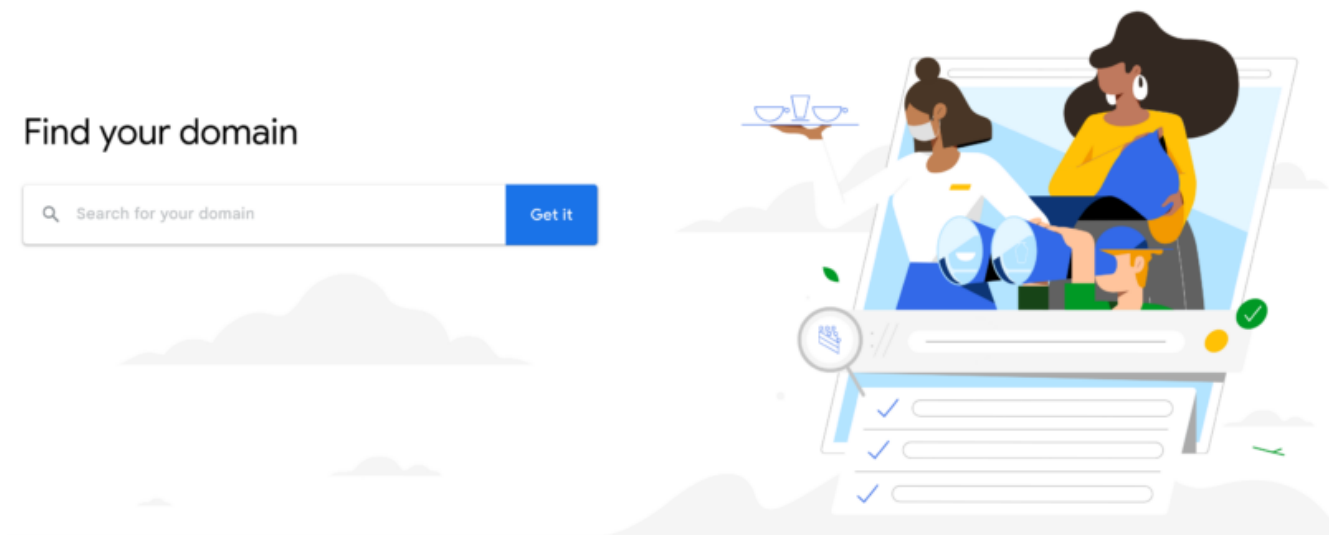


Google Domains is yet another useful service to get the ax in favor of “focus”



Enlarge / These Corporate Memphis folks are going to have to look elsewhere soon to get their own domain, unless they're good with Squarespace.

reader comments

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Eight years after Google Domains launched, and a little more than a year after it graduated out of beta, Google is “winding down following a transition period,” as part of “efforts to sharpen our focus.” That’s corporate-ese for “We need to keep cost-cutting, so we’re selling this business we just finished shaping up to Squarespace.”

As we noted when it fully launched, Google Domains wasn’t the cheapest registrar you could find, but it had a great interface, offered more than 300 different domain endings (now including, controversially, .mov and .zip), and its upkeep fees were a flat \$12 per year, without add-on charges like WHOIS privacy or DNSSEC.

Google Domains tied into many other Google products, including Gmail, Workspace, Cloud, Ads, and more. But there wasn't really an engine for making a website, the thing you see when you visit the domain. Domains offered quick hook-ups to services like Shopify, Wix, and Squarespace. Now the last of those is set to take the whole business over, along with the roughly 10 million domains and the millions of customers behind them.

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"Your domains are in good hands," Squarespace says on its landing page for Domains customers. Squarespace states that it will utilize "Google's infrastructure" during the migration, and will honor renewal prices "for at least 12 months after closing the acquisition." Google Workspace customers who get a domain as part of their package will land in Squarespace.

The companies expect to close the deal in the third quarter of 2023, subject to regulatory approval. There are more details on what happens next for Domains customers on Google's About page. No job cuts or staffing changes were announced as part of the move.

However clean and orderly a transition the two companies try to emulate, the sale cannot help but further Google's image as a company that readily gives up on projects that aren't core to its advertising business, even those that have matured and would seem to encourage a tie-in with Google accounts.

The move comes in the same year that Google's cloud-gaming service, Stadia, shut down, catching some game developers completely unaware. Just yesterday, Google shut down its Grasshopper app, intended to teach beginning code skills. Google Domains customers are at least spared from being forced to manually take their domains elsewhere—an onerous and sometimes nerve-racking process if you have many sensitive domains—but if they don't love Squarespace's domain management, they may end up doing so anyways.

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