

Domain Names

By Richard Lowe

Domain Names

Richard Lowe
articles@internet-tips.net

Internet Tips And Secrets <http://www.internet-tips.net>

Copyright (C) Richard Lowe Jr. and Claudia Arevalo-Lowe, 1999-2001.
Permission is granted to reprint the following article as long as no changes are made and the byline, copyright information, and the resource box is included. Please let me know if you use this article by sending an email to <mailto:articles@internet-tips.net>

Article Title: Domain Names
Author: Richard Lowe, Jr.
Contact Author: <mailto:articles@internet-tips.net>
Publishing Guidelines: May be freely published w/bylines
Web Address: <http://www.internet-tips.net>
Autoresponder Address: <mailto:article-238@internet-tips.net>
(Autoresponder formatted for 65 character wrapping)

If you've spent any time at all surfing the internet, then you've seen a domain name. You may not have known, but you can be sure that you've seen one.

So what are domain names all about? Here are some common questions and the answers.

What is this thing called a domain name?

It is a completely unique address which identifies a collection of web pages (generally called a web site) that are publicly accessible. A domain name identifies your site and allows people to get to it without knowing the technical details of it's TCP/IP address and so forth. A good domain name also informs people what your site is about.

Is a domain name only for web sites?

No. A domain name also is used for email identification. In addition, other kinds of systems such as newsgroups and FTP servers are often identified by a domain name.

Why is a domain name important?

If you create a web site, you don't absolutely need a domain name. In fact, the vast majority of people create a web site on a free host. These free hosts typically have many thousands (and in a

few cases millions) of web sites on the same domain, each site identified by a unique name.

However, if you have the desire to do anything significant on the internet, then you need to get your own domain name. Why? It's considered more professional, it is not very expensive, and many of the major search engines will not spider free host sites which do not have their own domain name.

What are the components of a domain name?

There are two to three parts to a domain name. Let's take a typical domain name - "internet-tips.net". This domain name has two parts. The first, "internet-tips", is a second-level domain name. The second part, the ".net" is a top-level domain name. You can also have a third (or even more) part, called a subdomain. For example, "search.internet-tips.net" might be a valid subdomain. The whole thing together identifies a web site or sites.

What is a subdomain for?

A subdomain is used to drill down deeper into a site. For example, a web host that allows other people to create sites might offer subdomains. Each subdomain might be a unique site. Subdomains can also be used to identify functions - "search.internet-tips.net" is a good example of a function oriented subdomain.

What are the valid top-level domains?

The current major top-level domains are listed in the table below.

Domain	Usage
.COM	Commercial business
.EDU	4-year university or college
.GOV	Government
.INT	International
.MIL	Military
.NATO	NATO field
.NET	Network related organizations
.ORG	Non-profit organization

There are also top-level domain names for countries - these are defined by ISO-3166. In addition, new top-level domains are in the process of being created - these are described in "The new domains are coming soon".

The intended purpose of the top-level domain is to allow surfers to know, just by looking at the characters, what kind of site they are examining. For example, a site with a top level domain of ".EDU" is a university or four year college.

Unfortunately, restrictions of the use of top-level domains (especially .ORG) has not been enforced. Thus, the divisions between the domain names has blurred.

How do people get domain names?

There are over 200 companies (called Domain Registrars) whose only purpose is to sell you domain names. All you have to do is find one and give them money. They will take care of the rest. How much does it cost to get a domain?

It depends upon where you get your domain name. You can find many places that will register for

free in return for some service or product. Some will charge a yearly fee, some will only charge for the registration itself. In general, I would not pay more than \$35 a year. If you look around, you can get this down to under \$10.

What about Network Solutions?

Until recently, you could only purchase domain names from a company called Network Solutions. You can still purchase your domain name directly from them. However, you now have the option of using any of several hundred different companies. It is up to you.

How many domain names can a person own?

