



DOMAIN DISCLOSURE: DIRTY DOZEN

12 THINGS EVERY DOMAIN OWNER NEEDS TO KNOW



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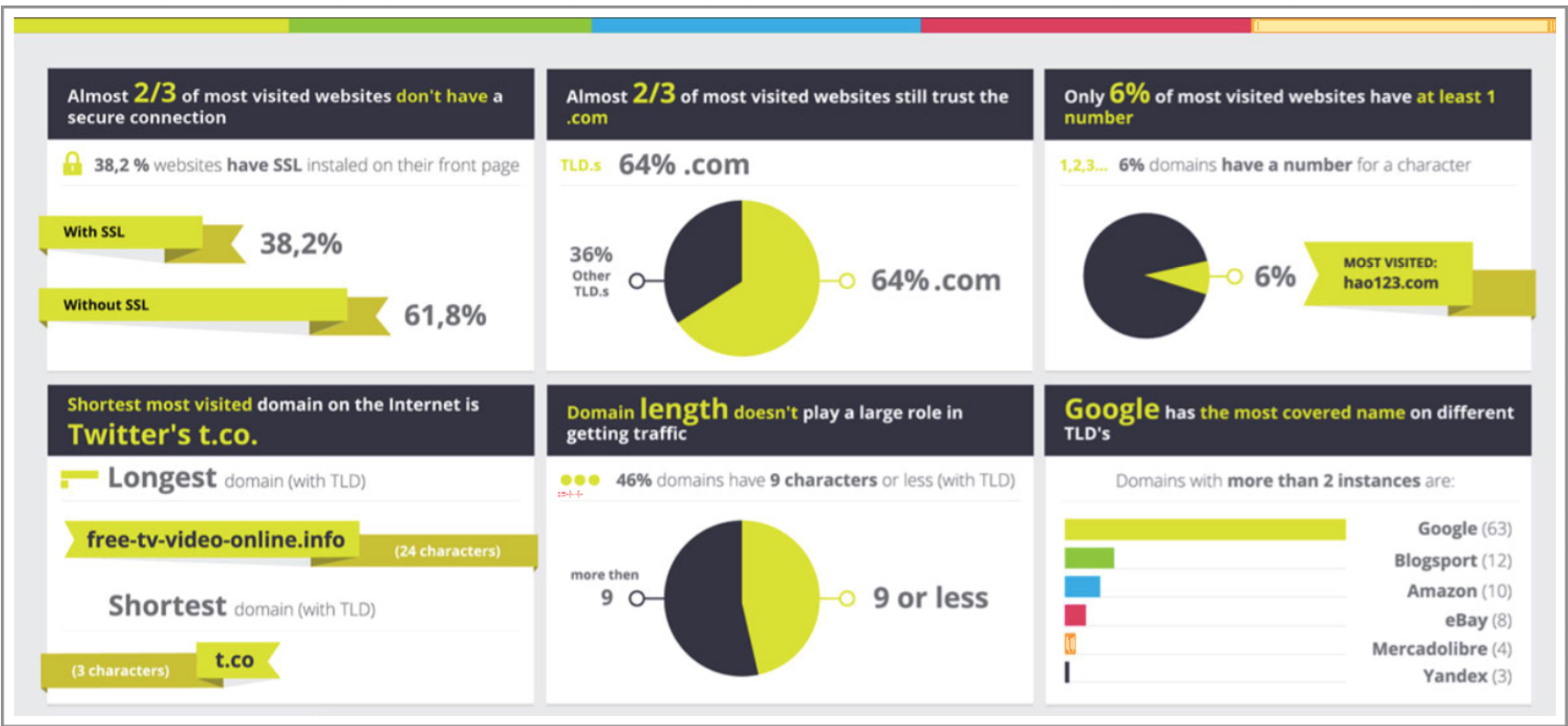
INTRO

At WhoAPI we've gathered data on hundreds of millions of domain names. The team behind WhoAPI has created hundreds of websites and monitored thousands of servers. We've worked with Google, Twitter, Sendgrid, King, Wikimedia, Endurance and other companies around the globe. It is after a decade of experience in the hosting and domain name industry and after several researches that I have decided to publish Domain Disclosure: Dirty Dozen.

Many entrepreneurs, IT beginners, online shops, and other website owners are not sure how domain registration really works, which leads to expiration, loss of a domain, and worse. In some cases the domain remains in the ownership of a third party against the will of the past owner.

The only way to prevent such problems is knowledge and acting with that knowledge. It will also protect you from various abuses when registering domain names in the future.

It's time to put an end to this.



A small segment of WhoAPI research on top 1000 domains

DO YOU REALLY OWN YOUR DOMAIN NAME?

Of course you have an invoice, right? Is that enough? And what if you don't have an invoice? Today, many individuals and companies are domain resellers (there are even resellers of resellers). In the end, you don't really know who registered your domain, where it is registered, or who is listed as the owner of the domain that you paid for. This is extremely important information to know if you want to change providers (or domain registrars). I will later explain in detail exactly how you can do that. In some cases, the person who registered the domain for you has no technical ability to specify your contact information (because if they did, all their domains would be in your name), which can cause you to be unintentionally damaged!

Before buying a domain, be sure to ask whether you will be listed as the domain owner or not. Better yet, check yourself by doing a WHOIS search. There are thousands of websites that provide that information.

