

## Choosing a domain name

A domain is the home of your website (www.yourname.com). Your domain name is the centre of your Internet identity, so what type of things should you take into consideration when choosing the name that will represent you on the Web?

A well-chosen domain name should be short and easy-to-remember; users do not like to type lengthy names in to their browser's address bar.

If you have already registered a company name, then it makes sense to use this name as your domain name. However, it makes even more sense to register a second name that will enhance your presence, or 'findability', on the Internet.

### Keep it relevant

A good domain name means a good web presence, so it should be recognisable, easy to remember and, most importantly, **reflect the nature of your business**. This last point cannot be stressed highly enough; Google, the Internet's most popular search engine, attaches high importance to a website whose domain name reflects its content - for example, a vineyard with 'wine.com' or 'grapes.co.uk' as its domain name. Most Internet users will search for a product name or service as opposed to a business name, so a relevant domain name will greatly increase the chances of your site being found. The following example illustrates the importance of choosing an effective domain name.

Guss Granger sells trampolines. The name of his company is Guss Granger Ltd. Guss sold 100 trampolines in two months through **trampolines-r-guss.co.uk** when it went online in October, whereas it took **www.guss-granger.co.uk** the whole summer to sell a hundred.

Google likes Guss's new website. It has the word 'trampolines' in its domain name and its pages are littered with the word 'trampolines'. Someone using the key word 'trampolines' in their search is very likely to find what they want at Guss's site.

### Types of domain name

There are several types of domain name that you can register, e.g. .com, .co.uk, .org, .net, .info and .eu to name just a few. If your target audience is the United Kingdom, it is a good idea to choose .co.uk. This will inform people that your business and website is based in the UK and is aimed at UK residents. If your target audience is global then use a .com domain name as no geographical region will be associated with it. Domain names are cheap so registering more than one can be done on a small budget. *There is no need to have separate websites* as several domain names can direct people to the same website.

### Registering more than one domain name

Domain names are cheap so registering more than one can be done on a small budget. **There is no need to have separate websites as several domain names can direct people to the same website!** This means that your business stationary can sport the web address "www.businessname.com", but anyone typing this address into their browser will be taken to "www.widgets.com". This incredibly useful facility can make all the difference to your search engine ranking.

## Format

Domains are always in lower case. Hyphens and numbers (e.g. c5.co.uk) are allowed. Hyphens can be used to represent a 'space', e.g. "john-smith.co.uk".

## Length of registration and Google

Registering your domain name for more than one year will enhance its status or 'search ranking' with Google. Illegitimate businesses often register domain names for only one year, and then discard them, whereas domains registered for longer periods give the indication that their owner is operating a legitimate business.

Note that .co.uk names must be registered for a minimum of two years – this is a requirement of the UK registrar, Nominet.

.com and .eu names can be registered for any number of years from one to ten.

## Ordering your domain name

So, if you've decided on a domain name, are you ready to sign up? If you need help in deciding, or any help at all, then don't hesitate to call us. Otherwise, the process is straightforward. First, see if your domain name is available by typing it in our [Address Checker](#).

The results of your search will be displayed after a few seconds. Be aware that your first choice may already be taken, so it's a good idea to have several similar names in mind.