As many as he wants. You do have to be careful about cybersquatting, which is the practice of purchasing a domain only to block someone else or force them to pay you money (it's could be described as domain name extortion).

Can domain names be sold or traded?

Yes, as long as the rules for cybersquatting are not violated. There are several companies who specialize in the buying, selling and bidding on domain names.

Can you have more than one domain name go to the same site?

Yes, if your ISP supports it. Actually, some domain registrars will support this even if the ISP does not.

This, by the way, is a good idea under some conditions. Suppose you have a site which is commonly misspelled. You might purchase your domain and the misspelled domain name, and point them to the same site.

It's often a good idea to purchase the ".NET", ".ORG" and ".COM" versions of your domain name if they are available. This prevents the problem that occurred with the whitehouse - whitehouse.gov is indeed the whitehouse, but whitehouse.com is a pornographic site.

Many ISPs or web hosts will charge extra for this feature if you do it using their services.

What are the qualities of a good domain name?

A good domain name should tell your visitors what your site is about. It should be easy to remember and it should be as short as possible.

Can you purchase a domain name just to prevent someone else from getting it?

Yes you can, as long as it does not violate the rules of cybersquatting. In fact, many companies will purchase as many variations of their domain name as they can. For example, if you company was named "AOL" you might want to purchase the domain "AOLSUCKS.COM" to prevent an AOL bashing site from being set up.

I've heard about long domain names - what about them?

Long domain names were all the rage during recent years. The concept was to get as many long domain names as you could with keywords related to your site. For example, for "internet-tips.net" you might also get "internet-tips-web-site-help.net" and "webmaster-helpful-hints.com" as well as

"protecting-websites-danger.com". Although it should be obvious that no surfer is going to type these long domain names, the idea was search engines would see the various keywords. This was touted as important for boosting your ranking in the search engine listings (ranking is how high up on the list you get - a ranking of 1 means you are first).

As far as I can tell, this is all so much hogwash. Save your money for something useful.

What about the domain names that require my browser be modified to see?

One company decided to offer it's own set of top level domains. It did this by maintaining it's own tables and offering a browser plug-in to interested surfers.

Personally, I believe this is one of the silliest things I've ever heard. I wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole. These people are side-stepping the established domain naming system, and it's highly unlikely that they will be recognized throughout the internet. If their domain name tables ever become recognized by the main top level servers, then I would consider their services. Otherwise, I think I will save my money.

How do I see if a domain is already registered?

You can check the WHOIS database. Internet Tips And Secrets hosts a WHOIS lookup form.

What happens if the registration renewal is not paid on time?

You lose the rights to the domain and it can be sold to someone else.

Additional Information

Cybersquatting

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Legal/cybersquatting.htm>

It's illegal to purchase a domain name similar to trademarked name.

Who Needs a Domain Name?

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Domains/domainnames.htm>

You've worked hard on your site and you want to be professional. You need a domain name.

Domain Parking

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Domains/domainparking.htm>

Got a domain name but you're not ready to put together a site? If so, you want to park your domain.

Registering a domain name

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Domains/registering.htm>

If you want your web site to be respected or to make any significant money, you had better register a domain name.

Transferring a domain

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Domains/transferring.htm>

Unhappy with your domain registrar? Price too high? Then go ahead and transfer your domain to another one.

The new domains are coming soon

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Domains/new.htm>

A number of new domains have been approved. This is good news for webmasters as it adds more choices to naming your sites

Networks - WHOIS

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Networks/whois.htm>

Need to find out who owns a domain name? Want to see if a domain has been purchased by someone? The WHOIS tool is what you need to use.

URLs give names to web pages and documents

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Basics/urls.htm>

A URL is a Uniform Resource Locator which allows web pages to locate one another throughout the world.

List of articles available for reprint: <mailto:article-list@internet-tips.net>

NOTE: The following information must be included if you reprint this article:

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets at <http://www.internet-tips.net> - Visit our website any time to read over 1,000 complete FREE articles about how to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)