



How to choose your domain name

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Your domain name is like the front door to your website, and if people can't see your door, they won't be able to find you.

It seems like an obvious thing to say, but your domain name should be the name of your company. That way, anyone who knows your company, can easily find your website. If you're just starting your business, and you expect to use your website as an integral part of doing business, you might want to check on the availability of a domain name before picking the name for your company.

You can check the availability of domain names at <http://www.internic.net/whois.html> for dot-com's and http://www.cira.ca/en/re_whois.html for dot-ca's.

If you already have an established business name, and are now adding a website as a new marketing tool, but your business name is not available as a domain name, you may wish to consider trying to buy the domain name from the existing owner. The 'whois' information retrieved from the sites above will give you contact information for the current owner of a particular domain.

Should you register a .COM or .CA domain name?

Think about who your customers are going to be and what you are promoting. If your site is specifically promoting Canadian content or a Canadian product, or only targeting Canadian customers, then go for a .CA domain. If you want to be found by Americans, you'd better opt for a .COM, because, face it, most Americans don't even realize that .CA exists.

How long should your domain name be?

Think about typing in a web address when you are trying to get to a particular website. Is it tedious when the web address is too long? Have you had trouble remembering long web addresses? Give your customers a break, and make your domain name as easy to remember and quick to type as possible.

Hyphens are not a great idea in a domain name, because you're making your customers remember too many things in order to get to your website. Is, or isn't there a hyphen? Is it a hyphen or an underscore? Oh forget it – I'll go to another site! You get the point.