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Domain Names

FOR
DUMMIES®

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About .eu and EURid

The .eu domain ranks among the largest top-level domains in the world, connecting more than 500 million people across 31 countries to one Internet identity. More than 3.5 million .eu names have been registered since the domain opened for registration in 2005. Many companies and brands use a .eu website as a practical solution to convey a clear European identity and their business ambitions, including Fairtrade International, Foot Locker, Louis Vuitton, the MAN Group, Microsoft Corporation, Orangina and Toyota.

EURid is the not-for-profit organisation that operates the .eu top-level domain, following a tender process and appointment by the European Commission. EURid works with over 750 accredited registrars and provides support in the 24 official EU languages. As part of its ongoing commitment to data security, EURid is certified for the ISO27001 security standard. EURid is also registered by the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), which is an expression of its environmental commitment. EURid has its headquarters in Brussels (Belgium), and regional offices in Pisa (Italy), Prague (the Czech Republic) and Stockholm (Sweden). More information at: <http://www.eurid.eu>.

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Introduction

Is there anyone in Western society whose life has not been transformed by the Internet? You'd be hard-pressed to find someone. Children today will never know what it's like not having vast volumes of information from around the world at their fingertips. They won't be able to imagine days when they couldn't instantly reach friends and loved ones through Facebook message or email – even those on the other side of the world.

Today's children also may begin to forget the earlier Internet days where there was a distinct line between those watching the show and those running it. They'll barely recall the days when websites were mostly for big corporations and prominent organisations, when email addresses were often obscure and difficult to remember, and frequently had to be changed when the user got a new Internet provider. What a pain!

Those were the days, and they really are already in the rear-view mirror. Even the smallest businesses can pretty easily engage in electronic commerce now, novices can create decent-looking websites – and individuals and families can have highly personalised email addresses, using a domain name that reflects their interests and quirks and perhaps even their name itself. That's actually quite easy to accomplish, if you get your own domain name.

About This Book

Domain Names For Dummies is all about unlocking possibilities by acquiring a domain name, whether it's for your business, your organisation, yourself, or your family. It's easier than ever to do – this book helps you understand the many benefits of having a domain name, and gets you started down that road.

In the pages of this book, we explore how domain names help users get where they want to be on the Internet, and how they help direct email to the right inbox. We discuss how to choose the right domain name for your purposes, touch on what to do if the name you want isn't available, and learn why the part of the domain name after the dot is nearly as important as the part in front of it. We look into how to find and work with a registrar, how to keep your domain secure, and how to keep it working for you well into the future.

Foolish Assumptions

We don't know you personally, but in preparing this book we've made some assumptions about you and your interest in domain names. We're assuming that:

- ✔ You're interested in learning how your business or your family can benefit more from the Internet, or improve your Internet experience.
- ✔ Dealing with Internet-related matters is not your full-time job, and may not be anything you've done much at all in the past.
- ✔ You don't have the time or the inclination to get a bunch of technical training, but you do want to learn more about the possibilities open to you right now with regard to domain names.

How This Book Is Organised

Work your way from the basics of Internet navigation through securing your domain name, as you peruse the chapters of this book. In between, we'll spotlight some of the reasons anyone and everyone might benefit from a domain name, and learn how to make it happen.

- ✔ **Chapter 1: Finding Your Way Using Domain Names:** Internet surfing and emailing could be a whole lot harder, if we relied on numeric IP addresses rather than domain names. It's remarkable how a few words can lead you directly and nearly instantly to a server halfway around the globe.
- ✔ **Chapter 2: The Advantages of Having a Domain Name:** If you're in business, it's all part of your brand and your

image, and the extension at the end sends a powerful message about where you are and where you want to do business.

- ✔ **Chapter 3: Heading Out into the Domain Name Market:** You'll need a provider to host your domain, at least if you're planning to use it for a website or for email. On the other hand, domains can be a great investment.
- ✔ **Chapter 4: Acquiring a Domain Name:** There's an art to deciding what name you want, and then you've got to hope it's available. Then comes the task of finding a registrar.
- ✔ **Chapter 5: You Have a Domain Name...What's Next?** With a name in hand, now's the time to think about building a website and setting up your email. Don't forget to secure your domain, and to take good care of this valuable investment.
- ✔ **Chapter 6: (More Than) Ten Key Points to Take Away From this Book:** All modesty set aside, there are dozens of important points in this book, maybe even more. But here's a roundup of some of the must-know things.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout *Domain Names For Dummies*, you'll spot the attractive icons shown below. They really spice up the page, don't you think? But there are even more important reasons why they're there:



You're venturing into a world that might be rather new to you, so a pointer now and then could be very helpful. There's just such a tip right next to this icon, whenever you spot it on the pages ahead.



We're not suggesting you should skip over anything in this book. However, please do pay extra-close attention to the paragraph next to this icon, because it's an important point.



There's always some danger in the world, isn't there? There are definitely some bad guys around the Internet. Watch for this icon to learn more about things you'll want to stay away from.



Face it, the Internet can be a pretty technical, even geeky place. Domain names make it much more user-friendly. But if you want to get into the more techie details, read the words next to this icon.

Where to Go from Here

You know what's great about websites, including the one you may be planning to launch at your new domain name? You can click around wherever you want and find just what you need. This book is kind of the same way. Sure, go ahead and turn the page. That's the traditional thing to do. But if you'd rather jump ahead to another chapter or another section to find something in particular, go right ahead. We certainly don't mind. That's just the way this book is. What's on the next page can wait until you decide to come back.

Chapter 1

Finding Your Way Using Domain Names

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In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding how computers navigate the Internet
 - ▶ Giving everyone and everything a number
 - ▶ Taking apart a domain name
 - ▶ Deciphering what's in a URL
 - ▶ Exploring how domain name servers make it all happen
 - ▶ Using top-level domains to categorise web content
-

It all seems pretty simple when you're surfing the Internet, searching for whatever it is you want to see or learn. You just type something into the address bar at the top of your browser, or some search terms into your favorite search engine, and you're on your way. It's simple for you, but there's a lot of technological wizardry that makes it feel so simple.

In this chapter, we'll explore just how your computer is able to find what you're looking for, and how domain names make the process far more user-friendly than it might otherwise be. We'll also dissect the typical domain name and learn the significance of its various parts.

Using an Address for Everything on the Internet

Most people don't spend even a microsecond thinking about just how remarkable it is that you can go online and connect

with whatever you want so quickly and easily. You may have a difficult time locating your television remote control sometimes, but your computer or smartphone can locate whatever you've asked it to find among the vast warehouses of Internet-based information available from servers all over the world. It's astonishing, when you really think about it.

Numbers direct traffic

The ability to find information stored anywhere in the world may be astonishing, but it's not magic. The Internet works because everything plugged into it has an address. You couldn't receive your telephone calls if you didn't have a phone number, and the birthday card you mailed your Aunt Charlotte would never reach her if she didn't have an address. Similarly, there's an address associated with your computer, and an address for the server storing the video of the piano-playing kitten that you just watched.



The addresses that get Internet traffic where it needs to go are called *IP addresses*. The 'IP' stands for *Internet protocol*, and an IP address is a series of digits and sometimes letters, separated by decimal points or colons. When your browser is connecting to a specific website, it's using an IP address to locate the server on which that website is hosted. Sounds simple enough, right?

Sometimes words are better

Using an IP address to find one's way around the Internet might be simple if you're a computer. But think about all of those advertisements you see on television or in magazines, encouraging you to visit a website to get more information or make a purchase. That kind of advertising would not be very effective if it listed a numeric IP address, with the hope that the viewer would remember that address and use it sometime later while on the computer. Most people's brains just don't store numbers that way.



That's where *domain names* come into play. That advertising you see promotes a website using recognizable words or phrases using letters, digits, and hyphens – often the name of the company doing the advertising. Remembering a much more meaningful domain name that uses real words is something the typical human brain can handle.

What really makes the Internet work for the average user is the connection between domain names and IP addresses. The real behind-the-scenes wizardry is the way Internet technology speedily takes that domain name you typed in, blends in some additional data, and finds the IP address that steers your computer to the server where that domain is hosted. We'll share more about that process shortly.

Working Out What All Those Numbers Mean



As we mentioned earlier, all devices linked to the Internet have an IP address associated with them. The server hosting the website you're seeking will have what's known as a *static IP address*, which means that it remains the same, at least for long periods of time.

Your personal computer, on the other hand, most likely has been assigned the opposite, a *dynamic IP address*, which it gets from your Internet service provider automatically when you connect your PC to the Internet. Your PC uses that dynamic IP address only for as long as you're on the Internet at any particular time. The next time you get on the Internet, your provider will assign it a different dynamic IP address. The provider maintains a pool of dynamic IP addresses and hands them out as needed.

IPv4 – the original



So, an IP address may be static, or it might be dynamic. But it also may be an *IPv4* address or an *IPv6* address. IPv4 addresses have been around a lot longer – IPv4 was the first address system used by the Internet. IPv4 addresses consist of four numbers, each one from 0 to 255, separated by dots. There are more than 4 billion combinations of numbers using this method.

That's a lot of IP addresses, but it's not enough, when you consider all of the servers and devices that are in use all over the world today. And some of those IPv4 possibilities are not even available for public use. That's why IPv6 came along.