Intervene as soon as possible, because later you could succumb to blackmail and loss of domain! Unfortunately we've witnessed this many times, and some people have come forward with their stories on our blog – “**A hosting company stole my website and my domain name. What should I do?!**”

If you find out that you are not listed as the domain owner, the situation could get very delicate. Stay calm and ask your service provider (even if it is your son-in-law, or your neighbor's computer whiz kid) for the reason for the incorrect information. If it's a technical issue, it is up to you whether you want to continue to give your trust to that person, or instead find an adequate replacement to give you a technical solution to this problem. Just keep in mind that trust is a finite resource with unscrupulous business people. Many times, people have come running and crying because their business partner was listed as the owner of the domain name, and to quote them, “Now I've lost everything”.

You wouldn't leave your real estate deed to the real estate agent or the developer, would you?

HOW DO YOU CHANGE THE REGISTRAR OR YOUR RESELLER?

Every professional domain registrar or reseller will give you specific instructions on how to change providers. If you get anything but clear instructions on how to change your provider, do whatever it takes to change to a new one. You can expect the instructions to include two steps.

At your existing registrar you have to do the following:

- unlock the domain
- request the EPP code (also known as Auth code or Authorization code, depending on the registrar)

After doing that, you can order a “domain transfer” with your new registry and start the transfer. The requested EPP code will be sent to the email that’s listed as the owner on the WHOIS record. During the order process of the domain name transfer you will have to enter the EPP code with your new registrar. This code is nothing but a long string of letters, numbers and symbols. Some domain registrars notify you that there was a transfer initiated, and you have to confirm the release of the domain. Until you do that, the domain will not be transferred. So for example, if you are buying a domain name on the aftermarket, beware if someone asks for a money transfer at this point. We will dig into this a bit deeper later, but for now remember point one: You are the owner of a domain name once your details are in the WHOIS record.

Keep in mind that there is a possibility (if the domain is registered with a reseller) that the main registrar is the same. In that case, it is necessary to do a domain “push”. For example, Reseller Club (often used by hosting companies that are using WHMCS) has this step, where two resellers push a domain from one reseller to the other. This is done within the Reseller Club administration where you enter the new Customer ID, and the domain name changes hands.

So, once again, the transfer is finished when, and only when, you see the change in your WHOIS record. There you can see the main domain registrar, and complete owner details. If you don't find the information you were expecting to see there, some-

thing is wrong, and you should immediately contact the responsible domain registrar. Usually you can find their email and other contact details right there in the WHOIS record, or on their website. It's always good practice to check your WHOIS one week after the change, and every now and then afterwards. There are bugs and errors in every system, with these as well.

Changing registrars doesn't happen just when domain names change owners. Sometimes registrars have promotions on domain registration and domain transfers. They can offer domain registrations for as low as 1.00 USD! This can be great, but once you have domain names registered at several different registrars, which means several different usernames and passwords and different systems, this becomes a pain. It also increases the risk of losing domain names (or completely forgetting about them), especially if you are not a savvy domain investor. WhoAPI's domain manager can help you with tracking all your domains with different registrars, or you can eventually just transfer all your domain names to a single registrar.

WHOIS Result

Domain Name: WHOAPI.COM
Registry Domain ID: 1640154939_DOMAIN_COM-VRSN
Registrar WHOIS Server: whois.publicdomainregistry.com
Registrar URL: www.publicdomainregistry.com
Updated Date: 2016-04-26T17:42:17Z
Creation Date: 2011-02-14T15:31:26Z
Registrar Registration Expiration Date: 2021-02-14T15:31:26Z
Registrar: PDR Ltd. d/b/a PublicDomainRegistry.com
Registrar IANA ID: 303
Domain Status: clientTransferProhibited <https://icann.org/epp#clientTransferProhibited>
Registry Registrant ID:
Registrant Name: Goran Duskic
Registrant Organization: WhoAPI Inc.
Registrant Street: 444 Castro Street
Registrant City: Mountain View
Registrant State/Province: California
Registrant Postal Code: 94041
Registrant Country: US
Registrant Phone: +1.6507411223
Registrant Phone Ext:
Registrant Fax:
Registrant Fax Ext:
Registrant Email: contact@whoapi.com
Registry Admin ID:

WHOIS consists of registrant, admin, technical and billing details.

WHEN IS A DOMAIN ACTUALLY REGISTERED?

The domain is not registered and its owner is not defined until you make the payment. The domain can't be reserved by making a pre-order or a search on the website. Only upon receipt of the payment does the registrant or a reseller assign the domain to you. Don't forget to double-check it using a WHOIS service.

If you are not sure about the data accuracy of some of the WHOIS services, make sure to check it on two or three different locations. Most quality hosting providers have a domain search engine on their websites, which you can take as a starting point. In some cases domain availability checks can fail to make a proper check. If you are not convinced of this, just ask Google about that time in October 2015 when their **domain availability search mistakenly thought that the domain name google.com was available for registration.**

Also, another common mistake people make is Googling the domain name and thinking that if you Google the domain name, and you don't see any results, that it's available for registration. Well, that doesn't mean that it isn't actually registered; it simply means Google hasn't indexed it yet. It could be that the reason for no index is because the domain isn't registered, but there are also hundreds of thousands of domain names that are registered and not indexed by Google.

Who is responsible for the domain registration?

