

InterNIC FAQs on the Domain Names, Registrars, and Registration

The following is a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the domain name registration process and the new competitive registration environment. It is expected that this list will be updated frequently, so please check back often.

What is the domain name system?

The Domain Name System (DNS) helps users to find their way around the Internet. Every computer on the Internet has a unique address - just like a telephone number - which is a rather complicated string of numbers. It is called its "IP address" (IP stands for "Internet Protocol"). IP Addresses are hard to remember. The DNS makes using the Internet easier by allowing a familiar string of letters (the "domain name") to be used instead of the arcane IP address. So instead of typing 207.151.159.3, you can type www.internic.net. It is a "mnemonic" device that makes addresses easier to remember.

What does it mean to "register" a domain name?

When you register a domain name, you are inserting an entry into a directory of all the domain names and their corresponding computers on the Internet.

How do I register a domain name?

Domain names ending with .biz, .com, .info, .name, .net or .org can be registered through many different companies (known as "registrars") that compete with one another. A listing of these companies appears in the [Registrar Directory](#) on this site.

The registrar you choose will ask you to provide various contact and technical information that makes up the registration. The registrar will then keep records of the contact information and submit the technical information to a central directory known as the "registry." This registry provides other computers on the Internet the information necessary to send you e-mail or to find your web site. You will also be required to enter a registration contract with the registrar, which sets forth the terms under which your registration is accepted and will be maintained.

Will my name and contact information be publicly available?

Information about who is responsible for domain names is publicly available to allow rapid resolution of technical problems and to permit enforcement of consumer protection, trademark, and other laws. The registrar will make this information available to the public on a "Whois" site. It is however possible to register a domain in the name of a third party, as long as they agree to accept responsibility -- ask your registrar for further details.

How long does a registration last? Can it be renewed?

Each registrar has the flexibility to offer initial and renewal registrations in one-year increments, with a total registration period limit of ten years.

How much does a domain-name registration name cost?

Each registrar sets the price it charges for registering names, and prices vary significantly among different registrars. In addition, some registrars offer discounted or free registration services in connection with other offerings, such as web hosting. To see what offering best meets your needs, you should go to the web sites of several of the registrars listed in the [Registrar Directory](#) on this site.

Can I change registrars after registering a domain name?

Yes, you may change the registrar sponsoring your domain name (60 days after initial registration.) For details on the transfer process, contact the registrar you would like to assume sponsorship of the registration.

I have seen advertisements for domain-name registration by companies not in the accredited

registrar directory. Are these legitimate?

Only registrars accredited by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) are authorized to register .biz, .com, .info, .name, .net and .org names. Some of these accredited registrars offer their services through resellers, which may provide assistance in completing the registration process. Your registration contract, however, will be with the accredited registrar and that registrar will maintain your contact information.

What is ICANN?

ICANN is the new non-profit corporation that is assuming responsibility from the U.S. Government for coordinating certain Internet technical functions, including the management of Internet domain name system. More information about ICANN can be found at <http://www.icann.org/>.

Someone else has registered my company's name as a .com domain name. What is the process for resolving my complaint?

All ICANN-accredited registrars follow a uniform dispute resolution policy. Under that policy, disputes over entitlement to a domain-name registration are ordinarily resolved by court litigation between the parties claiming rights to the registration. Once the court rules who is entitled to the registration, the registrar will implement that ruling. In disputes arising from registrations allegedly made abusively (such as "cybersquatting" and cyberpiracy"), the uniform policy provides an expedited administrative procedure to allow the dispute to be resolved without the cost and delays often encountered in court litigation. In these cases, you can invoke the administrative procedure by filing a complaint with one of the dispute-resolution service providers listed at <http://www.icann.org/udrp/approved-providers.htm>. For more details on the uniform dispute resolution policy, see <http://www.icann.org/udrp/udrp.htm>.

If I have customer service questions or problems related to my domain name registration, who should I contact?

You should contact the registrar that registered your domain name.

What are the rules for registration of .biz, .com, .info, .name, .net and .org names?

The .com, .info, .name, .net, and .org TLDs are open and unrestricted. Traditionally, however, names in .net have been used by organizations involved in Internet infrastructure activities and .org is frequently used by noncommercial organizations. .biz is reserved for use by businesses. For more information on .biz restrictions, please contact your registrar or visit the .biz registry operator at <http://www.nic.biz/>. .name is dedicated exclusively to individuals' personal names.

Are .biz, .com, .net, .info and .org domain names available for registration on a global basis?

Yes, these domains are available for registration by Internet users across the globe; also, ICANN-accredited registrars are located in countries around the world. To view a list of domain name registrars sorted by country, [click here](#).

I've seen domain names ending with two-letter combinations, like .uk. What are the rules for registering in these domains?

Two letter domains, such as .uk, .de and .jp (for example), are called country code top level domains (ccTLDs) and correspond to a country, territory, or other geographic location. The rules and policies for registering domain names in the ccTLDs vary significantly and some are reserved for use by citizens of the corresponding country. You should check with the registrar offering ccTLD registration services regarding the specific terms and conditions for registration.

Some ICANN-accredited registrars provide registration services in the ccTLDs in addition to registering names in .biz, .com, .info, .name, .net and .org, however, ICANN does not specifically accredit registrars to provide ccTLD registration services.

For more information regarding registering names in ccTLDs, including a complete database of designated ccTLDs and managers, please refer to <http://www.iana.org/cctld/cctld.htm>.