More numbers for today's Internet (and tomorrow's)



Whereas IPv4 uses four groups of three-digit numbers, separated by dots, IPv6 uses eight groups of four-digit numbers or letters, separated by colons. Those who make a living dealing with this kind of thing refer to those four-digit groups as *hexadecimal* digits, and they can tell you that while an IPv4 address has a 32-bit value, an IPv6 address is 128 bits.

Suffice it to say that if an IPv4 address is difficult for the typical human brain to remember, an IPv6 address is practically impossible.

How Many IP Addresses Are There?

With the original IPv4 addressing system, there are more than 4 billion possible IP addresses – 4,294,967,296, to be precise, a rather impressive 10-digit number. In case you were wondering how many possibilities there are using the IPv6 system, it takes a lot more digits to answer that question – 39, to be exact. The answer is 2 to the power of 128, and if you had a calculator with enough digits to do the maths, you'd come up with...

340,282,366,920,938,463,463,374,607,431,768,211,456

That's more than 340 undecillion, enough to last for a very long time. You just had to ask, didn't you?

Working with the Building Blocks of Domain Names

As we mentioned earlier, without domain names, you'd have to type in a numeric IP address to visit a website. For example, typing 91.220.191.212 into your browser will lead you to the EURid website. But that's much more difficult to remember than simply typing 'eurid.eu.' It's pretty safe to say that without domain names, the Internet would never have become the integral part of our lives that it is today.

Domain name levels



To fully understand domain names, it helps to know the different parts. Consider the website `www.eurid.eu`. The `.eu` part of that address is considered the first level, and it's called the TLD, or *top-level domain*. Some people refer to it as an *extension*. The `eurid` part is known as the *second-level domain*, while the `www` part is the *third-level domain*. Put them all together and you get what's officially known as the fully qualified domain name, or FQDN, which is the unique name of that particular place on the Internet.

The third-level domain of *www*, by the way, indicates that you're trying to connect with a webpage on what was originally proclaimed as the World Wide Web. There are other possibilities, such as *ftp*, short for file-transfer protocol, which indicates that the address is for downloading or uploading files. You may have noticed that a lot of advertising leaves off that third-level domain, for extra simplicity. When it's omitted, it's nearly always a webpage; your web browser will figure it out.

Subdomains and character limits



In many cases, you'll see something else in that spot in front of the second-level domain – any word, really, such as `help` or `members` or `forum`. That's called a *subdomain*, and it directs visitors to a completely different page or site, perhaps even a different server.



You can have as many different subdomains as you'd like. The only restriction is that any subdomain must be no more than 63 characters long. And while we're on the subject of character limits, note that the complete domain name must be no longer than 253 characters.

Deciphering a URL



If you look in the browser address bar, you'll see an address that contains the domain name, and usually a whole lot of other stuff. That full address is known as the URL, which is short for *universal resource locator*. The URL is what directs your browser to exactly the place on the website you wish to go.

As you'll see in Figure 1-1, every URL has multiple parts, each with its own function:

- ✓ The *protocol* comes first. For a website, you'll see 'http,' which is short for hypertext transfer protocol. Sometimes you'll see 'https,' which indicates that it's a secure page, for exchanging private, sensitive information such as bank logins. It's followed by a colon and two forward-slashes, as in http://.
- ✓ Second is the domain name itself, such as www.eurid.eu. It includes the top-level domain, the second-level domain, and the third-level domain, or subdomain.
- ✓ Last is the full path to the resource on the server that you're looking for, or that links on a webpage are leading you to. You'll often see something like '/index.html,' which usually indicates the landing page for that particular site, and further adds that the page is written in HTML, short for *hypertext markup language*. HTML is computer coding full of tags and brackets and slashes that make little sense to most Internet users. The important thing is that your browser understands HTML and translates it into the viewer-friendly page you see.

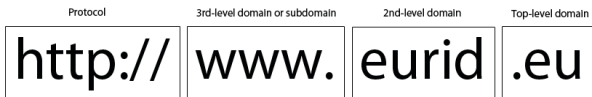


Figure 1-1: The parts of a URL.

Add three parts together and you get a URL that's something like this:

http://www.eurid.eu/en

Getting from Here to There

You're watching television and see a compelling advertisement for a new car. There's a website listed at the end, inviting you to go online and learn more about why that car is the right car for you.



So, you step over to your computer, your brain recalls that domain name, and you type it into the address bar of the browser. What happens next? A *domain name server* does the hard work, completely behind the scenes. There are lots of name servers out there, and typically, your Internet service provider will automatically tell your computer which name server to use, again totally behind the scenes from your perspective. The various servers are owned and operated by Internet service providers and other businesses, including the biggest name out there on the Internet, Google.

When you type in a domain name, your computer connects with the domain name server (you might sometimes see it abbreviated as *DNS*). The name server has access to a huge database of domain names and IP addresses that are associated with each of them. It looks up the IP address for the domain name you submitted, and that lets your computer locate and make a connection with the website you're seeking.

There's a decent chance, however, that the first name server your computer has queried doesn't know where to find the domain name you are seeking. That domain name might not be in its database. That's because it's just one name server in a huge, worldwide hierarchy of name servers, most of which maintain only a portion of the massive list of domain names from all over the world.



Thus, if that first server doesn't have the answer, it passes your request up the line. Your request might make it to one of the 13 root servers around the world. The root server will take a look at the extension or top-level domain in the domain name you've typed in – for example, .eu – and respond with a list of name servers that are responsible for that extension. A query to one of those name servers will then pass along the set of name servers for each individual domain name within that extension. The query then goes to one of those servers, which sends back the web page information you're seeking.

Domain name resolution



Technically speaking, the whole process involving the many levels of name servers is known as *domain name resolution*; it's essentially automatic, and it happens in the blink of an eye. Even faster than the blink of an eye, actually. And when you think about what has happened during that blink, it's

pretty amazing. You can see a visual representation of the process in Figure 1-2.

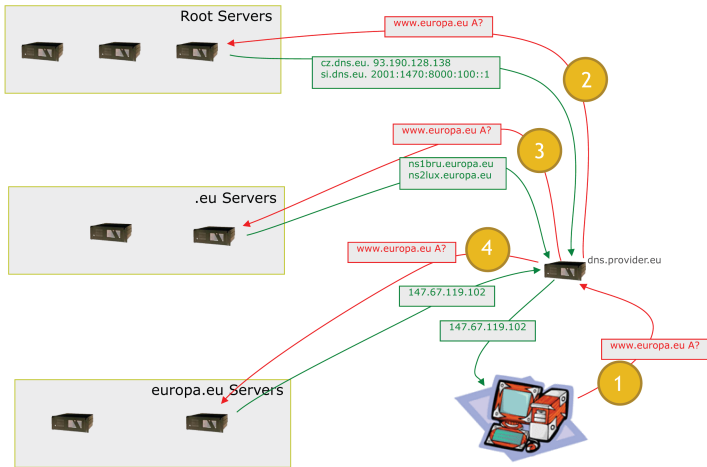


Figure 1-2: A query that involves a root server

It gets even faster, as a matter of fact. The original name server that your browser queried will store that long list of answers it just received in its cache. That way, the next time it gets a similar request, it can skip over some or all of those steps and just use the information from the cache. For example, if your first query was for `eurid.eu`, and you follow that up by looking for `europa.eu`, your name server can skip a few steps and go straight to the name servers that handle the `.eu` extension or to the requested website. Obviously, things change on the Internet all the time, so to make sure updates make it around the world, all those name servers will clean their cache from time to time, in order to force new lookups to happen. How long will information remain in the cache? That depends on a configuration parameter that is appropriately called TTL (time to live). There's more on TTL in Chapter 4.

Domain names help email get where they're going through processes that bear some similarities. When you send an email, you might be using email software installed on your computer, or perhaps a web-based email service, or maybe you're sending from your smartphone. Whichever the case, your message is sent to a mail server, which then queries a domain name server to find out the IP address for the

domain name that's after the '@' symbol in the email address. Domain name resolution happens through the hierarchy of name servers so that the message can be passed along from your mail server to the recipient's mail server, which then checks the part in front of the '@' symbol to get it into the correct inbox.

Who's in charge of all this?

The whole system that allows domain name resolution is overseen by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, a privately operated, not-for-profit corporation established in the late 1990s to handle this massive task. ICANN operates the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, which coordinates the various global resources for DNS root management and IP addressing.

It seems pretty complicated, but the process is there to make your Internet life a whole lot easier. It is true that in many cases, you can type an actual IP address into your browser and it'll get to the right place, but why would you want to do that? That often doesn't work, anyway, for a number of reasons, including the fact that an IP address gets you to a server, but that server often is hosting multiple websites.

To Whom Does That Domain Name Belong?

With many domain names, it's pretty obvious who the holder is. If it's a brand name, for example, in most cases the holder of the domain name will be the company to which the brand belongs.

Some are not as obvious, however. Lots of domains are established as part of a fairly limited marketing campaign, such as for a new product or movie, and it's less obvious who has registered the domain name. You might see a city's name as a domain name, but that doesn't necessarily tell you what organisation within that city actually runs that website.

If you wish to find out who's behind a particular domain name, a WHOIS lookup can provide the answer. WHOIS lets you access a database to find out such things as who or what organisation registered a domain name, how to contact that person or organisation, and a variety of technical information.

