

Website Domain Names - the Ins and Outs of Picking and Choosing

Contributed by Chris King

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I have discovered that even though domain names have been around since the beginning of interaction on the Internet, there is still a great deal of confusion surrounding them. How do I pick the right one? Can I have more than one? Where do I find out if the name I want is available? How much do they cost? These are a few of the questions I answer in this article.

Pick a domain name that has the following attributes:

- It relates to your name, your company name, or your product.
If you are a solo-preneur, your name is a good choice. What if www.JohnSmith.com is already taken? Some suggest ww.TheJohnSmith.com. I also think that using .info or .biz or even .net will work.
- My company name has been Creative Keys since 1992, so when I purchased my first domain name in 1999 and found that www.CreativeKeys.com was already taken, I chose the .net ending and since then have registered the .biz ending for my business site. I don't feel that it has hurt me in any way. If anything, it separates me from the norm.
- Use your website's title, topic, product and/or keywords.
- Don't be too cute, clever, or obtuse. It will either rob you of credibility or confuse surfers.
- Misspelled names.
Now that domain names are so reasonably priced, I know some top website gurus who suggest buying several variations of the spelling of your name or topic and then pointing them to the correctly spelled website.

Once you have picked a name, you need to first make sure it is available, and then register for it. Below are the steps:

- Free parking.
- Free pointing.
For example, I point my information site names to the home pages of those sites, which are included under the umbrella of my main information site.
- The opportunity to change the DNS endings so the domain name is hosted at its own IP address.

Be patient. To have changes in the files and on the Internet take effect sometimes takes as long as 72 hours.

Final warning:

If you have or once you have a domain name, your post office address will be listed in WHOIS. Therefore, you may receive a mailing(s) that looks like a bill for renewal, or just a bill. Read the small print. If you pay it, you will be registering your name with another registrar - and often for a lot more than you have already paid.

Chris King is a professional website creator / designer, storyteller, writer, free agent, and fitness instructor. You will find her business website at <http://www.creativekeys.biz> where you can sign up for her monthly Internet Tips E-zine. In addition visit Chris's information website at <http://www.creativekeys.biz> and her blog at <http://www.curiositycubed.blogspot.com>

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