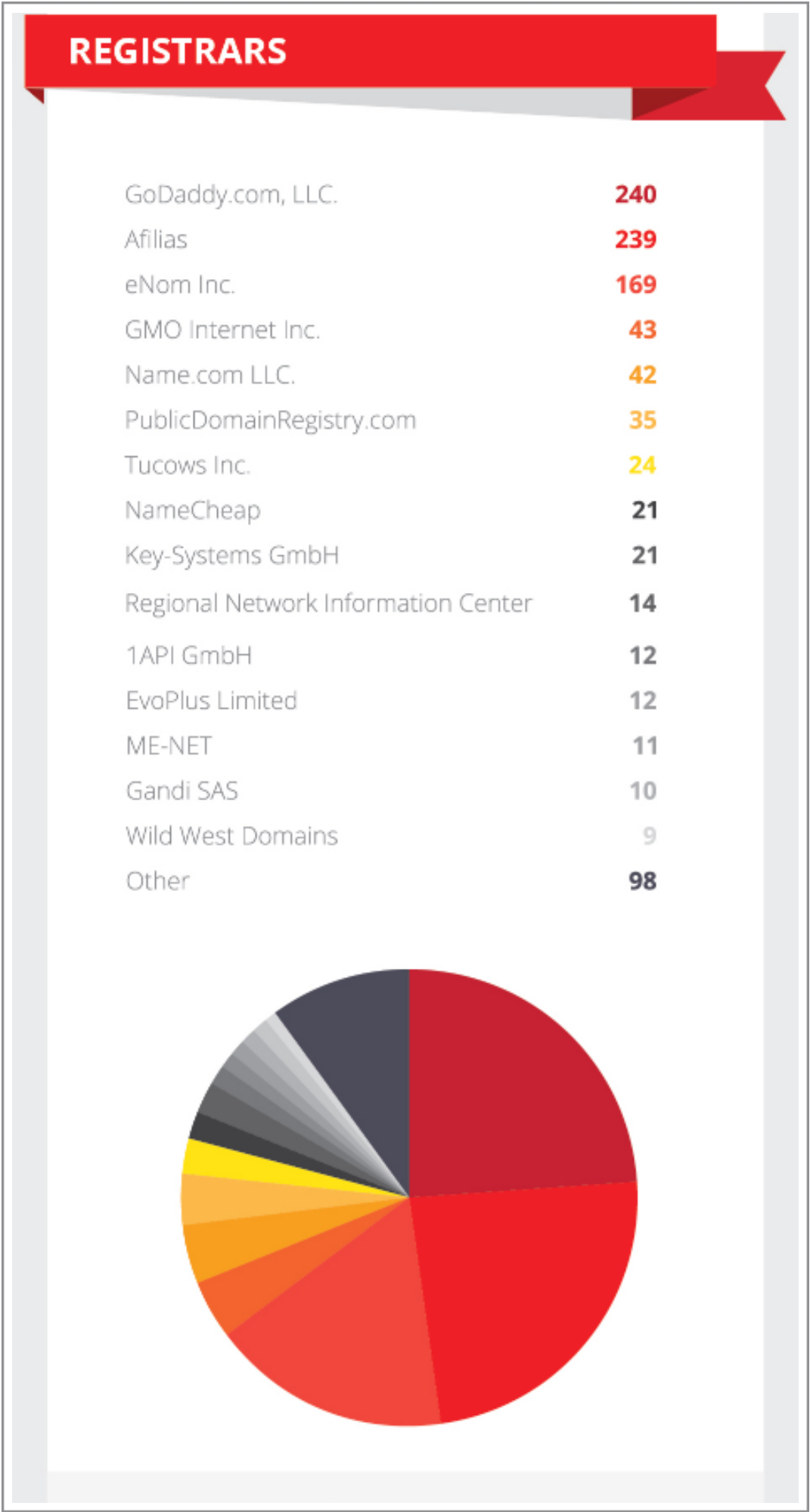
At the top sits ICANN (Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers). They oversee the creation of a domain name registry for every extension. The government of a country also has a say in the registry of their country code top-level domains. And IANA, responsible for the operation and maintenance of a number of key aspects of the DNS.

E.g.,

<https://www.verisign.com/> is the registry for COM and NET

<http://www.domain.me/> is the registry for ccTLD ME

A registry then appoints registrars such as GoDaddy, eNom, Tucows, etc. For example, when we were researching the 1000 most popular .ME domain names, we found out which were the most popular registrars they were assigned to.



THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO

In some countries, some resellers have a system set up in a way where you order a domain on the website, but you can delay your payment. For example, you pay the invoice separately over netbanking, because their system doesn't support credit card or PayPal payments or the buyers don't have credit cards. In the meantime, the registrar (or someone else) bought that domain. This is a worst-case scenario, so make sure to do everything you can to avoid situations like this. You planned the whole project, and now everything is in jeopardy because you failed to execute a prompt payment of only \$10 or less, depending on the registrar.

Your order means nothing until you make the payment, and that's when the domain becomes rightfully yours. Tens of thousands of domains are registered and deleted (or expire) on a daily basis. If you find an interesting domain, register it and pay right away. Or register your domain name with a provider that accepts online payments. You don't really know what true frustration is until someone from the other side of the planet takes “your” domain just hours before you planned to make the payment, right in front of your nose.

Be careful when choosing a website for domain availability checks. Generally speaking, those companies have the opportunity to register a domain before you. Although in practice this happens only extremely rarely, still, keep it in mind when deciding on your name, as it is considered a business secret. Sometimes it's easy to reveal what will appear on the website, just from the domain name.