You can conduct your WHOIS search at www.whois.eu if you're searching for .eu domain names.

Steps are taken to protect the privacy of domain name holders, particularly if they are private individuals. WHOIS contact information for companies and organisations generally includes the registrant's name, address, telephone number, and fax number, along with a technical contact. In the case of the WHOIS search for .eu names, the contact information is limited to an email address if it's for a private individual, unless the registrant requests that more details be listed. That WHOIS policy may be different for extensions other than .eu.

Also, there are often protections in place to prevent automated 'harvesting' of this very valuable information. For .eu searches, those conducting a search must enter some random letters and digits that are displayed in a 'warped' image that proves the searcher is a live human being rather than an automated search robot (that check step is called CAPTCHA, short for Completely Automated Public Turing test telling Computers and Humans Apart). As one more safeguard, the most sensitive information is generally displayed as images rather than text, making it much more difficult to automatically capture that information.

Identifying Different Kinds of TLDs

Top-level domains, those extensions at the end of domain names that are sometimes known as TLDs, come in a lot of different varieties, and there are more on the way. The people at ICANN who oversee such things have opened the door to an entirely new kind of TLD, in fact.



You have, no doubt, become quite accustomed to some TLDs. Each sovereign country has its own TLD, for example. This kind of TLD is known as a *ccTLD*, in which the 'cc' stands for 'country code.' These ccTLDs are all just two letters long, and in fact, all TLDs that are two letters are ccTLDs. Some examples include .eu, .us, .uk, .de, .fr, .be, and many more. Because countries generally don't come and go, this list is pretty stable, although a couple have been deleted through the years as the former Czechoslovakia and the former Zaire transitioned to become different countries.

Then there are *gTLDs*, short for generic TLDs. The first of these, established back in the 1980s, were .com, .org, .net, .edu, .gov, and .mil. Each had its own specific purpose – .com was for businesses, .org for organisations, .net for Internet providers, and .edu for educational institutions. The restrictions for what uses should be allowed for the .com, .org, and .net TLDs have been pretty much eliminated since then.



Of course, you've seen a lot more TLDs than these, especially in more recent years following the formation of ICANN in the late 1990s. Such TLDs as .info and .biz joined the mix first, shortly after the new millennium began, and several others have been added since then. Also newer to the game are *internationalised TLDs*, which are top-level domains that use other alphabets such as Arabic, Russian, or Cyrillic, or characters such as Chinese. That's a major step forward from earlier restrictions that limited domain names to letters, digits, and hyphens.



Expect to see many, many more TLDs in the coming years, thanks to ICANN's *New gTLD Program*. This development allows applicants to request establishment of much more specific TLDs, such as business names, city names, sport names, and practically anything else. A whole new world of top-level domain names is on the way.

Chapter 2

Appreciating the Advantages of Having a Domain Name

In This Chapter

- ▶ Using a domain name to build your brand
 - ▶ Giving thought to the extension
 - ▶ Taking your domain name with you
 - ▶ Getting more technical flexibility
 - ▶ Foiling the spammers
-

These days, practically every medium- to large-sized business has its own domain name, or even many of them. A high percentage of small businesses do, too, though plenty still do not. As for individuals and families, only a tiny percentage have chosen to get their own domain name.

In this chapter, we'll explore some of the benefits that go along with getting a domain name of your own, whether you're a business or an individual. We'll discuss how a domain name can impact a company's brand and image, how it can give you extra flexibility, and how it can even help you keep some of that annoying spam from ever hitting your inbox.

Getting the Right Domain Name for Your Brand

If your interest in domain names is for a company, you probably already know how important branding is, and why it's so critical to get potential customers to recognise your brand. Your brand is your company's identity. It distinguishes what you do and the way you do it from competitors in the same industry. It reflects the values of your company.

Your brand helps customers remember your company and, you hope, think of your company when it comes time to make a purchase of whatever it is that you're selling. And, with the help of a website, your brand can lead customers right to your door.

Part of the digital brand



The function of your company's website depends a lot on the kind of business you're running. If it's online retailing, the website is the actual place of business – your company would not exist without it. If you have some other kind of business, your website informs customers about your products or services, and how to obtain them.

But it also plays a key role in forming an image of your company in the customer's mind. For one thing, a good website with the right domain name reflects the attributes of your brand. Equally important, the simple fact of having a website and email address brings added legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the customer, particularly if it's a new business.



A domain name is a key component of your company's brand. Some people refer to your online branding strategy as your *digital brand*, and your domain name is the foundation of that digital brand. Choosing the right domain name is critical, nearly as critical as choosing the right brand name itself. In fact, in some cases the brand name actually *is* the domain name, complete with the extension at the end.

In some cases, choosing the right domain name for your brand seems fairly obvious. If your company has a relatively short name, and a domain bearing that name happens to be available, that may well be the best choice.

The extension is important

Choosing the second-level domain – the part before the dot, the part that quite possibly is your company name or part of it – is just one piece of the decision-making process when it comes to picking the right domain name. You also need to pick the right top-level domain, that extension that comes after the dot. It is a more important part of helping your domain name convey your company's image than you might realise.



In some cases, the extension can help the potential customer recognise what kind of product or service you provide. For example, `.travel` is pretty self-explanatory and specific, compared with `.com`, which could be any kind of business. Other specialised extensions include `.jobs` for employment-related sites, `.aero` for organisations involved in air transport, `.xxx` for sites with adult-oriented content, `.name` for individuals or families, and you can pretty easily figure out what `.museum` is for. On the other hand, perhaps your company or organisation does more than one kind of thing, or may one day expand into something different, so getting too specific might not be wise.



A country code extension would help identify your geography, and help localise your operation for potential customers in that country. For some customers, local equates to familiar and safe. On the other hand, a specific country code might be limiting if your company does business in multiple countries. It might project an image that is smaller than what you would like to get across. Take a look at Figure 2-1 to see the difference between choosing a country code extension compared to one such as `.eu` that covers a broader territory.

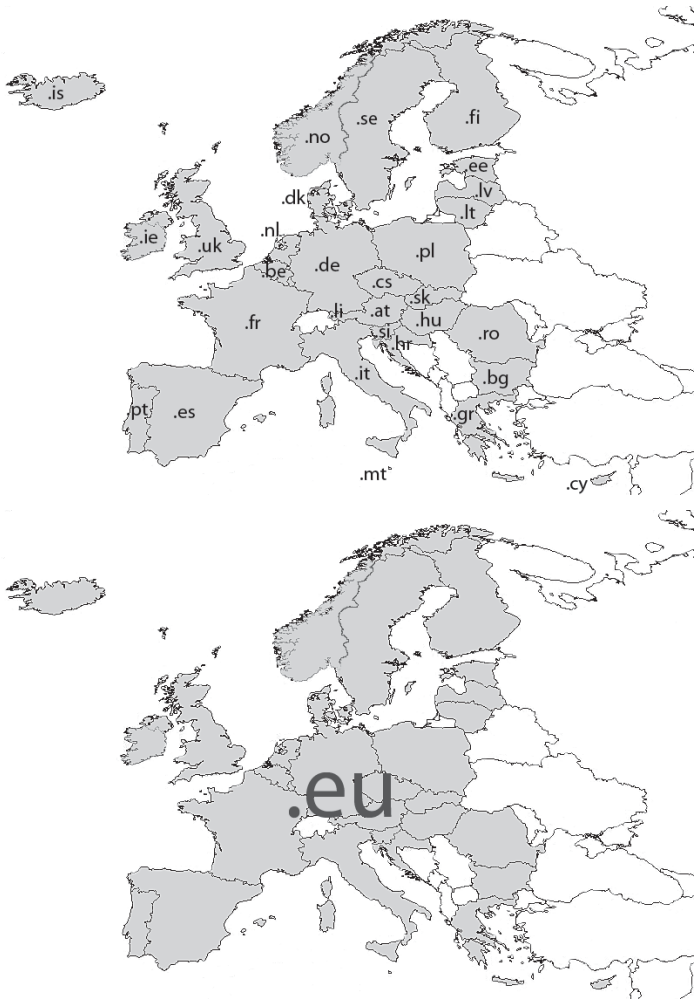


Figure 2-1: Pick a country code extension, or .eu?

Some Reasons to Consider a .eu Extension

If your business operates in just one European country and always will, a country-specific extension might seem to make sense. But can you say for certain what the future holds? Can you be sure your business transactions will never cross the border? Certainly, if your business already operates in multiple countries, or across all 28 European Union members, a .eu extension conveys the message that you're open for business all over. That extension also lends an air of added credibility and trustworthiness to your business, because it indicates a legal entity that is governed by the laws of the European Union. Only businesses established in at least one EU country – or in Iceland, Liechtenstein, or Norway – may obtain a .eu extension.

You can save some money, too, because you only need to be registered in one of the EU countries, and can then do business online across all of Europe. You don't need to have an office in any more than that one member state, which is certainly less expensive than maintaining a physical presence in multiple places. And you can maintain just that one website, rather than needing multiple variations in different countries.

There's some added security for customers, too. The .eu top-level domain was one of the first to adopt the DNSSEC protocol, which helps assure customers that they're on your website and not some fake site trying to look like yours. If you have chosen to protect your .eu domain name with DNSSEC and the visitor's service provider does validation, typing your address into a browser automatically engages some behind-the-scenes security to prevent imposters from luring your customers elsewhere and stealing their personal information.

