

# Domain Name Do's and Don't

By Dave Barrett

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You may have heard that it can be difficult to find available names. That was true a few years ago, when domain names were limited to only 22 characters, but since late 1999 the limit was raised to 63. So fear not, all the good domain names are not taken.

Ideally, you want a name that conveys your product or service. Think of your domain name as your identity online. You want your name to be eye-catching, yet simple and easy to remember.

As the first thing your visitor sees, your domain name gives them their first impressions about you. The last thing you want is your visitor to form a bad first impression. Here are some general Do's and Don'ts when deciding on a domain name:

## \*Be Professional

The best domain names sound professional. People are impressed by quality and value, but above all else, they expect professionalism. You want your domain to project a high level of quality. The right domain name, coupled with a quality product at a genuine value, will not only prove you're a professional, you'll also earn your customer's loyalty and trust.

## \*Get a .com extension

You should always try to obtain a .com extension rather than .net, .org, .biz, etc. The reason is most people will automatically add .com as the extension when they type an internet address. There is nothing wrong with owning other extensions, but if you own a domain with a .net extension without first owning the .com extension, you will lose visitors.

### \*Use keywords

If your domain name contains common keywords, you're likely to get a higher listing in the search engines. Search engines list sites by sending out "spiders" to constantly crawl from website to website, going through every page looking for keywords and cataloging what they find for later listing. Once they decide to list your site, they consider the domain name as part of the ranking. If your domain contains keywords, it will usually get a higher ranking.

### \*Don't use hyphens

Unless a word or phrase has a natural hyphen, such as "real-time" or "soda-pop" leave it out. They are harder to remember, and you will lose visitors who either forget, or don't know about the hyphen in the address.

### \*Don't misspell

The spelling and structure of your name should be clear. If the visitor has heard of your site through word-of-mouth, they will most likely type in the incorrect address if you misspell your domain. For example, [www.UltimateEntrepreneursGuide.com](http://www.UltimateEntrepreneursGuide.com) is obvious, while [www.UltimateEntrepreneurzGuide.com](http://www.UltimateEntrepreneurzGuide.com) is not. Replacing the "s" with a "z" at the end of a word is fine if you are a pop band, but if you do it in a domain name you'll only end up losing most of your visitors to your competition with the correct spelling.

### \*Be memorable

This is crucial. If people can't easily remember your domain name, you won't get the kind of traffic you need to be really successful. Keep your potential visitors in mind, and try to put yourself in their shoes when choosing a domain. Write down as many names as you can think of, and one by one ask yourself, "Would I remember this domain name if I heard it on the street?" When you can answer "yes" you've found your domain name.

Registering your domain name is quick and easy. The entire process usually only takes about 10 minutes once you've found an available name.

Your name is your brand, so choose it wisely. The right domain name could mean the difference between success and failure.

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