

Domain Name Registration - Key Tips

Contributed by Keith Thompson

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Domain name registration is a necessary, easy, and strategically important first step in establishing an online presence, whether for business or otherwise. A well-chosen domain name registration can set you up for success with your new site in so many ways, the most prominent of these being increased search engine traffic. Here's some vital elements to consider when executing your domain name registration.

A good domain name registration, particularly for an online business, (which is the main focus of this article) is easily done, but at the same time requires choices that will impact your site's effectiveness. So here, in no particular order, are some things to bear in mind when doing a domain name registration.

The extension - Will it be a .com, .net, .org, .info etc. Any of these will get spidered and indexed by the search engines, but if you can get a .com for your chosen name you'd be better off, as this extension is more common and carries an air of legitimacy with it.

Try not to have you domain name registration with your web host. The reason being that should you decide to part ways with your host, (and this isn't uncommon!) it's potentially a massive headache to move your domain as well. Split them up: you'll be glad you did!

Your domain name registration, purchased from a reputable company should run you somewhere between \$1-10, depending on the extension and the amount of time you sign up for.

Probably the most important aspect of your domain name registration is the choice of keywords to use in your domain name. Try to use the main keyword or phrase you'd like to optimize the whole site for, and see if you can craft a domain name around it. The search engines seem to favor keyword-rich domain names. Nuff said.

Keep it short if possible. A shorter name is easier to remember than a long one.

Don't use your company name unless it has your keywords in it. There's no point in ranking high for your name if no one is looking for it yet.

Try to keep your domain name registration topically relevant. As search engines get smarter and smarter, sites that display total relevance will rank higher than catch all sites.

Lastly, be sure to avoid other companies trademarks and copyrights in your domain name. For example, let's say you're an affiliate of The Sharper Image. It's tempting to use some version of that name to promote your affiliate site, but don't do it, unless of course you'd like to meet their lawyers!

To sum up, your domain name registration is easy to do, but important to do well. It can make the difference in whether you get found or not!

Whois information is another thing to get knowledgeable about. Whois refers to the owner of the domain name. This information is provided by you when you register a domain name. This information in turn is offered to anyone who cares to search for it. For this reason, it is important to consider privacy issues when entering your information for a domain name. It is not advisable to falsify domain name information. At the same time, you may use the most generic information you can when entering your domain. If you have a work address and home address, use the work address. If you have a post office box number and a street address, include the post office box number only.

How many years should you consider registering your domain name? I would argue that it depends what you are going to use the domain for. If it is your business name and you intend to be in business for at least the next five years, I would register it for five years. That way, you don't have to worry about it for a long time. In fact, you can register domain names for up to ten years. If you register your domain for that long, you won't have to worry about it for a decade. Maintenance and stress free.

Make sure you lock your domain. After you've registered your domain name, log into the control panel for your domain name and confirm that it is locked. What does locking do for you? It prevents anyone from transferring your domain name to another registrar without your authorization. Most registrars require you to approve the transfer by clicking on a link but some registrars may simply allow the transfer if you don't expressly forbid it. Miss an email and you could lose your domain name. Don't take a chance. Lock your domain name right away.

Keith Thompson is the webmaster at Domain Name Registration Today where you will find the latest news and information on domains.

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