Going Mobile: Ensuring Portability

In the early days of the Internet, it was not uncommon for individuals and even businesses to set up a website with a URL that included the domain name of the Internet service provider. For some web pioneers, domain names were more of an afterthought.



That's not usually the case anymore with businesses. However, most individuals (and again, even some businesses) still have email addresses that bear the domain name of their

provider. For a business, this wastes a great opportunity for branding, image-building, and credibility boosting. For businesses and individuals alike, it also sacrifices portability.

The hassle of changing providers

If you've ever changed your Internet service provider at home, and your email address had been given to you by the old service provider, you know about portability, or the lack thereof. Changing providers means changing your email address. If your email address has your provider's domain name and that provider goes bankrupt and shuts down, you've got that same problem. It's a real hassle having to change your email address and notify everyone with whom you interact via email.

No matter how careful you are, you're likely to miss some important email messages in the process of changing your email address. Your address is probably stored in many databases, including banks and businesses with which you interact, and plenty that you've forgotten. Even if you do notify them all, you're often depending on someone else to act upon your address change request.



On the other hand, if you have your own domain name, it's portable, and that's one of the biggest benefits. The domain name belongs to you, not the registrar or provider, so you can switch providers and take your domain name and email addresses with you.

Identifying the different parties involved

It's worth taking a step back to explore the different parties involved in registering your domain name. The *registry* is the entity with responsibility over a particular top-level domain. For example, EURid is the registry for .eu domain names. But when you're seeking to establish a domain name, you'll typically be dealing with a *registrar*, which is a company that has a contract with the registry to distribute domain names. You, the potential acquirer of a domain name, are the *registrant*.

The registrar you choose has its own set of terms and conditions spelled out in the contract you sign, and the

details of those terms and conditions may be part of your decision-making criteria when you choose a registrar. There also are terms and conditions that are passed down from the registry. Among those are the procedures for transferring your domain name.

Transferring your domain

Generally speaking, it's easy to transfer your domain name if you choose to move from one provider or registrar to another. How you accomplish this may depend on which extension you've chosen for your domain name. For .eu domains, if you wish to transfer to a different registrar, you simply obtain an authorisation code from your current registrar and send it to the new registrar, who will handle the rest.

There's a similar process to follow if you wish to transfer to a different registrar and also transfer the domain name to a new holder. If you wish to transfer the domain name to a new holder without changing registrars, check the registrar's website to find out the procedure. Once the transfer takes place, the registrar will update the contact information in the WHOIS database.

Gaining Increased Technical Flexibility



If you use the email service that your Internet service provider offers, you get whatever features and options that provider chooses to make available. That may be fine as long as you're pleased with the options, but can be frustrating if you wish to use some kind of functionality that's not available.

The same is true for other kinds of software applications that you might choose to use, such as blog software or the content management system you use to control your website. You often have to take what you're offered, whether you like it or not. Whoever is hosting your website is probably hosting other websites, too – maybe even thousands of websites – and can't feasibly provide all sorts of different software options to all of those customers.

Going your own way

Get your own domain name and you can also operate your own server to host that domain name. If you operate your own server, you can choose whatever software applications you desire, with precisely the features and functionality that are right for your needs.



Operating your own server also gives you scalability that you might not have with a service that hosts multiple domains. For example, there may be limits to the number of email addresses your provider can offer you. If your needs grow and you find your company operating thousands of mailboxes, it's likely that hosting your own domain will be more cost-effective.

A helpful metaphor

The choice between operating your own server vs. getting space on someone else's is a bit like buying a car. You may examine several different models, and like some features of one and different features of another, but in the end you'll have to choose one of the models and take whatever features you can get on that one. Sometimes you can add a desired feature; often you cannot.

What if you could design your own car, with exactly the features you want? No need to settle for what some big car manufacturer chooses to offer you – you're in the driver's seat, so to speak.

Okay, it's true that building your own car is most likely far beyond your abilities. The good news is that, while operating your own server can be somewhat challenging if you're a novice, it's nowhere near as complicated as building your own car. It's doable, and if you do, you can have exactly what you want.

Enjoying More Privacy, and Less Junk Mail

Plenty of people like canned meat. Few people like spam, the annoying overabundance of unwanted email that clogs your inbox and sometimes offends your sensibilities. Spam filters can work, but only to a point. The fact is, anytime some business gets your email address, there's a good chance your address will wind up in the hands of someone else who wants to flood your inbox with spam.

The only surefire way to prevent spam is to never, ever share your email address with anybody other than a few people you want to keep in contact with. Truth be told, even that is not always successful. And the Internet is a lot less useful or fun if you have to refrain from shopping or creating accounts with the online publications you wish to read, simply because they ask for your email address and a password.



If you obtain your own domain name, you gain a lot of control over your email. You can use that control to your advantage for keeping spam at bay and protecting your privacy.



Here's a strategy for doing just that. Simply create a new email address for each different site on which you shop or have to register. If you have your own domain, that can be quite easy to do and simple to manage. For example, set up an email called `newshop1@somedomain.eu` to create a login and shop at one site, and an email called `newshop2@somedomain.eu` to shop at another site. You can easily set it up so that mail coming to these addresses will forward automatically into your main inbox.

Then, if you start noticing a bunch of new spam, and you find that it's being sent to `newshop2@somedomain.eu`, it suggests that an online retailer sold your email address to some marketer. So, just delete that email address and, just like that, you'll stop getting that spam, but you'll still get the emails you want from the other retailer.

Chapter 3

Heading Out into the Domain Name Market

In This Chapter

- ▶ Choosing a hosting provider
 - ▶ Understanding the business of domaining
 - ▶ Determining the value of a domain name
-

If you've never gone through the process of getting a domain name and launching a new website and email service using that domain, you may be surprised by the thriving business that has grown up around this endeavour. You'll likely be interacting with a registrar or hosting provider, and may at some point become involved in the sale or purchase of an existing domain name.

In this chapter, we'll outline some of the things you should consider when choosing what provider will host your domain, and we'll explore what's known as 'domaining,' which involves registering domain names with the hope of selling them later for a profit. And you can't buy or sell anything, including a domain name, unless you can set a value for it.

Picking a Hosting Provider

Where will your website and email service reside? That's an important question you'll need to carefully consider as part of the whole process of getting and using a domain name. In Chapter 2, we briefly discussed the option of hosting your domain on your own server, which many companies and organisations do, especially those that are larger.

If you're thinking of getting a domain name for yourself as an individual or your family, or for a smaller business, there's a good chance you'll prefer to have someone else do the hosting. That means you'll have to make a decision about what provider will be the host.

Deciding what you need



Before comparing different hosting providers, it's best to take a step back and make sure that you've fully determined what you plan to do with your domain and website. To begin with, are you obtaining a domain name for a business or for personal use? If it's just for you or your family, are you getting the domain name primarily to set up personalised email, or do you plan a website, too?

If, on the other hand, you're registering a domain name for a business website, what do you expect customers will do on your site? Find information before buying? Access customer support? Actually purchase something from the site? What kind of traffic do you anticipate? And what will your email requirements be? How you answer these kinds of questions may help narrow your choices.

Helpful tools from the provider

Hosting providers typically offer a variety of tools to help you achieve what you're trying to accomplish. For example, they may have tools to help you design a site, which can be especially useful if you're just starting out. Some may offer design assistance, or complete design services.



One important question to ask is, if you use the hosting provider's design tools, will you be able to move your site to another provider should you so choose at a later date? Some tools work only on that provider's server, and it may be difficult or impossible to move.

Perhaps you have a web design application you wish to run on your own PC and simply upload the website files to the host. Or, you may seek assistance from an outside design firm. Either of those possibilities should eliminate the problem of having your site stuck with a provider just because it was created there.



Email may be the single most important reason to have your own domain name. It is, therefore, important to consider email when comparing hosting providers. There may be variations in email-related costs, the number of mailboxes you get, or the ability to scale up the number of email addresses as needed. And you may want access to certain email tools, such as autoresponders.

Understand what you get

It's important that your provider allows plenty of disk space for your content, at a pricing level that's agreeable for you. Ask what you'll be provided, and be sure you get an answer that's understandable and relates to the content you're planning, such as roughly how many pages of content the space will allow.

Another technical aspect that's quite important is *bandwidth*, or the provider's ability to transfer your expected volume of website data efficiently. The bandwidth you need depends entirely on the kind of content you have on your website as well as the number of visitors. The volume of traffic is important from a pricing perspective as well, because what you pay for the hosting service often depends on the amount of traffic visiting your website.

Your provider will do you no good if it's not reliable. Ask about how it's equipped to deal with disasters, and how its data is backed up. Also check whether it guarantees a certain number of hours or minutes of uptime.

Is help available?



One more thing to compare is the level of customer service offered. Should you need assistance, or if there is a problem, can you count on reaching the provider by phone? Does tech support happen on the phone or via chat? Either way can work just fine, but you may have a preference. And, are there hours when support services are closed, or are they offered 24/7?

Once you have a feel for the features and tools you will need, you can start comparing packages. Many providers will offer packages that include registration of a domain name along

with hosting and an assortment of the tools and features we've outlined here.

