

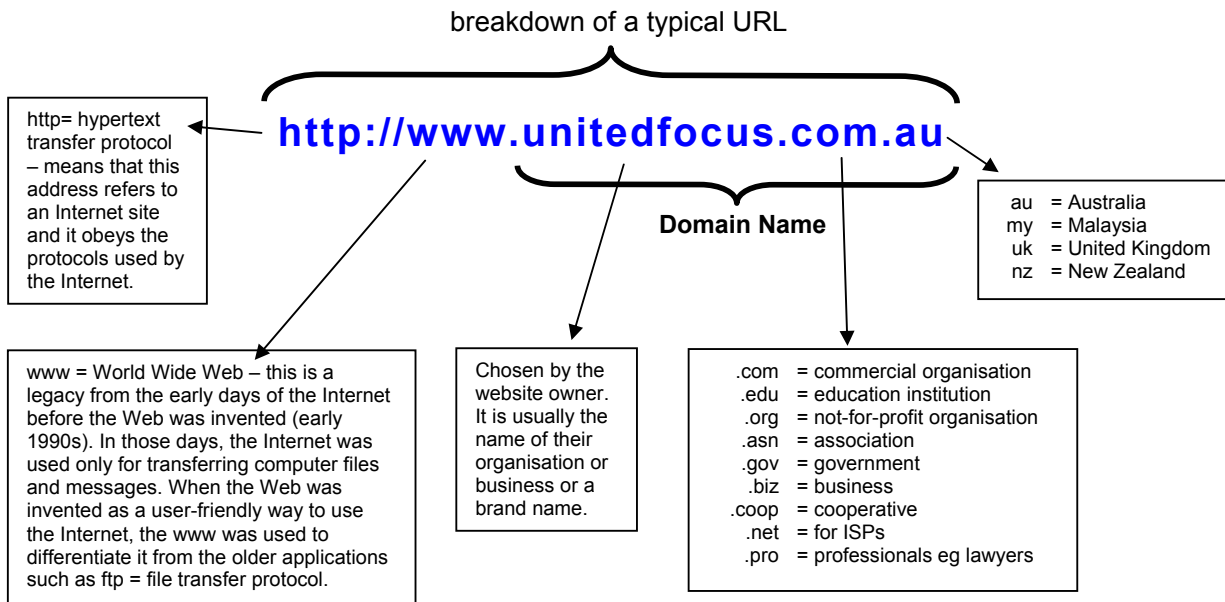
Choosing a Name For Your Website

What's in a name?

As with any business or household, websites require an address so people can find them easily and refer others to them. We all understand how street addresses work, but out in cyber-space the rules are different. There are no streets containing houses and buildings organised in neat, sequential rows. So how are websites named and assigned an address so that they can be found?

What website names mean

Every website must have an address called a URL - Universal Resource Locator. This is your own unique electronic address on the Internet. The URL is determined in part by history and in part by the owner of the website. Here's how it works ...



Because the Internet was invented in the USA (for military purposes) and it was the only country using it, the identifier .us wasn't considered necessary. Once other countries linked to the Internet, a country identifier (eg .au .uk) became necessary and useful. However, the US still didn't need an identifier because it was assumed that if an Internet address didn't have an identifier then it was obviously in the USA. As the Internet developed it became possible to buy a domain name in the USA, so just because a website address does not have a country identifier at the end (eg www.unitedfocus.com) does not mean it must be a USA company. Many companies choose the .com option because they feel by avoiding their country's identifier they might appear to be an international organisation.

Caution: If you're not an American company think carefully before dropping your country's identifier. You should be guided by what your target audience would expect your domain name to be. In most countries other than the USA, citizens will assume that a website of an organisation in their own country will have their country's identifier at the end of the address. To choose to ignore this behaviour runs the risk that people in your country, typing in your URL will add the identifier and therefore will not find your website. If you must have a .com address, then at least register both it and one that includes your country's identifier and have both point to your website.

Let us evaluate your website using our WebCollie test –
the expert, independent round up of your website

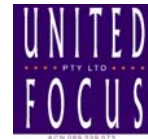
Visit our website for more about WebCollie and the website advice, workshops and assistance we provide.

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web tips and tricks #2



by United Focus Pty Ltd

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Choosing a name for your website

The choice of name for a website is as important as choosing the name for your company or organisation or cause. The name should reflect and promote your existing brand name as far as possible. For example, Westpac Bank in Australia would have been unwise to use any URL other than the one they chose: www.westpac.com.au

However, it's not that easy for some organisations. Those that have long complicated names, or names that are commonly mis-spelt will find it difficult to establish a domain name that Web users will get right.

When the web first really started to take off, from about 1995-96, it was considered best to keep URLs short since people were unfamiliar with the Web and typing a long URL was just asking for trouble. However, things have moved on and people are more comfortable with the concepts and typing in URLs. More importantly though, browsers like Netscape and Internet Explorer allow people to bookmark favourite websites. This means that having visited a site once, and having bookmarked it, users only have to click on the site's name in the bookmark directory and they go straight to it – without having to type it again. Bookmarking and the ever increasing use of hotlinks from one site to another are decreasing the need for people to type in URLs.

A checklist for choosing a name

1. Would average users guess the domain name without having to use a search engine?
2. Does the domain name support the image of the organisation?
3. Does the domain name stand on its own and convey meaning – if it was the only thing on a poster or billboard would the public know who owns the site?
4. If an acronym or abbreviation has been used, does it make sense to the target audience?
5. Has the most appropriate and obvious organisation type (or types) been chosen eg .com .org?
6. Is the name so long or awkward to type that it's likely errors will be made typing it?
7. Have additional domain names been considered that users may guess and that should be registered along with the preferred domain name – eg www.unitedfocus.com & www.unitedfocus.com.au or www.unitedfocus.biz.au

There is a common misconception that just because you already have a company name or a registered trademark, you have a right to use that name as your domain name. This is incorrect. Domain names are licensed on a 'first-come, first served' basis to eligible applicants. Before you attempt to register a domain name, you should check that the domain name you are seeking is available. You can do this by visiting the Australian Registry website: www.ausregistry.com.au

Applying for a domain name in Australia

Each country has its own government appointed domain name registration body. In Australia it is: .au Domain Administration Limited (auDA) www.auda.org.au

To register a domain name in Australia visit www.ausregistry.com.au

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