For example, in the beginning, Facebook used the domain thefacebook.com, and later they bought the domain facebook.com for 200,000 USD.

Another worst-case scenario that often occurs, and our company conducted a research on this (**top five domain expirations**), is domain expiration. You can rest assured that these still occur, even to large companies such as Microsoft!

Here are 11 common reasons why domain owners fail to renew their domain name:

1. Forgetting which email is listed as the owner
2. Indecisiveness on whether to renew the domain name or not
3. Ignoring the notification email from the registrar
4. Missing out (due to the spam box or other reasons) on the registrar notification email
5. Person that was responsible (and his email) left the company
6. Domain owner doesn't control the email listed as the owner
7. Domain owner forgets completely that he owns the domain (could be he/she registered with a registrar he/she doesn't usually use)
8. Owner forgot to renew the domain where his email was on (the email can't work without the original domain name)
9. Owner forgets to set up email forwarding from “email on WHOIS” to “email he/she reads”
10. Domain owner doesn't have an “auto-renew” option on the domain name
11. Credit card on file is expired, so the “auto-renew” never takes place

Another great way of decreasing the chances of domain expiration is by registering the domain name for the next ten years. If you are serious about your business – and if you weren't, I am not sure you would be reading this white paper – \$100 shouldn't pose a great expense, and the risk is reduced significantly in the next 10 years.

LOSING A DOMAIN FOR UNTIMELY RENEWAL

This is one of the biggest and most frequent mistakes when it comes to domain names. When you have hundreds or thousands of unique visitors, you just can't let your domain name expire! The registry will remind you three or four times times (probably at 30, 15, 7, and 1 day) before your domain name expires. I cannot stress enough how important it is that the email address you provide to the registrar is always the one you are using the most, as that is where you are going to receive the information about the expiration. Also, be careful that the domain on your email address remains active (especially if you are the owner of that domain, or if that email is listed in WHOIS)!

Once the domain name expires, your webpage shows the main registrar's ads. That is definitely something your clients should not see. Through my personal conversations with people outside the hosting and domain industry, I learned that most people think you lose your domain on the day it expires! That is not true; in this situation, all is not lost and you can still renew your domain even after it expires. There's a limited period when you can renew it at base price, after which some registrars ask for an additional payment. Later in this white paper you will learn about all the cycles a domain name has to pass before becoming available to new potential owners. If you renew your domain after the moment it expires it will take 2–24 hours before your content shows up on your webpage again. The reason for waiting that long is changing the nameserver, as your domain has to be re-transferred back to your hosting and it is necessary to wait for propagation. Why does this happen? Once the domain expires, as we mentioned, the domain registrar starts displaying ads; in order to be able to display their ads (instead of your website or web shop), they have to change your nameservers. Unfortunately, they have this right. If you don't like it, be sure to renew your domain name to prevent this. Once you renew your domain, domain registrars change the nameserver back to yours, hence the 2–24 hours' propagation.

Don't put your whole business at risk (or jeopardize your brand, to say the least) over a small amount such as \$10 per year, as it says a lot about your project and you as an owner.

OFFERS FROM EXOTIC COUNTRIES

Don't be surprised if you are contacted by someone from South America, Africa, or some other continent across the globe.

The content of the message would look like this:

Dear President & CEO,

We are a professional intellectual property rights consultant organization in Asia, who mainly deal with the global domain name registration and Internet intellectual property rights protection. Right now we have an important issue to confirm with you. On September 3, 2016, we formally received an application, one company named "Acme Inc." applied for the Internet Product keyword "Your Company Inc." on the following domain names:

*yourcompany.io
yourcompany.la
yourcompany.vg
yourcompany.gd
yourcompany.sc
yourcompany.ag
yourcompany.vc*

with our organization. Would you be interested in purchasing these domain names? If so, please get in touch with us, so that we can expedite this process.

Now mind you, this is an actual offer my client received. What is this really about? A company which represents itself as professional in fact offers nothing more than just the most ordinary mediation in domain registration. In most cases they charge it as a domain registration plus their fee (which is not small). I sincerely hope that offers like this will not pass, but I know that these types of companies have contacted my clients and myself on several occasions. In many cases, the contact is purely automatic.

.io is country code Top Level Domain for British Indian Ocean Territory.

.la is ccTLD for Laos.

.vg is ccTLD for British Virgin Islands

.gd is ccTLD for Grenada

Intimidation techniques when someone wants to register a domain with an extension that in 99.9 percent of cases means almost nothing to you is immoral and certainly something you should ignore. If you really need a national domain, registered in Laos, China, or some other place where it is legal, visit the website of a registrar you trust and register your domain there, for a realistic price. If you have a global footprint, this might make sense, and also you could hire a company that “police guards” your worldwide domain sphere.

Every country has its own domain extension, and buying domains in all countries where it is possible would be a huge cost and a hassle. Also, not every domain has the same price – some extensions are as much as five times more expensive than others.

You shouldn’t mistake this for a legitimate offer to purchase a legitimate domain name. For example, if you are a plumber operating in the Seattle area, why not take advantage of a domain name such as “www.PlumberSeattle.com”? Even if someone approaches you over email, do the due diligence mentioned in this white paper, and you could reap the rewards of owning a great domain name.