Understanding Domaining



Domain investment, sometimes known as *domaining* or *domain name speculation*, is a practice in which someone registers a lot of domain names with the hope of selling them later at a high profit. It involves trying to think up domain names that might at some point have some value, but that no one has yet registered.

A great time for domaining is when a new top-level domain becomes available, which means there are many potential domain names out there that no one has claimed. A successful domainer might also be adept at spotting pop culture trends very early on, trends that have their own brand-new terminology, and then acquiring names that use that terminology.

Options for domainers

Sometimes a domainer may acquire a fairly generic name that ties in with a type of product or an industry sector. The domainer can then set up a pay-per-click site with information about that topic, generating pay-per-click revenues from businesses that choose to advertise on the site. The domainer will want to maximise traffic in order to make the domain more valuable when it comes time to sell it to someone else. This kind of domaining most often involves real words, rather than nonsense words.

In other cases, the domainer will register a domain name and simply hold onto it, letting it remain inactive and hoping that someone will find it valuable enough to purchase later on. Most domain names sold in this manner don't command astronomical prices. On occasion, though, the prices can be staggering. The prices paid for such domains as *hotels.com*, *fb.com*, *toys.com*, and *beer.com* reportedly were in the millions.



This aspect of domaining is important to understand even if you have no interest in becoming a domainer yourself. It's worth taking some time to consider domain names you might like to use in the future – perhaps relating to some new line of work your company is considering, or a potential new product that might or might not actually end up being developed. Better to register the domain now so that you control it in the future if you need it, rather than have to deal with someone else who grabbed it in the meantime as a potential investment. You can register quite a few possibilities (even if you never end up using most of them) for a whole lot less money than it would take to acquire one great domain name that a domainer registered first.

What domaining isn't



It's worth noting that there's a difference between legitimate domaining and the practice known as *cybersquatting*. That's when someone registers a domain name that is someone else's trademark. The intent is to get the trademark owner to pay large sums of money for the domain, though cybersquatters often end up in court, sued for trademark infringement. A variation of this is sometimes known as *typosquatting*, which involves registering domains that are slightly misspelled versions of popular websites.

Realising the Value of a Domain Name

Many holders of domain names will never have any need to sell their domain, or acquire one from someone else. Others buy and sell with regularity, while still others have spent time creating and building an online business, but are now ready to exit the business and wonder whether someone might be willing to purchase their domain name.

That leads to the question of how one can judge the value of a domain name. This isn't like buying or selling a used car, for which there are services that gauge exactly what a car should be worth. There's a lot of subjectivity here, but there are some factors to consider.



Perhaps the most important factor is the domain name's potential to attract traffic, which is what everyone wants. Some domain names are so memorable and compelling that users will simply type them into the browser and won't even bother using a search engine. Those are likely to be worth more on the resale market.



Also pertinent is the domain name's potential to end up near the top of search engine search results. Some naturally land higher than others, for lots of reasons, one of which may be that the domain name matches a keyword in the search. The greater the potential for ending up high in search results, the more that domain name may be worth. There's more about search engine optimisation in Chapter 4.

Whether you're planning to sell a domain name or have an interest in buying one, you can get some help in determining the value. In fact, some of the marketplaces where domains are bought and sold offer appraisal services that analyse domain names according to a variety of factors.

Chapter 4

Acquiring a Domain Name

In This Chapter

- ▶ Choosing a domain name
 - ▶ Checking to see if the name is available
 - ▶ Picking a registrar
 - ▶ Disputing another registrant's ownership
-

So you're convinced. You need a domain name, maybe a few. It's time to get the process moving.

In this chapter, we'll discuss some of the considerations that go into picking the right name, then examine the initial steps to follow. We'll find out how to see if your desired name is available, what to do if it's not, and how to choose a registrar.

Choosing the Right Domain Name

For businesses and organisations, the most important reason to have a website is to connect with customers and potential customers. But that website will do you no good at all if no one knows about it, or few people can find it.

With that in mind, one of the primary considerations when choosing a domain name should be whether the name will help get your website noticed or your email address easily remembered. A carefully chosen name can make a big difference in the volume of traffic that visits the website. How can a domain name make such a difference? There are two key ways.



One is by being memorable. If potential customers can remember the domain name easily, there's a very good chance that they'll bypass a search engine and type the name in directly, an outcome that's doubly positive. Obviously, it has brought about a direct connection with the customer, which is what you want. That's the first plus. And by leaving a search engine out of the loop, it means that customer doesn't have the opportunity to spot a competitor in the search results.



The second way a great domain name helps boost traffic has to do with those search results. When it comes to search engines, such as Google, it's critically important that your website be as close to the top of the search results as possible. That's where it's most likely to be seen, and a high ranking suggests to potential customers that you're an especially good match for what they're needing.

Search engine optimisation

The task of getting your website to show up favorably in search results is known as *search engine optimisation*, or SEO. There's a whole science behind SEO, along with numerous experts whose entire businesses revolve around helping clients bump their websites higher in search results. SEO has to do with much more than just domain names, but the right domain name is the most logical place to begin.



One of the most significant ways a domain name can impact search results is if the domain name contains one or more keywords that are used in a search. This is an argument in favor of picking a domain name that relates closely to the actual business you're in or product you're selling. If your business specialises in yellow wood pencils, it may be prudent to choose a domain name that includes 'wood' and 'pencils', or perhaps 'yellow' and 'pencils'. If someone then searches for 'yellow wood pencils', it's more likely that your website will rank nearer to the top of the list.



It's worth noting that trying to incorporate keywords into the domain name may cause you to wind up with a longer name. That's not necessarily bad, but it works against the other goal of making it memorable. There are great arguments for shorter domain names and equally compelling reasons for choosing longer names. What if you were considering setting up a site called `www.ambition-has-an-address.eu`?

Would it be better to name it `www.ahaa.eu`? There's no right or wrong answer; you just have to decide which is easier to communicate and remember. Even if you decide to go with a longer domain name, there's such a thing as too long. Best to keep it to two or three words.

The more the merrier

It's possible that you've come up with six or eight keywords that all would be powerful. That's clearly far too many for a domain name. As a solution, consider registering multiple domain names, each spotlighting different keywords.

Sound crazy? It might be crazy, if you tried to use all of those different domains in your marketing materials. Just remember that this is for getting noticed by search engines. A customer who reaches you via search engine is not typing in the domain name, and is often not paying attention to it at all. If you decide to register multiple names, it's best to direct them to different parts of your website, because if they all point to the same page, that can diminish the impact on search results.

Impressing Google



As long as we're discussing SEO, it's worth talking a bit about PageRank. This is one of the factors that helps Google decide what to rank highly in search results. PageRank works on the assumption that an important, useful site will often have lots of links pointing to it from other sites. The more different, credible, highly ranked sites that include links to your site, the better you'll do with PageRank.

One more thing to know about Google (well, there are lots of things to know about Google, many of which only Google knows). A very complicated algorithm determines the order in which search results appear, and much of it is a secret that often changes. In fact, website owners and SEO specialists are constantly trying to figure out that secret through extensive testing, though Google will occasionally release a few details.

It's not just PageRank, not just keyword matches, but many things combined. For example, solid keyword matches are much more likely to bump your page toward the top if you also have a good PageRank.

Pay attention to the image

We discussed in Chapter 2 how a domain name can be a significant part of your company's branding efforts, and that it's therefore important to choose one that helps to convey the image you wish to project. That's particularly true when you're picking the company's primary domain name, as opposed to additional domains related to specific products or services. You want any and every domain to do well in search engines, but the one you'll be using in your marketing sends extra messages about your company.



Thus, your name considerations go far beyond memorability and search engine rankings, and they also go beyond the second-level domain that appears just before the dot. What's after the dot speaks volumes, whether you realise it or not. One that relates to your territory gives potential customers some comfort, knowing that you're targeting people in their part of the world.

Notice that we mentioned connecting with the people you're targeting, who might not necessarily be your closest neighbours. Your business may be located in just one of the EU countries, so your first thought might be to go with the extension for your country. But if you're trying to reach customers in other EU countries, too, an extension for just your country may send the wrong message.

Whatever message you're trying to send, never forget that the online world is small, and your website will be visible outside your country, whether or not you plan to do business elsewhere. And who knows? You may one day change your mind and decide to seek customers across the border. At that point, you'll be glad that you didn't limit yourself geographically.

For example, customers might presume your site is in a language different from theirs, even if it's not, or that your product is not available where they live. Since you're in the EU, the .eu extension is an option for you – one that signifies you're ready to do business with anyone, anywhere across the EU.

Think about the mistakes people make



As you move forward with the domain names you've chosen, it's worth considering acquiring a few more. Remember that not everyone is a skilled typist, so it's not a bad idea to register some of the most common misspellings and typos related to your domains.

Some people also register domains that have the correct second-level domain but the wrong top-level extension. That way, someone who types a different extension out of habit will still arrive safely at your site.

Being Sure that Your Choice of Name is Available

It seems easy enough to find out whether someone else has already chosen the domain name you'd like to register. Just click in the address bar of your browser, type in that domain name and see what happens. If it goes to a site, that clearly means someone else owns that domain already.

