

## **Company and domain names – frequently asked questions**

Your brand comprises many elements, including your company and domain names and as with all your intellectual property assets, it is important to take active steps to protect them.

### **What is a domain name?**

As it is what your customers will use to find you, your domain name will typically include your company name, trading name, trade mark or perhaps even a strapline associated with your latest advertising campaign. For example, our domain name is pagewhite.com and our online address www.pagewhite.com. Your domain name is unique to you, once you have registered it, and nobody else can register the same domain for as long as your domain remains registered.

### **Why should I have a domain name?**

Having a registered domain name with a live website is usually the priority of any business that will trade in or promote its products or services on-line. Using the domain name in your web address enables you to direct customers to your website. However, it does not replace trade mark registration as a means of protecting your important brands.

### **What can I register as a domain name?**

Domain names can consist of words, including Chinese or Arabic words, numbers and hyphens, but not other punctuation such as exclamation marks. A good domain name is one that is easy to remember so that your website can easily be found.

### **What are gTLDs and ccTLDs?**

A gTLD is a generic top level domain. There are more than 1,000 of these including domains ending .com, .net, .expert, .technology, .luxury etc.

A ccTLD is a country code top level domain. There are around 250 of these including domains ending .uk, .eu, .us, .za etc.

### **How many domain names should I register?**

It is unnecessary and expensive to register and maintain all conceivable combinations of your chosen domain name, therefore most companies adopt a policy of registering only the domain names they need plus one or two versions of them, e.g. yourbrand.com, yourbrand.co.uk, your-brand.co.uk.

### **Can I object to someone else's domain name?**

Bad faith registration of domain names by third parties can usually be challenged via the dispute resolution procedures of ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) and those of Registrars such as Nominet, the .uk Registrar. We have successfully recovered domain names for a number of our client's using these processes.

However, sometimes a third party will have a legitimate reason for registering a domain name incorporating your mark or name. For example, your trade mark might correspond to a family name or place name, or the third party domain name might be used in connection with a business completely unrelated to your own. It will depend on the circumstances but sometimes, the third party will be willing to sell the domain name. We can assist in negotiating the purchase of domain names from third parties.

### **What happens if a disgruntled customer or disgruntled ex-employee registers a negative domain?**

There may be action that can be taken through the dispute resolution procedures of ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) and those of registrars such as Nominet, the .uk Registrar. However, serious consideration should be given first as to whether adopting that course of action is likely to attract further negative publicity.

### **When should I register a domain name?**

It is important to secure the domain name you have chosen at an early date and certainly before the launch of any new product or service with which it is associated to avoid it being registered by a third party or a competitor.

### **How long is the registration process?**

Domain names can be registered very quickly, usually within hours, but the process might take longer with regard to some gTLDs and ccTLDs.

### **How long does a domain name registration last?**

A domain name can be registered from 1 year up to 10 years dependent on the gTLD or ccTLD but can be renewed if still required, before the end of the relevant period.

### **How much does it cost?**

The cost of registering a domain name depends on whether and which type of gTLD or ccTLD it is and the registration term.

For advice on our company and domain name services, please contact us via our online enquiry form or telephone 0207 831 7929.

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