Trademarks and domain names

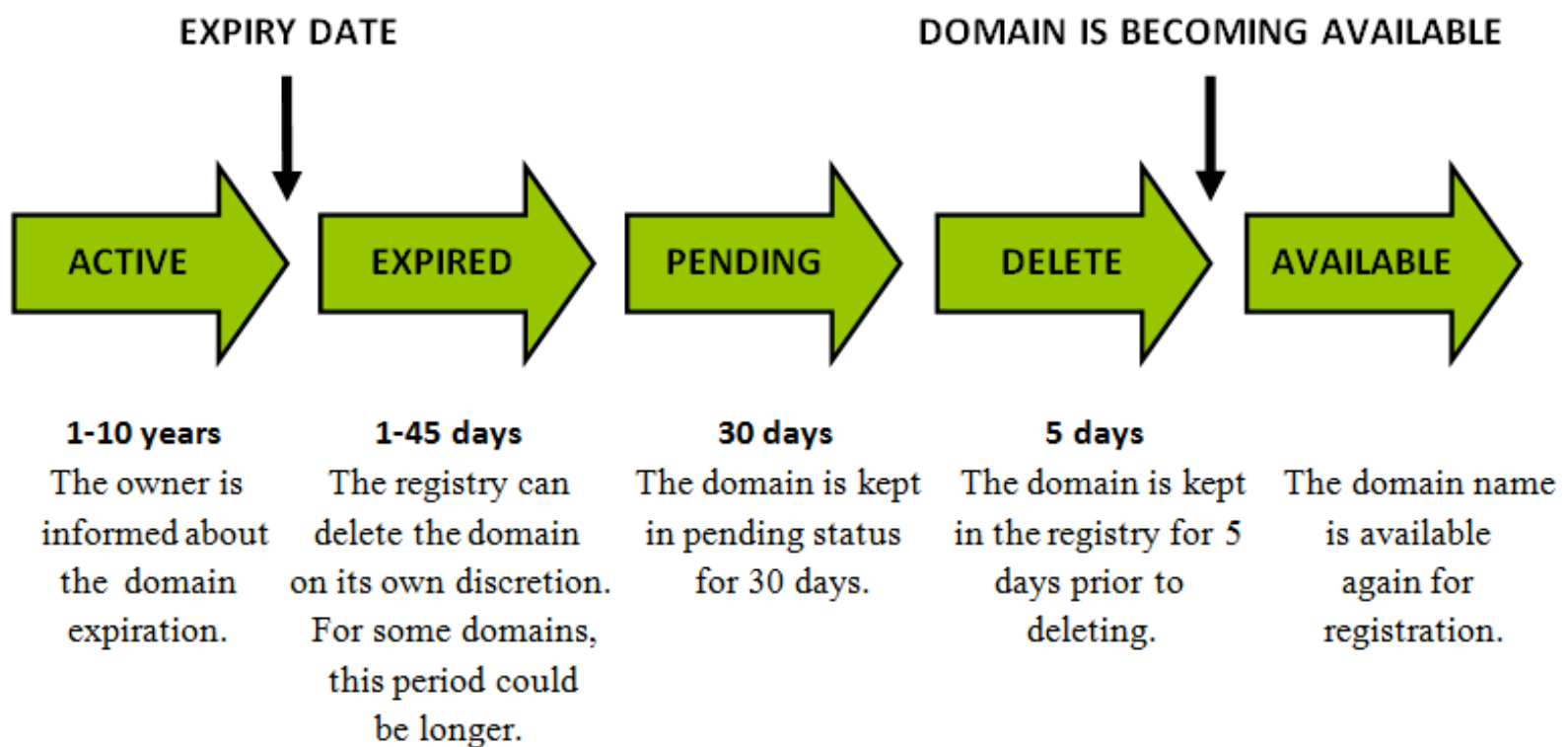
This is far too large and complex a topic to fit into this white paper, but I have to mention one piece of advice in particular: If you are filing for a trademark, do so after you have registered all the domains on all the domain extensions you’ve planned. I’ve learned there are unscrupulous people monitoring which words are being trademarked, and then they register the domain with that keyword before you. The “ransom” then is slightly below the legal fees (let’s say \$200 for a domain that could be yours for \$10).

CAN I BUY A DOMAIN THAT IS ALREADY TAKEN?

Or, perhaps you are thinking, can someone else buy my domain? This is a question that, just like a coin, has two sides... Someone may hope to catch the already-taken domain, and on the other hand, someone may be stalking your domain. Meet the “Backorder” option. Backorder allows you to reserve a registered domain and once that specific domain becomes available, it automatically buys that domain in your name.

The price of Backorder is a bit higher than the regular registration, but sometimes the cost is more than worth it. In cases that multiple owners have the Backorder active, unfortunately (or luckily), luck plays a key role. The good news is that if the Backorder is not successful, you pay nothing more than the initial backorder price.

Backorder is not executed on the date of expiry of the domain, but after passing through all the stages of a domain. Here are all domain stages.



The other, simpler way of buying an already-taken domain is buying it directly from the owner.

HOW DO I BUY A REGISTERED DOMAIN NAME FROM THE OWNER?