But there's more to know than that. If you type your domain name idea there and no site appears, it does not necessarily indicate that the domain name is available. Many domain names have been registered but not launched as websites. Another company may have registered that domain with plans to use it later, or a domainer may be just waiting for someone like you to make an offer for it. Or it may just have been set up for email only, in that case the previous method won't make you any wiser.



That's why you need to check the WHOIS, which we discussed in Chapter 1. That will let you know not just whether or not the domain is available, but if it's already spoken for, you can find out who owns it, where it's registered, and many other details.

It's important to remember that each extension, such as .eu, is run by a different registry, and each registry has its own WHOIS. You'll need to check the WHOIS that corresponds

with the extension you're considering, and it may be wise to check multiple extensions by visiting more than one WHOIS database. Some registrars offer their own availability checker, which may not always tell you contact information for a name that's already taken, but at least will let you know if the name is or is not available.



If the domain name you want is not available, don't despair just yet. Stay there on the WHOIS page and try some slight variations, such as adding hyphens between words. There's a good chance that you'll find something that works for your needs. To look up domains with .eu extensions, just visit www.whois.eu.

Picking a Registrar



A registry is the organisation that's responsible for one or more extensions. For example, EURid (<http://www.eurid.eu>) is the registry that handles the .eu extension. The registry maintains the database of all domain names that have been claimed, along with contact information for all registrants.

The registry also runs the domain name servers for the extensions it oversees. These name servers then point to other name servers run by the registrar, the registrant, or the hosting provider. Without the network of name servers, no one would be able to find your website. (You'll find more about the hierarchy of name servers in Chapter 1).

Considerations about registrars

Once you've determined that the names you want are available, it's time to choose the registrar that will handle your registration. We're not talking about the registry, because you usually can't register your domain directly with the registry that handles the extension. You need a registrar for that job. The registrar is the go-between that handles the details for you.



There are many registrars out there waiting for your business. Many of them are Internet service providers – those organisations that provide connectivity to the Internet. Some of them are hosting companies that provide the server space for hosting websites such as yours, along with related email

boxes. There are many service companies that are registrars, too. These may be companies that design and build websites, for example, or they may be organisations that specialise in registering domain names.

The registrar must be accredited by the registry responsible for the extension you plan to use. For registering a .eu domain name, you'll need a registrar accredited by EURid, for example. There are plenty of them, all over, operating in any language you choose. The website of the registry will typically provide you with a full list of registrars.

Which registrar is right for you depends on your needs. They have wide varieties of packages and pricing options, typically including hosting services, possibly including design assistance if you need it. It pays to shop around a bit.

Getting the process started

The registration process is quite simple, really. To get the process going, you'll need to provide the registrar with a few key pieces of information, including:

- ✓ The domain name or names that you wish to register
- ✓ Your contact information
- ✓ Your name servers (if you decide to run your own)



There's a good chance you don't have your own name server, and that's fine. The registrar will typically provide this critical piece of the puzzle, which handles the information necessary to route visitors to your site and get email to the proper inboxes.

If you do, however, run your own name servers, you'll have to inform the registrar and provide the names. If those name servers happen to share the same domain name as the one you're registering (the tech crowd refers to those as *in-bailiwick* name servers), you'll need to also provide the IP addresses (called *glue records*) for those servers.



Although the technical explanation about why this is necessary is really fascinating, we'll cut the long story short and just say this solves a 'chicken and egg' problem. To ask the name servers about the domain name, you need

the IP addresses of the name servers; however you need to ask those exact same name servers in order to get those IP addresses.

Either way, the name server information must be entered into the appropriate place. Once it has been entered, it's possible there may be some delay before potential visitors can find your site. If it's a brand-new domain name, it should work almost immediately, but if you've changed the information on an existing domain name, it can take up to a day or so for the various name servers to get your information updated.



This is because all those name servers out there maintain their own caches of website location information so they can hand out answers more speedily. A name server's caches are cleared automatically from time to time to ensure that they're delivering the most up-to-date information. Check the section in this chapter called 'Making a Move' to learn more about how that works.



As for the contact information, provide it carefully and double-check it, because the person or company listed here is the legal holder of the domain name. The legal holder is the one responsible for content on the site (including illegal content, so be careful). And if there is a dispute about the domain name registration, the data included here is decisive. It will become the WHOIS data, as you'll notice in Figure 4-1.

The screenshot shows the .eu website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, FAQ, Contact us, and a search bar. Below this is a banner for 'Insight at your fingertips' with a download button. The main content area features a WHOIS search bar with the text 'Check if your domain name is available' and a search button. Below the search bar, the results for 'somedomain.eu' are displayed, indicating it is 'Not available for registration'. The page includes a 'Domain' section with registration details and a 'Registrant' section with contact information.

Home | FAQ | Contact us | English | Search

Get a .eu | .eu holders | Registrars | About us

Check if your domain name is available | WHOIS search | .eu | GO

Register a .eu domain name

Home > WHOIS search

WHOIS search

somedomain.eu: Not available for registration

If you believe you have the right to a .eu domain name that is already registered, you may [dispute the registration](#).

If you believe the registrant data for this .eu domain name is **inaccurate**, you may file a [complaint](#).

If you wish to **transfer** this domain name, you will require a [transfer authorisation code](#). If you are unable to obtain the authorisation code from your registrar or via the [.eu End-user Extranet](#), you may [request an emergency authorisation code](#).

Domain

Name	somedomain
Status	REGISTERED (what this means)
Registered	May 31, 2010
Expiry Date	May 31, 2014
Last update	March 6, 2012, 2:04 pm

Registrant

Name	Marc Van Wesemael
Organisation	EURid vzw/asbl
Language	Dutch
Address	Parkstation Woluwelaan 150 1831 Diegem Belgium
Phone	+32.24012750
Fax	+32.24012751
Email	admin@eurid.eu

Figure 4-1: Who is the holder of ‘somedomain.eu’?

It’s worth noting that for companies with .eu domain names, the holder of the domain is considered to be the company listed in the company field. There’s also a contact person, but that person is not considered the holder of a company’s domain. After all, employees arrive and depart all the time.

Making a Move

If you're moving from one home to another, you'll likely let your friends and relatives know of your new address promptly, so that they won't drop by and try to visit you at your old home, or send a letter there. If you're moving your website, you need to make similar arrangements.

Here's the problem: As we discussed in Chapter 1, a server may initially have to query a number of different name servers when it's trying to locate your website. Once it finds your site, it will file what it learned in its cache, just in case someone else asks. That saves trouble on any subsequent requests – in particular, it keeps authoritative name servers from being bogged down by unnecessary work.

How long does that information stay stored in the cache? It depends on a setting in your name servers known as time to live (TTL). It's almost like an expiration date, and it tells those name servers how long to cache the information about your site. Set the TTL for too short an interval and it'll cause unnecessary work. On the other hand, if you set a very long TTL and you move your site – well, it's like you moved but your friends are still using an older address when they're trying to find you. Name servers will look in their cache and use outdated information.

You can use TTL to your advantage when moving your site. First, note the standard length of the TTL that's normally set for your site, then change it to a shorter time period. Wait around until that longer amount of time has passed, then move the website. Since you let that longer TTL interval expire, name servers won't keep directing traffic to the old address. Once all the servers are pointing in the right direction, then you can change the TTL back to a longer, standard time period.

Knowing What to Do If the Name You Want is Taken

The WHOIS search that you use to check on the availability of the domain name you want can be frustrating. Someone may already have registered the name you wish to use.

Often, it's simply a case of someone else having a good idea just a little bit ahead of you. Using our example of a specialist in yellow wood pencils, it may be that another pencil special-

ist already decided to register a name relating to your chosen niche. There's not really much to be done about that, other than contacting that domain name holder and seeing if you can purchase the domain (if it really means that much to you). Otherwise, you'll need to explore other variations.



On the other hand, what happens if you believe that registrant acted in bad faith in obtaining that domain? That might be the case, particularly if the domain carries your exact business name, and especially if that registrant doesn't actually run a business using that name. There's reason in that case to suspect that the other registrant signed up for the name for speculative or abusive purposes, and really is not entitled to have it.

In such cases, you definitely have options. Filing a lawsuit is one of those options, of course, but for many people it's not a particularly attractive option. It can be prohibitively expensive, not to mention time-consuming. The alternative offered by some registries is ADR, or *alternative dispute resolution*.

Deciding if ADR is for you



An ADR dispute is much faster to resolve and less expensive than hiring a lawyer and potentially going to court. It's a way of putting the dispute into unbiased, expert hands without resorting to the full legal system. In the case of .eu disputes, you can start an ADR procedure if:

- ✓ you feel the name is identical or confusingly similar to the one on which you own the rights, and
- ✓ you believe it has been registered by its holder without rights or legitimate interest, or it has been registered or is being used in bad faith



Registries that offer ADR typically designate a provider that will handle the cases. ADR for .eu cases is handled by the independent Czech Arbitration Court in Prague. Cases are handled by panellists, rather than judges, and these panellists are often intellectual property experts. The process is all done online and by email – no need to travel to another EU location to attend a hearing (as you sometimes hear said about other online conveniences, you can handle ADR without even changing out of your pyjamas).

Cases can be conducted in any one of 24 different languages. Typically, they're conducted in the language of the domain name holder – the one showing up in the WHOIS search – unless the parties agree to a different language. If you're filing the case, you can request a change to one of the other available languages. It's up to the panellists to decide, though a language change may incur an additional fee.

