



## Domain Names

Registering a domain name means that you have an address for trading on the internet and that your company identity - your brand - is protected online.

Every computer connected to the internet automatically has a unique address - a string of numbers - called an Internet Protocol (IP) address. But a string of numbers is neither memorable nor informative about the nature of the business. So you'll need to choose a domain name.

### Choosing a name

An e-business domain name is often the same as the registered company name. But if your company name is already taken, try creating something similar using slightly different letters or including numbers or hyphens. If Shoebox. com is already registered, for example, see if 'Shoe-Box2.com' is available instead

The name should:

- be easy to remember
- explain what your business does
- ideally be concise and easy to spell
- look good on company literature
- make an instant impression
- be easy to find - potential customers will be using search engines to find your website.

### Domain name endings

There are three different kinds of domain name endings:

1. **Generic Top Level** - these aren't linked to any country and include the endings .co, .com, .org and .net
2. **Top Level** - the domain name belonging to each country, for example .co.uk for the UK or .de for Germany
3. **Second Level** - top level domain names are subdivided into categories such as sch.uk for schools in the UK.

Your choice of domain name ending is important.

- It will reflect the nature of your business - are you a national or international organisation, for example.

- Different domain name endings are known to appeal to different customers: '.com' is a highly regarded and a globally recognised ending, but your country's own domain ending (such as .co.uk) may endear you to national customers.

A survey showed that people searching for information online were six times more likely to click on a domain ending specific to their country than the more anonymous '.com'.

Ideally, register both .com and your country-specific ending. Even if you use only one or the other, owning both versions will protect your domain name and your brand.

## Registering a domain name



### Tip: Contract Length

Don't agree to a longer contract than necessary. Once you start trading you may decide to change your name/ domain name/ website structure but find yourself stuck with a particular name or provider.

Registering your domain name is simple. Amesis Design offers a low cost and complete registration service as well as other services such as creating and hosting websites.

Basic company information such as owners name, registered address, company number, and contact numbers are required. Business websites using .co.uk domains cannot opt out from having these details listed and made available by Nominet the UK licensing authority and administrator.

If you choose to use another company, always check the terms and conditions. Make sure you retain the right to move to an alternative provider if you choose and that the domain is registered in your name. Fees for domain registration vary but .co.uk names range from free to £200 and .com names are generally more expensive.

Once your registration is accepted, and your website is hosted on a server connected to the internet, it can be accessed almost immediately. However search engines such as GOOGLE can take up to six months to find a site and register it so that it will be found in searches. It is essential that professional advice is obtained and that your website meets the guidelines with appropriate pointers for the search engines to pick up on. Faster ratings can be obtained by using specialist services such as Traffic Driver which is offered by Amesis Design. This automatically submits your website to over 400 search engines every month, encouraging them to explore and direct users to your website.

A properly designed website will have these features in place but it is worthwhile examining the visitor statistics to your site in order to determine what criteria people are using in their searches. The website settings can then be refined to improve visibility and hit rate.

## .UK Domain Names at a glance

Domain	Who is it for?
.co.uk	The most popular choice of domain for business and enterprise in the UK. 4 in

	5 people searching online in the UK prefer .co.uk websites.
<a href="#">.me.uk</a>	Your personal space on the internet, the choice of domain for individuals wanting to do anything from setting up a blog, collecting all social feeds in one place and professionalising a personal email address to showing off their portfolio or proudly presenting their collector's items.
<a href="#">.org.uk</a>	The non-commercial domain choice for charities, community groups, public service, professional institutions, not for profit and third sector organisations.
<a href="#">.sch.uk</a>	<b>The domain for UK schools.</b>  This domain is restricted and requires specific registration criteria to be met. Please speak to your registrar or <a href="#">click here</a> for more information on registering this domain.
<a href="#">.ltd.uk</a>	<b>The domain for Private Limited Companies.</b>  This domain is restricted and requires specific registration criteria to be met. Please speak to your registrar or <a href="#">click here</a> for more information on registering this domain.
<a href="#">.plc.uk</a>	<b>The domain for Public Limited Companies.</b>  This domain is restricted and requires specific registration criteria to be met. Please speak to your registrar or <a href="#">click here</a> for more information on registering this domain.
<a href="#">.net.uk</a>	<b>The domain for Internet Service Providers.</b>  This domain is restricted and requires specific registration criteria to be met. Please speak to your registrar or <a href="#">click here</a> for more information on registering this domain.

## [.uk registry Nominet has announced a launch date of 10th June 2014 for new 'example.uk' domain names.](#)

From this date, people will be able to register the shorter 'example.uk' domain names through their registrar, alongside existing domains such as 'example.co.uk' or 'example.org.uk'.

The new domain is an opportunity for those wanting a short, snappy web address combined with the recognition and trust of the .uk namespace.

Over ten million existing .uk domain holders will be offered the shorter equivalent of their current address, with five years to decide whether they want to use it in addition to, or instead of the domain they already have. Nominet will be contacting these customers following launch to ensure they're aware of their opportunity to exercise this right.

Nominet's [WHOIS tool](#) has also been updated to allow people to look up who (if anyone) holds the right of registration for an 'example.uk' domain.

## Why should I register more than one domain name?

If you're thinking about registering more than one domain name, this could be a good idea. Registering and using multiple domains names is great for building your business, protecting your brand name, and creating a dynamic online identity.

When you register multiple domain names, you can:

- Keep your competition from registering a similar domain name drawing customers to them instead of you
- Promote the different products and services you offer
- Drive more traffic to your website
- Enjoy more opportunities to market to — and be listed in — search engines
- Create distinct advertising strategies reaching different target markets
- Provide customers more ways to find you when searching the Internet
- Capture common misspellings of your domain name, instead of sending visitors to an error page
- Protect your brand and online identity

It should be noted that each domain will have to be hosted which may incur additional costs. Automatic forwarding to the primary site works but prevents you from identifying a different approach for various markets. However Forwarded sites are not particularly SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) friendly.