Sometimes this is a bit difficult to accomplish, as many owners ask for unrealistic prices for their domain, which in some cases puts you in a relatively unfavorable position. Let's stick to the Facebook example. You already read here that Facebook paid \$200,000 for facebook.com to switch from thefacebook.com. But they also purchased fb.com for \$8,500,000 from the American Farm Bureau Federation. As you can see by the numbers, things quickly blow out of proportion, so covering this in depth would exceed the scale of this white paper. But do consider what Rob Grant says about powerful domain names: "The most powerful domains are intuitive, descriptive and credible. They do not need any explaining. They are natural, organic brands. www.TropicalFish.com www.BookPublishers.com www.TalentAgents.com". More on Rob Grant, guess where? www.RobGrant.com. Therefore, if you are interested, let's at least briefly touch on doing smaller deals of up to a few thousand dollars.

It's necessary to do your basic due diligence on the domain name and the seller.

Here are seven steps for buying a domain name on the secondary market:

1. Check if the domain name you are interested in purchasing is a registered trademark. Check with USPTO and WIPO
2. Is that person the rightful owner? Check WHOIS and nameservers, and communicate strictly to/through the owner's email address on the WHOIS to verify the seller has access to it
3. Make the payment over Escrow, and remember what we wrote about here: The domain isn't yours until it has your WHOIS data, and you can see the domain inside your administration
4. Was the domain name used for illegal purposes in the past, and do any "bad" websites link to it? Check Ahrefs and Archive.org
5. Search the domain on Google with quotes -> "SomeDomainName.com"
6. Google the person (his name and last name) you are talking with, and check if you find any signs of a bad reputation
7. Transfer or push the domain to your registrar, and make the payment

Get advantage on the other side of the dot!

If you want to get your keyword in the domain name, but you can't find the right .com, use one of the new gTLDs.

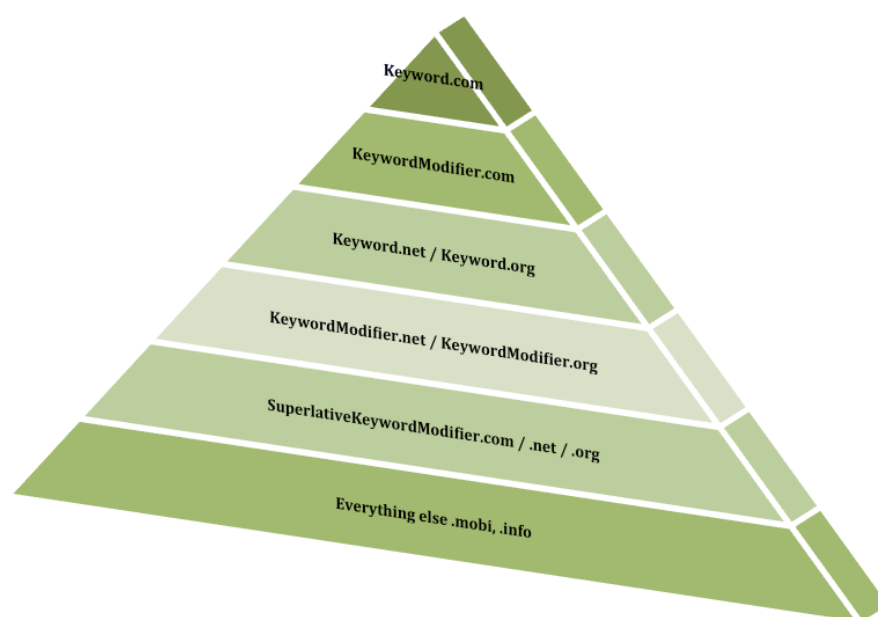
If your client is an investment fund, recommend .fund, .ventures or .money.

If your client is a photographer or shooting video, recommend .photographer, .photo or .camera.

If your client has a large community or owns any type of a club, go for .club!

You can find domains on **many domain marketplaces**, domain forums, and also eBay. Or maybe you just spot a domain name you really like, but it's already registered. Either way, you submit a bid or approach the owner. If you approach the owner asking if the domain name is for sale, you might have a better chance of getting an answer than just by sending an offer. If the owner doesn't respond to your offer there's a good chance you submitted an offer so low that you didn't even get the owner's attention. If you need help in determining the price of a domain name, or with the transfer itself, it's always smart to contact a professional; it could save you a lot of time, money, and embarrassment.

Another good tip would be to contact the owner from a non-reputable email. For example, don't contact him from your business email hinting at the possibility you are a big buyer. Create a free email address, and start correspondence from there. Keep in mind that this will help only to some extent. If you are contacting the owner of beer.com, you can expect only a minor decrease in price, if any. But if you are contacting from joe@heineken.com you can expect a major increase in price.



SEO value of domains with keywords, source: moz.com October, 2012. Today, you can utilize the keyword on the other side of the dot.

FEW FUN (AND PROFITABLE) FACTS ON DOMAIN NAMES

While on the topic of purchasing a domain name on the aftermarket, I would like to share a few facts in case perhaps you decide to venture deeper into this sphere.

Back in December 2013 our company published a research stating that every four-letter .com domain name is currently taken. We checked all the four-letter combinations .com domains. For example:

AAAA.COM

AAAB.COM

AAAC.COM

AAAD.COM

up to....

ZZZX.COM

ZZZY.COM

ZZZZ.COM

What we confirmed was that all the four-letter domains are registered. We haven't tried numbers, dashes, or IDNs, just the 26 letters of the English alphabet. This takes us to 456,976 combinations, or 456,976 .com domain names. Not to mention that three-letter and two-letter domains were long gone, long ago. This basically means that you can purchase them exclusively on the aftermarket for an increased price. Ever since they were registered, the price for them has been going only up. Today it's hard to buy them for under \$200.