Deciding if ADR is for you

When you file your complaint, you'll be asked to provide the details of the complaint and explain why you think you have a good case. If you have evidence supporting your side of the story, such as documentation of your registered trademark, now's the time to share it.

You have the choice of using one panellist or three to preside over the case. It's less expensive to use one, and that's what most people do. If that's the case, the court will appoint one for you. If you decide you'd rather have three, the court will name one of them, you get to pick the second, and the other party in the dispute is allowed to pick the third. A simple majority will decide the outcome. You can find more information on the procedures and the fees at www.adr.eu.

Chapter 5

You Have a Domain Name...What's Next?

In This Chapter

- ▶ Activating a domain name
 - ▶ Building a website
 - ▶ Setting up your email
 - ▶ Securing your domain
 - ▶ Renewing your domain's registration
 - ▶ Understanding the domain quarantine process
-

Domain name in hand, you're ready to go! So what's next? If you obtained it with plans to use it right away, you can go ahead and launch a website and set up email.

In this chapter, we'll outline in very basic terms how to get started on these tasks, and explore the somewhat sobering topic of security. We'll also find out about keeping your domain in force by renewing your registration, and learn what happens when its registration ends.

Activating Your Name



Most registrars maintain an online control panel that allows you to login and manage your domain name. This is where you'll take the final steps to get your name active – ready to welcome website visitors and handle email.

You may have to enter information in the interface regarding the location of your domain's name servers, though there's

a good chance your host or registrar will take care of this for you. If this task is up to you, your hosting service should provide you with the location of primary and secondary name servers.

Building a Website

Odds are your primary reason for wanting a domain name is so that you can put a website there. We've reached the stage in the process where you get to create your website, whenever you're ready. This is where it gets especially exciting, as you see the fruits of your efforts starting to take shape.

There are entire books written on the topic of creating your website. Whole shelves of books, in fact. We'll just explore some of the basics here.

Tools of the trade



Your hosting provider may have tools that will help you create and manage a website on your own. Some tools of this nature are pretty simple and straightforward, others less so, but with the help of tutorials and some practice, you should be able to get started. As an alternative, you can acquire design software to install on your own computer, then simply upload the files to the server.

The upload process will vary depending on your provider and the software you use. In many cases, once you enter the proper settings, you can very simply publish your website and any updates just by clicking a command in your design program, and it handles the upload behind the scenes.

Of course, website design may not be your cup of tea. That's no problem, because there are many resources available that will take on the task for you. Your hosting provider may be one of those resources, in fact, or your company's advertising agency, if you have one.

What will your site look like?



The actual design of your site will depend upon a number of factors:

- ✔ What's the purpose of the website? What will visitors be able to do there?
- ✔ If it's a business site, will it include product descriptions, if your business makes or sells products? Will products actually be sold on the site?
- ✔ What is the personality of your company? What kind of image should your website project?
- ✔ How will your website complement other marketing efforts? Should it carry on the look and feel of printed materials? How can it take advantage of the interactive nature of the web, so that it's not just like a static, brochure online?

Setting Up Your Email



Beyond making a website possible, the other main motivation for obtaining a domain name is email. Your business looks much more professional and credible if all employees use email that bears the company's domain name. Or if you're getting a domain just for you or your family, you can end up with easy-to-remember email addresses that you will never have to change again, ever, no matter who provides your Internet service.

How to set up your email will vary, depending on the hosting provider and the service plan you've chosen. You'll likely be allowed a certain number of email boxes with your hosting package, and the host will provide you a way to manage your pool of email addresses.



If you're establishing email for a roster of employees, you may wish to decide upon naming guidelines to help your emails look consistent. Again, that's a hallmark of a professionally run company, and people do notice these things, consciously or subconsciously. You may, for example, set up email addresses that use the employee's first initial followed by last name, or you may prefer to spell out both first and last name, with a dot separating them.

Knowing that Security is More Important than Ever



The news is full of stories about increasingly clever crooks, and how they've found the Internet to be an attractive place to prey upon victims. You certainly don't want to be one of those victims, nor do your customers. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways you can, and should, fight back.

SSL and TLS protection



One of the best-known security features – recognised even by many casual Internet users – is the SSL protocol, short for *secure sockets layer*. It was developed in the 1990s to allow secure communications on the web, for buying stuff and doing online banking. TLS, which stands for *transport layer security*, is not as well-known as an acronym, but it's a security protocol along the same lines, essentially the successor to SSL. Both allow visitors' web browsers to establish secured communications with the server, to prevent evildoers from snooping.

If you'll be conducting any kind of business, or dealing with any kind of sensitive customer information, you'll need to use this type of technology. It can sound rather complicated (and in some respects it certainly is), but you may be able to benefit from this type of security without getting a computer science degree. Your hosting provider may provide shopping cart functionality, for example, to help you conduct secure transactions.

DNSSEC to the rescue



Other threats go by such names as *spoofing* and *man-in-the-middle* attacks. Put simply, spoofing is when someone with ill intent pretends to be someone else. In our context here, it involves imposter sites that exist to trick your customers into giving away sensitive information. You certainly don't want bad guys intercepting a communication between you and a potential customer, hoping to victimise the customer.

Man-in-the-middle attacks involve an imposter who gets between two parties and controls a communication between them, essentially pretending to be one, then the other, and fooling both. Again, you can see the potential for bad things to happen, should one of these imposters get anywhere near your website.

A security protocol called *Domain Name System Security Extensions*, or DNSSEC, is a sophisticated new way to prevent these kinds of security problems. It prevents intentional redirection of traffic to the wrong site, as well as the interception of email traffic. It works at the domain name system level and is so transparent that you won't even know it's there. If your domain name is protected by it, you can feel confident that web, email, chat, and other Internet communications are much safer and more secure.



Because DNSSEC works from the DNS level, it needs to be adopted by the registry responsible for a site's top-level domain. It's new enough that many top-level domains haven't implemented it fully. The .eu registry, EURid, has implemented it to protect domains that end in .eu. DNSSEC is optional, and if it's chosen by the registrant, it must be implemented throughout the whole chain of name servers. It's only effective if information is verified by validating name servers.

Permission to make changes

Registry Lock provides another level of security for domain name holders (as well as their customers). Consider this possibility: What if someone with bad intentions got into the control panel you used to activate your domain, the one that includes such information as the name servers for your domain? Remember, that name server information helps the DNS system know exactly where to find your domain. If someone broke in and changed that information, traffic trying to get to your site could potentially be directed somewhere else. Not good.



Registry Lock is a bit like some of those personal identity theft protections that essentially prevent virtually anything from happening involving your credit without special authorisation that only you can provide. Without Registry Lock, registrars are able to automatically update DNS information with the registry. Registry Lock prevents changes to your site's DNS

information without specific, manual authorisation from the registry. You can request this protection from your registrar for a relatively small fee. Be aware that because manual authorisation is required, it can significantly slow down any legitimate DNS changes. But that's certainly better than being hacked.

Keeping Your Domain Name in Force



Once you've gone through the process of acquiring a domain name, you certainly don't want your registration to expire, right? That's why you need to make yourself fully aware of the renewal process for your domain name. It can vary from one registrar to another, and from one extension to another.

A common arrangement is renewal every year, conducted automatically. That saves you trouble, as long as there's current payment information available to pay registration fees. In other cases, you may have a one-year renewal that you have to take care of yourself each year.



Your registrar also may offer you a much longer registration period when you sign up for your domain name, sometimes up to 10 years. It's still important to understand the terms, because the renewal period might not be as long as the initial period. For example, some registries allow for an initial period of two years, with renewals that last just one.

In most cases, whatever renewal you must do will happen through your registrar. Some registries allow what's known as direct registration.

Oops, My Domain is Quarantined

Given all the talk about computer viruses, you might think that a *quarantined* domain name has been infected with some awful illness and is being kept away from the rest of us. Actually, it's nothing that terrible.



Basically, quarantining is what happens when a domain name's registration ends and it's deleted. Perhaps it was cancelled, or maybe you needed to renew it and forgot. When a domain is in quarantine, it can't be used for a website or email or anything else. It just sits around, waiting for something to happen. For .eu domains, the quarantine period is 40 days.

Many registries refer to this process as a *retention period* rather than a quarantine. Whatever it's called, during this time the domain is non-functional. In the case of a .eu quarantine, the WHOIS record states that it's quarantined. That record may still show the name of the last registrant, but not necessarily the contact information. It also may show the date the quarantine ends.



So what is the domain waiting for during that 40 days? A couple of things can happen. If the registrant didn't mean for the registration to end – say it was cancelled by mistake, or as we said, the renewal didn't happen – the 40 days allows time for the registrant to reactivate the domain, reinstating it with the same data that was in place before the quarantine. Otherwise, once the 40 days expire, the domain name is available for someone else to register.

If you're wondering about the significance of the 40-day period, let's just say it's all in the language. It was decided that for the .eu extension, the retention period would be called a quarantine. At that point, someone involved in the process noted that the word 'quarantine' derives from the French *quarante*, which happens to mean '40.'

Chapter 6

(More Than) Ten Key Points

.....

