain name, its parts, features, development, and how to sell one. Additionally, you have learned how domain names are categorized by the search engines and registrars.

We also hope you understand the often confusing process of selecting a name, registering it, transferring or pushing it and the importance of registering the name yourself so there is no question of ownership.

If you are planning to buy a domain name to set up a website, good for you! Thousands of entrepreneurs are doing the same thing every day, so you are in very good company. If your goal is to sell your domain name eventually, we hope you have learned some of the great strategies out there for selecting a name that has marketing value and financial potential.

Even though countless of domain names have been registered, plenty more combinations are still available,

especially when you think in terms of keywords, phrases, geography, or the potential of using country specific Top-Level Domain names.

Finally, we hope you have learned that you do not have to go at it alone. FreshDrop has made it immensely easy for you to search for the right domain name.

We wish you the best in your domain buying experience.

- Your Friends at FreshDrop

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