Four-letter domains are also known in the domaining industry under the jargon LLLL.COM or 4L. Some four-letter domains may also be referred to as CHIPS (short for Chinese Premium). So, for example, 1PRO.COM wouldn't be a LLLL.COM domain. Also LLLL.COM doesn't mean the literal domain llll.com, but a representation of a group of domains where L stands for "letter".

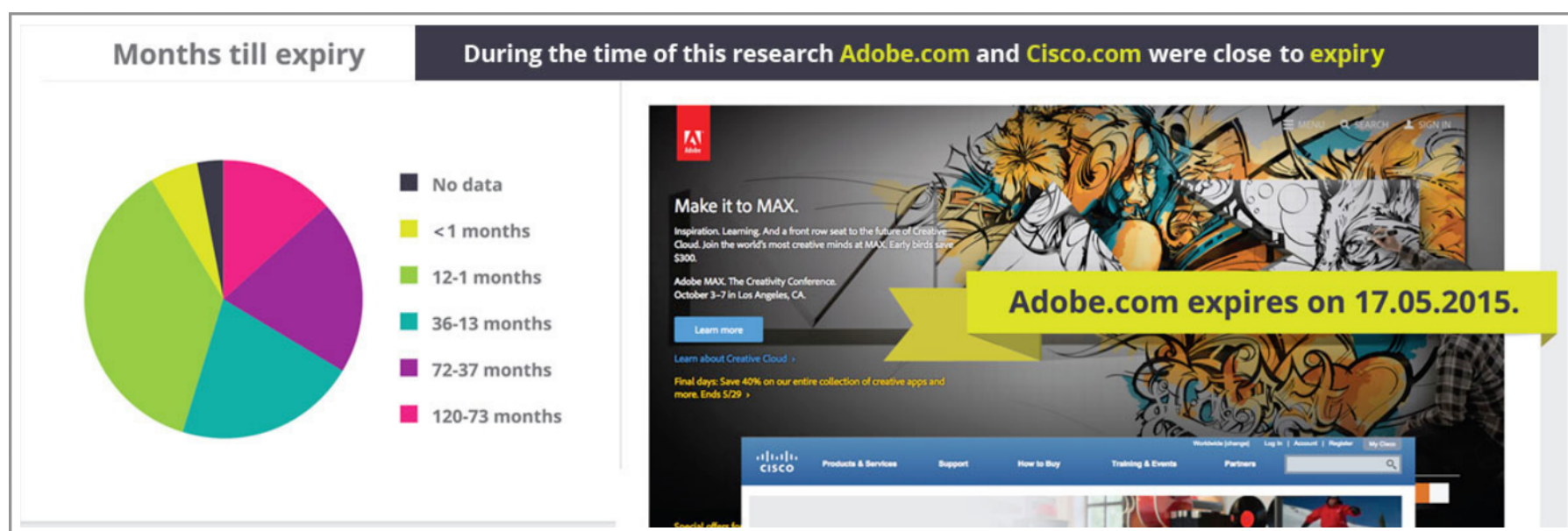
4-letter combinations sell for about \$200-20,000 on the aftermarket depending on the domain and the buyer. These domains do not include any numbers or complete words like dogs.com, baby.com, beer.com they cost a lot more!

These extra-short domains are great for respectable companies with long names that need an acronym, instead of a long domain name. For example, I sold EHLA.com to the owner of Extension Hair Los Angeles. So although four-letter domain names might be easier to sell/liquidate, it doesn't necessarily mean that short domains are automatically more popular.

We proved that in one of our researches where we tested the 1000 most visited websites on the Internet (screenshot in the intro section of this white paper). It turned out that 46 percent of the top websites reside on domain names that have less than nine characters (including TLDs with sometimes two and sometimes three characters). So you can say that most visited name part of a domain name has six to seven characters or more.

During that same research we found that Adobe.com and Cisco.com were just a week away from expiration. I guess and hope that auto-renew was in place; otherwise I can't imagine why they wouldn't renew for 10 years such important domain names.

As you can see below, almost all of the top 1000 domains expire in more than 12 months.



I OFTEN SEE ONLY BAD ADVERTISING ON DOMAINS, WHAT IS THAT?

Some webpages have hundreds if not thousands of unique visitors even after they expire. Domains remain indexed on search engines, and the links from other webpages and social media still link to that domain. That means that there is still active traffic on that domain! You yourself are proof, as you have certainly seen those ads, too.

It's such a shame that domains like that are taken over by the registry after they expire. The registry simply puts the advertisement on those domains and makes enough money so that all the work pays off. There are also companies that deal with buying such domains. They stalk interesting domains so they can use it to their advantage! Speaking of domain stalkers, after you lose your domain name, it may become impossible to get it back. The problem is that you never know what kind of content might end up on your old domain: illegal activities, porn, a phishing site, questionable pharmaceutical products, and anything else bad that is having a hard time attracting website visitors through normal channels.

With every day after your domain expires, you are risking losing it, and in most cases the domain is worth much more than \$10 per year.

Besides, those ads wouldn't be there if someone wasn't making money on them. Expense for displaying ads on a domain name can be as low as \$8.53, so if those ads bring in \$9.00 in 12 months, that asset is profitable. Don't think for a minute that people aren't making thousands of dollars this way.

HOW DO I HIDE MY CONTACT DETAILS ON WHOIS?