In This Chapter

- ▶ Remembering the important points
 - ▶ Moving forward with confidence
-

What are the most important points you need to burn into your brain as you embark on your domain name adventure? We've made it easy for you in this chapter, by listing not just ten, not just eleven, but fourteen key takeaways. Take it away!

You Want Flexibility? You've Got It!

You can pick just about anything for your domain name, as long as it doesn't already belong to someone else. There are no restrictions. And talk about flexibility – pick a domain name ending in .eu and you can use any character used by any official language in the European Union.

It's Got Portability

If you've ever tried changing your email address, you know that's something you never want to do again – ever. Get a domain name and you won't have to change your email address if you move to a different Internet service provider. You take your domain with you wherever you go, and along with it, your email addresses and your website URL.

You're the Boss

When you get a domain name, you own it. It's yours. That means you can make all of the decisions, including what kind of infrastructure you want for hosting your website, what service provider, what content management software you want to use. It's all up to you.

Give Careful Thought to Your TLD

Of course, your domain name says something about your company. Quite possibly, it says the name of your company. That's no surprise. But don't forget to think about what the part after the dot says about your company. Some top-level domains carry more credibility than others, for example. Some have a specific purpose, such as .org for non-governmental organisations. And the TLD can make a statement about the market in which you wish to operate. Picking .eu as your TLD sends a message that you're open for business across the European Union.

Court is Not Your Only Option

Is someone else using the domain name that you believe rightfully ought to be yours? Serious courtroom hassles are in your future, right? Not necessarily. Alternative dispute resolution is worth a try if you want to attempt to get your hands on a domain name to which you feel you have a legal right. ADR proceedings are recognised by courts, they're legally binding, they're significantly less expensive, and they're a whole lot faster to resolve. Some top-level domains have their own version of ADR, so it's definitely worth checking out this option before heading to court.

Be Safe, Not Sorry

Chances are you read something not long ago about hackers victimising someone somewhere. You don't want your name

in the headlines, do you? Didn't think so. Then be sure to activate every safety feature you can as soon as you've got your domain name. Registry Lock and DNSSEC are a couple of prime examples.

Choose Your Registrar Wisely

If you think one registrar is like any other, think again. Not all have the same reputation, and they certainly don't all offer the same services. Carefully investigate all of your options before signing up with a particular registrar. If you're in a big hurry to snare a potentially hot domain name and don't have time to fully investigate, you can always register the name first, then do your homework and, if necessary, transfer it to a different registrar later.

The Best Offence is a Good Defence

When you're picking domain names, begin by registering the ones you want to use. Then think of common ways that people might misspell your name, and register those, too, because if you don't, some opportunist might. And while you're at it, register anything else you can think of that you would not want your competitors to grab.

Make Sure You're the One Listed

Check the WHOIS database once you're registered to see if you're listed as the registrant. Why wouldn't you be? Sometimes to make things convenient, domain names are registered in the name of the registrar, or the reseller, or the intellectual property lawyer. That might have been convenient, but you don't want it to stay that way, because if you aren't listed as the registrant, you don't have legal rights to the domain name. That means the intellectual property doesn't belong to you, and that's not good.

Be Certain Who Your Registrar Is

This might come as a surprise, but there are dishonest people out there (just kidding, you already knew that). Just as there are scams designed to trick you into giving out your credit card number to some unsavory character, there are scams designed to trick you into transferring your domain name inadvertently. So, double-check any communication you receive to be certain it's really coming from your registrar.

You've Got Credibility

You would always want to be properly attired when making an important sales call. That gives you credibility. Likewise, having a domain name can lend your company credibility, particularly when it comes to email. Which impresses you more: email coming from a free email service, or a message sent with a domain name that matches the company's website? Even if you're running a small company – make that especially if you're a small company – you can't do without that credibility.

Will Social Media Replace Domain Names? No Way

Social media can be a great way to get the word out, but some companies make the mistake of viewing it as the only way to get the word out. They think domain names are yesterday's news. Don't buy into that mindset. The social media scene is incredibly trendy, and what's hot today could be as cold as ice tomorrow, and then where would that leave you? Also, relying solely on social media puts you at the mercy of someone else's rules and guidelines, and you don't even own the content. You are likely to be restricted in terms of what you can do visually, as well, and what kinds of media you're allowed to publish. A domain name, on the other hand, allows you to build an identity the way you want to, and be in charge of the content.

Know Your Privacy Rights

When you're choosing a TLD, it's worth checking to see what contact details are displayed in the WHOIS database. In some cases, it's more revealing than you might like. Be sure you make a choice where your privacy will be protected. If you register a .eu domain name, for example, and you're a private person, the WHOIS database will never display your name.

Make it Easy

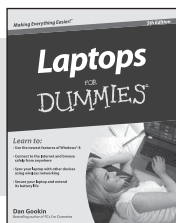
There's little point in getting a domain name if no one can remember it. You need a name that's memorable, and also one that's easy to type (unless you relish the challenge of predicting every possible typo of a tough-to-type name and then buying all of those domain names, too). Your domain name needs to be easy to understand, and along those lines, easy to say, for effective word-of-mouth and broadcast advertising.



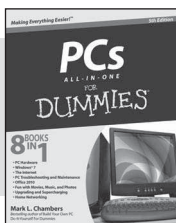
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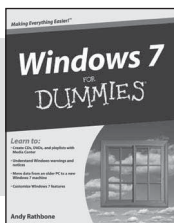
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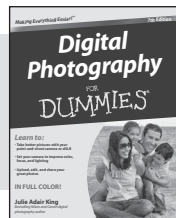
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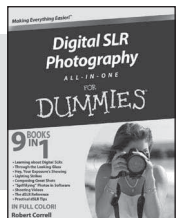
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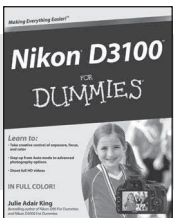
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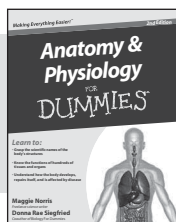


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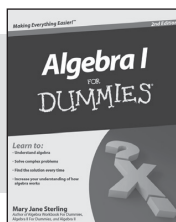


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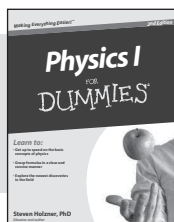
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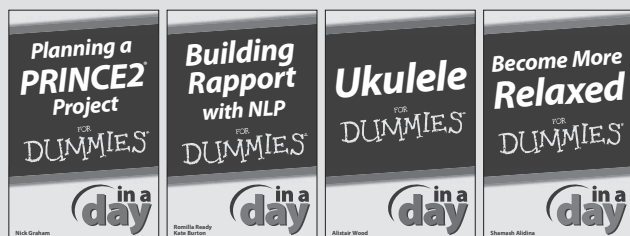
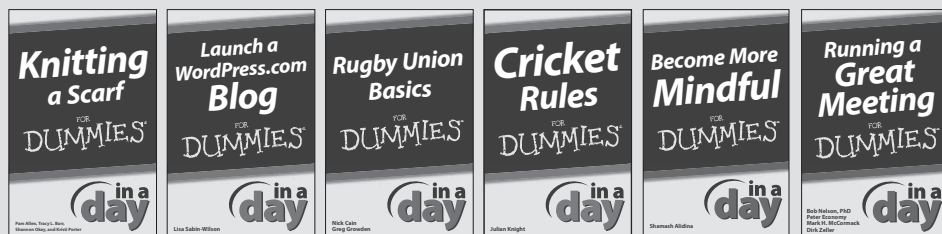
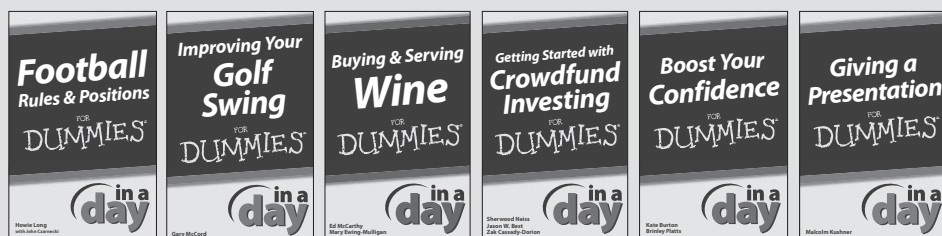
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EURid

The European Registry of Internet Domain Names

 EUregistry

 EUregistry

Your comprehensive guide to choosing and obtaining a domain name for you or your business

The Internet is a central part of life as we know it, but it wouldn't work without domain names, which direct visitors to websites, and email to inboxes. Every business needs one (or more), and individuals may want a domain name, too. There's a lot to consider when choosing a domain name, much more than simply picking the words before the dot. This guide gives you the scoop on selecting the domain name that's right for your needs, obtaining it, then protecting it.

- ***Understand what a domain name can do for you or your organisation – build your brand, make a statement, and make your life easier.***
- ***Decide what goes before the dot, as well as after it – pick the right name and choose a registrar to make the name yours.***
- ***Know what to do next, once you have your domain name – build a website, set up email, and be sure your domain name is protected.***

EURid, the European Registry for Internet Domain Names, is a non-profit organisation chosen by the European Commission as the registry in charge of managing the .eu top-level Internet domain.



Open the book and

- **The secret that leads visitors to your website and gets email where it's going**
- **Steps to take to get the domain name you want and deserve**
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