

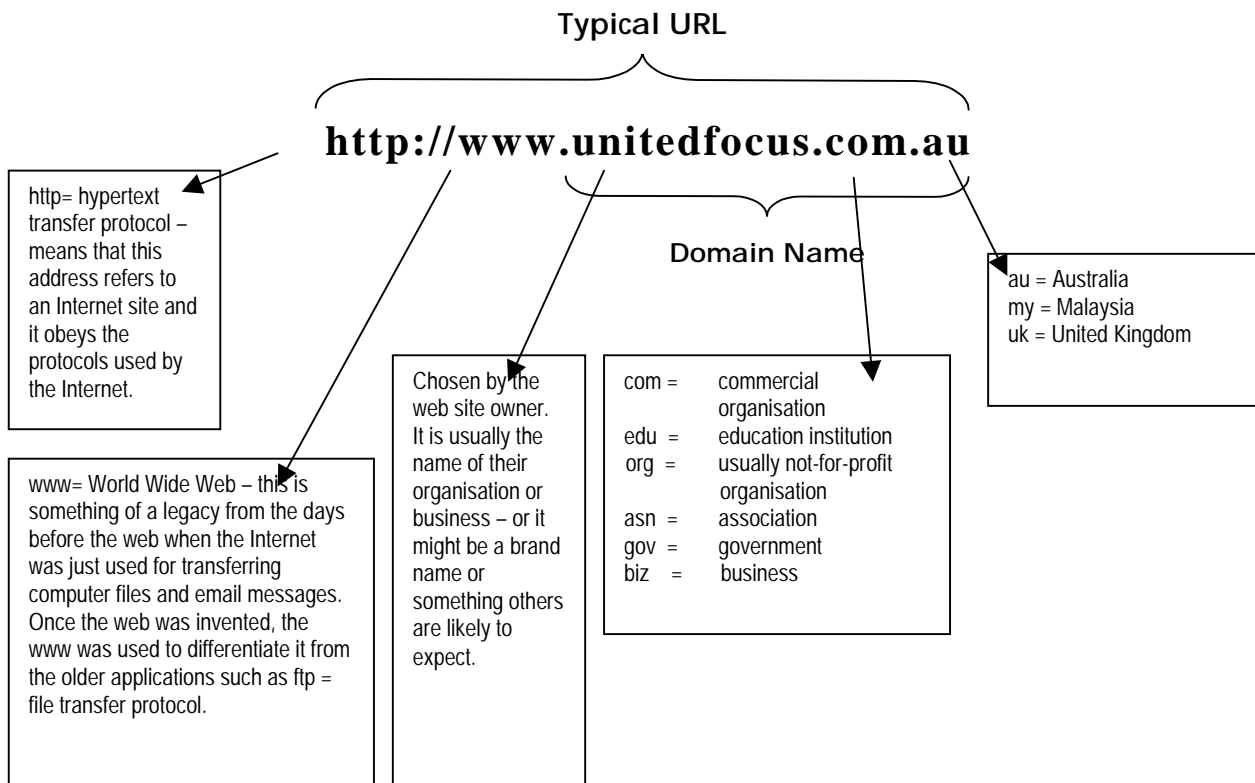
Choosing a Name For Your Website  
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**What’s in a name?**

As with any business or household, web sites 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 web sites named and assigned an address so that they can be found?

**How Web Sites Are Categorised**

Every web site must have an address called a URL - universal resource locator – this name proves that techo geeks invented the Internet!. The URL is determined in part by history and in part by the owner of the web site. Here’s how it works ...



**Note:** The USA doesn’t have a two letter identifier (eg “au” for Australia) because they were the first ones into the Internet so an identifier wasn’t needed. Once other countries hooked up to the then USA-based Internet, a country identifier became necessary and useful – and if a URL didn’t have an country identifier at the end, that used to mean that the site was based in the USA. However, as the Internet developed it became possible to buy a domain name in the USA which actually directs users to the web’s host computer that could be anywhere in the world. So just because a URL does not have a country identifier at the end no longer means it must be a USA web site – it could be anywhere. Many companies choose this option because they feel by avoiding a country identifier they give the appearance, real or not, of being an international organisation.

## **Choosing a name for your web site**

The choice of name for a web site 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.

Eg Westpac bank would have been unwise to use any other URL than the one they chose: [www.westpac.com.au](http://www.westpac.com.au) However, it's not always that easy. The SA government wanted a name for the site it was building that was to act as a gateway to all government sites and to private industry sites. They came up with the name "sacental" but being a South Australian government, not Federal government site, they had to name it [sacental.sa.gov.au](http://sacental.sa.gov.au) The sa adds a complication to the name that people outside of Australia would not anticipate and may therefore not guess unless the site's URL was printed on a document in front of them.

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 in 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, the browsers being used like Netscape and Internet Explorer allow people to bookmark favourite web sites. This means that having visited a site once, and having bookmarked it, they 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. The result is a more liberal approach to the length of URL. Eg [www.visit-southaustralia.com.au](http://www.visit-southaustralia.com.au)

## **Some guidelines**

The following guidelines apply to choosing the part of the URL that comes after the www. And before the au eg [www.it-southaustralia.com.au](http://www.it-southaustralia.com.au)

1. Wherever possible, choose a name that people would most likely guess if they were sitting at home or at the office in front of a computer on the Internet wanting to see if you have a web site – recognising the constraints such as state government departments having to use [sa.gov.au](http://sa.gov.au) at the end of the name
2. Use your recognised name – your brand name
3. Avoid acronyms or abbreviations of your name – eg avoid [www.dit.sa.gov.au](http://www.dit.sa.gov.au) - you might know what dit is but others don't and are unlikely to guess it.
4. Choose the most appropriate and obvious organisation type ie com, biz, org etc.

## **Applying for a URL in Australia**

Each country has its own government appointed domain name registration body. In Australia it is: Internet Names Australia – [www.ina.com.au](http://www.ina.com.au) Applications can be made online.

There are a number of regulations governing the URL an organisation is allowed to have. In brief, for a com. URL the company or business must be registered and for others, proof is required (usually via some other registration or legal document) that it is an association, not-for-profit organisation etc..

INA will only register a URL if the name corresponds almost exactly to the business or organisation's registered name and common everyday words cannot be registered unless they are part of a business's name. Eg United Focus Pty Ltd was allowed [www.unitedfocus.com.au](http://www.unitedfocus.com.au) . Whereas Coke would not have been allowed to have [www.softdrinks.com.au](http://www.softdrinks.com.au)