

PC-NetworkX

Selecting a Domain Name for Your Website

Your domain name is like your street address. How will customers find you if they don't know where to look -- or worse, if they go to what they think is your address only to find your company is not there? Here are some tips to choosing a domain name for your business:

1. dot-com is the Best -- choose any domain name, so long as it's a ".com" extension. In the United States, most people typing in a domain name will type ".com" by default. With over 70 million registered URLs, the ".com" extension is by far the most popular, with ".net", ".org", and ".info" lagging far behind in popularity.
2. Short, easy to spell -- Shorter is better. A short URL is easier to remember and less likely to be misspelled than a long one. For obvious reasons, avoid any domain name that by its nature is hard to spell or confusing.
3. Company names and brand names -- Whenever possible, register your company name as your main URL. It's what people usually try first when looking for your business website. You might also consider registering your product/service names as additional URLs.
5. Personal names -- Register your own first and last name as your URL if you are a consultant, writer, or other professional whose reputation in your field is critical to drawing customers. You have several options here. For instance, you can use your personal name as your business domain. Or, you can point your personal-name URL to a separate company website. Either way, people looking for you are more likely to also find your business website.
6. Be defensive with misspellings -- Buy up common misspellings of your domain name. That way, you don't leave traffic on the table -- and competitors won't be able to buy the misspelled domains and siphon off traffic intended for your site. Get a number of people in your office to type in your domain name 100 times each in a browser. If you don't have employees, get your family and friends involved. Keep track of every mistyped URL. Those are the URLs you want to buy and point to your site.
7. Protect your brand with other extensions -- While the ".com" extension is the most popular, as a defensive measure consider also snapping up other extensions of your domain name. Secure the .net, .info, .biz and similar extensions. If you do business internationally, think about securing country extensions, also (such as .co.uk).
8. Don't forget mobile -- With mobile devices becoming more popular, big brands are starting to register and develop their .mobi sites specifically for mobile users. So do what the big boys do and register that .mobi. You may have no plans to build out a .mobi site today. But as mobile usage grows you may be glad you have that domain in two or three years.

9. Avoid long hyphenated URLs -- This approach led to some ridiculously long URLs prone to misspellings and confusion. This approach has fallen out of favor in most camps, as it is not clear that search engines give any preference to hyphenated keyword URLs.

10. Register domains for as long as possible -- A final word of advice: secure your main domain names for a minimum of several years so they don't expire out from under you. Ten years is best

11. Ask Around -- When you have settled on several available name choices, see what your friends and clients have to say. A name that may make perfect sense to you may be too hard for other people to remember. Is your domain easy to say? Is it hard to spell? Do you have to explain why you chose the name?