



Five common mistakes with domain names.

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Domain names are the cornerstone of the internet. As the primary source of internet navigation, without domain names, your customers couldn't get around and wouldn't know how to find you. Also, domain names form part of a company's identity and branding. Yet many companies make mistakes every day that can be extremely costly by not considering their domain name strategy carefully enough.

A web design error can be fixed. Software applications can be updated. But some domain name mistakes can stay with you a long time and could potentially cost your business a lot of money in lost trade or corrective measures.

If you have an online presence, consider the following five mistakes and see if you need to do more to protect your online assets.

1. Forgetting to update WHOIS information

Your domain name registration contains all the relevant information regarding the registered owner. But if this information is out of date, when your domain name is up for renewal, the notifications may never reach you. It is extremely common for a business to register a domain using one email address and then transfer all of their email activity to the new domain without updating the registration with the new email address.

If all your domain name administrative correspondence is going to your old, unused email address, you may not be aware your domain is about to lapse until it is too late. A lapsed domain can be a costly affair as your website becomes inaccessible, and there is always the risk that someone else could register the domain before you realise.

Always ensure your registration information is up to date.

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2. Registering under a personal rather than the business name

A common scenario is for a business manager to ask an employee to register company domains on their behalf. After all, managers are busy people. But be careful that the employee registers the domains under the company details and not under their own name.

Although it may not seem important at the time, as this certainly doesn't affect the performance of the domain, if the employee leaves the company, you may find yourself unable to access or administer your own domains. Further, some employees are only too aware of the value of domains. If they are able to gain control of your domains and you part on bad terms, your website could suffer from the fallout as ownership is debated and transfers (sometimes expensive) are negotiated.

Always ensure all company domains are registered consistently under the correct name and with the one contact address. Never allow individual employees to register under their own name.



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3. Failing to register all the alternatives

You may think that if you have one website, you only need one domain. But what if someone else registers all the other related domain names? For example, if you own xyz12345.com but someone else registers xyz12345.net, xyz12345.com.au, xyz12345.org, etc, many of your customers may find their way to these other websites instead of yours.

If at all possible, register all the domain names related to your brand, trademark or website and simply point them all to the same spot. Therefore, no matter which domain the visitor accesses, they arrive at the same place – you.

4. Not registering 'typo' domains

Some domain names aren't so easy to spell. If you have a domain name that can easily be misspelled, consider registering those domain names as well. A common trick amongst unscrupulous domain speculators is to register 'typo' domains for popular websites and fill them with advertising to catch the high amount of traffic that hits the wrong key. For example, one commonly misspelled word is 'restaurant'. If a domain name contains this word – and many do - it is advisable to register the most likely typo versions as well, rather than risk losing customers.

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5. Not keeping domain management secure

The risk of hackers continues to increase with more websites having their home pages hacked or domain names commandeered. If a hacker were to take control of your domain name, he or she could point your reputable name towards a website of dubious content; spam advertising, phishing, internet viruses or simply steal your business.

To do so, they need to be able to hack your domain name passwords. Surprisingly, many companies still don't have secure procedures in place to safeguard their passwords.

Protect your online assets

You wouldn't leave the front door to your shop unlocked. Domain names are just as vital to your online business as a front door is to a main street shop. By planning a domain name strategy and protecting the ones you have, you can reduce the risks of a costly domain name nightmare.

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