

How Businesses Can Capitalize on Emerging Domain Name Trends



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If you type a domain name into a browser and it ends with a .com, .net, .org or .info, you're typing in something called a generic Top Level Domain name. As the owner of a seven-figure dot-com gTLD (vpn.com) and as an avid entrepreneur who's been involved in countless ultra-premium domain name transactions over the past five years, there is some expert advice I can impart to you that can help you better understand the advantages that these new domain names have to offer.

The evolution of domain names: From .com to now

First came the dot-com, back in the '90s. Then came all the businesses and brands. Unsurprisingly, the dot-com became scarce, expensive and collectible. Over the course of about a decade, we saw the introduction of the .net extension in February of 2002, which also became scarce as time passed.

As of February 2024, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has 1450 gTLDs which are approved for sale. This growing saturation, though, doesn't always sit well with consumers, who are still programmatically inclined to trust a .com or a .net domain over the latter due to age and trust.

What it does do, however, is open the doors to businesses that may have missed their chance on owning a three-to-five-letter, ultra-premium .com or .net, which may fetch a larger price tag in today's domaining world than it once would have.

Related: The Evolution of New Generic Top-Level Domains

Why these new generic domains matter for modern businesses

One thing I like about this new batch of domains is that many are designed to align directly with the offerings of a business model. For example, .tech is great for IT-related ventures and software as a service (SaaS), whereas .shop is ideal for ecommerce, and .blog is perfect for blogging.

Even big brands have hopped on board the bandwagon. A great example of this can be found with BMW and its next100.bmw, which celebrates the next 100 years of the brand moving forward. Barclays has followed suit, too, with .barclays and even Google has .eat to reinforce SEO-friendly topics for its

search engine.

The advent of these domains not only helps brands better position themselves online but also can aid in SEO due to the new availability of exact keyword match domain names that haven't yet been gobbled up over the past 25 years of domaining.

There are numerous benefits your business can benefit from by having one:

- They give you a lot more branding freedom to really capture your brand's identity.
- They're fantastic for SEO because you can get exact keyword matches in your URLs, which helps improve trust and SEO optimization.
- They offer clarity in the offerings of the brand from the get-go, most often due to the domain name (think cars.com, rent.com or my domain, VPN.com).
- These domains help new businesses gain the upper hand with custom brand names that enable them to better compete in the long run; custom domain names that weren't previously available to them until now.
- They're excellent choices for rebrands or personal brands that are seeking exact-match domain names.
- Users have complete control of the domain, including cost and registration.
- They're shifting the industry by enabling businesses to go after new domain sets as the old method of regulating domain names opens doors to the demands of the future.

Related: 3 Keys to the Right Domain Name for Building a Brand

The challenges and considerations when choosing a new domain like this

If you're interested in acquiring one of these domains, there are a few things to consider before you purchase:

- One issue is that users place far less trust in these names as compared to a .com or a .net.
- You want to consider any existing intellectual properties, including trademarks and trade names, even if that domain is available.
- Ensure that your investment is future-proof by opting for a popular extension that won't fade away as time passes.

How to make the most of new domain opportunities

With so many domains available, choosing one can be difficult. After you've run your searches and brainstormed, take things to another level: Run a trademark search for peace of mind. In a perfect world, you'd run a lawyer-assisted trademark search to ensure that the domain and brand name you are considering are truly available.

- Consider domains that can position your brand as trustworthy.
- Avoid spammy-sounding names, long names, jargon or hard-to-spell names.
- Find names that align with your unique value proposition and also offer exact keyword matches for an easier time

with your early days of SEO.

Related: 5 Unforgettable Lessons I Learned Spending \$1 Million on a Domain Name

The future of domains and online branding

I have no doubts when I say this: gTLDs are one of the coolest and most exciting things to happen since .net dropped in the early 2000s. They don't come without their fair share of challenges, though, and just because something is available doesn't always mean that it will make sense for your brand or business needs.

In reality, these newly available domain names offer a world of untapped potential and opportunity – something that is especially true for brokers like me, who love to buy, collect, trade and sell all sorts of domains daily. From a branding perspective, they are pure gold that can alleviate the costly spend of acquiring an ultra-premium domain instead, albeit at the loss of perceived consumer trust in the process.

In the end, they are a viable expansion of the growing dot-com multiverse that shouldn't be overlooked!

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