If you care about your privacy, and for some reason don't want others to see you are the owner of the domain, there is a solution. That solution is a service, in most cases called “privacy protection”, “WHOIS protection”, “WHOIS privacy protection”, or something similar. Because this is paid on a yearly basis, some registrars offer this service for free the first year.

Also keep in mind that this doesn't mean that you get the right to make immoral webpages or scam deals, because your personal data is still available with a court warrant and your hosting company or domain registrar have the ability to disable your website. You cannot hide your age behind “WHOIS privacy protection”. Although there is no age limit for registering a domain, this does not imply a not-guilty verdict in case of abuse. Although you can type in Donald Duck as the owner, you are not allowed to do it, and you could be penalized and lose your domain name.

As for me personally, I totally understand someone's stand on privacy issues, but I always leave my details public. The thing is, oftentimes when someone is doing something they are not supposed to be doing with their website and their domain name, they use WHOIS privacy.

Negative aspect of leaving your WHOIS public are occasional SEO offers in your inbox. You probably got at least one! They either happen just days after your register your domain name, since some companies are getting the list of all domain names that were registered on any particular day, and with a WHOIS request they are able to see your contact details.

GREAT DOMAIN? PEOPLE FIND YOU WITH A SEARCH ENGINE.

How is that working out for you? Search engine optimization is one of the most cutthroat practices in the online marketing industry. Most would agree that there are unethical spammers and black-hat experts that get results (until Google blocks you and you lose everything) or white-hat good guys that do everything as Google instructs and get no results (but you have to pay them anyway). And even if you don't agree with that statement and you do get traffic from search engines, it will probably be well below 70 percent of your traffic. If it's a new website with limited content, then the traffic you will get from search engines will be close to zero. If you are a small business owner with some visibility, it will probably be around 30 percent. If you are a SAAS company that invests heavily in inbound marketing, it will probably reach between 40–70 percent. Not to mention that there were at least three studies from three different companies that showed people would rather click on a domain name they either recognize (brand) or that has the keywords they are looking for (Exact Match Domains).

Case study : **How Generic Domain Names Impact a SEM Campaign**

Case study : **Improving PPC Search Engine Campaign Results Using Generic Domain Names**

Case study : **How Keyword-Rich Domain Names Positively Affect Search Click-Through Results**

This proves that even on search engine results (paid or organic) people look at your domain name when they decide where to click! Not only that, but one case study proves that: “Internet search users are almost twice as likely to click on a domain name where the second level includes at least one of the keywords in their search query, compared to a domain name that does not include any of the keywords in their search query.” Besides, SEO has evolved so much that when you invest in SEO, you are bound to get traffic from other sources as well. For example, you have to have a strong social media presence (lots of likes and shares) if you want to improve your search engine ranking. Well, by pure logic, you will get traffic from social media di-

rectly if you have strong presence there. Once you span to those other sources, your domain name plays an important role.

Alternate sources of traffic to search engine:

1. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Quora, Disqus, Stack Overflow, Vkontakte, Reddit, Google+, Hacker News, SlideShare, Pinterest)
2. Direct (word of mouth, presentations, other offline sources)
3. Referral (forums, partner websites, directories, other websites)
4. Email (autoresponders, newsletters, direct email)

Email is often looked at as a direct source of traffic, but I separated it because it is especially important regarding your domain name. Let me give you an example. If someone is sending you an offer from mark1356@gmail.com or mark@whoapi.com, which one do you think has more chances of being opened? Which one do you think is less likely to be considered as spam and blocked? What if someone applied for a bank loan with access to email address james@google.com or john.doe@shell.com? Do you think his credit score might be higher?

Domains are an important asset in digital marketing, and even more important in the offline world where people access your website directly by typing in the domain name. When you are using your email or domain name:

1. over the phone
2. on car/truck stickers
3. on billboards
4. on business cards
5. for TV/radio ads
6. in brochures
7. etc

your domain name becomes a key component of your brand.

Some of you may be saying, all the good COM domains are already taken. Look harder, there are tools that can help you. Pay more for a premium domain, or you can get one of the new TLDs! If you are an agency, why not temping.agency? If you are a media company, why not liquid.media? You may even get a better position for your most important keyword, you just have to look for it on the other side of the dot.

CONCLUSION

Now that you know a lot more about domain registration and domain names, you will make more careful and smarter decisions when it comes to where you register your domain names, and check for availability. Registering a domain is a serious business that globally brings in millions of dollars every day. Over 90,000 domains are registered on a daily basis, and about 40,000 domains are deleted every day and made available for registration. These numbers demonstrate what a fast and lively place domain name market is, and that doesn't even include the millions of dollars in transactions on the aftermarket, besides, most of those are done under non-disclosure agreements.

You don't have to become a domain investor, although it is a nice and profitable hobby and profession for some people, but as a business owner with a website you have a lot to lose if you ignore the fundamental basics of registering a domain. And even if someone else is taking care of this for you, it's important to make sure it's being done correctly. You now have that knowledge. It's time to act upon it, and protect your most important digital asset: your website and the domain name where it resides.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Goran Duskic is the founder and CEO at WhoAPI Inc. An entrepreneur for more than a decade in the hosting and domain industry, he is dedicated to helping website owners. He co-founded and sold a hosting business (2006–2011), and raised over \$250K from investors, including 500 Startups, for his current company, WhoAPI.

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