

Berlin takes world lead with own domain name

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An aerial view taken on May 29, 2012 shows the protestant church Berliner Dom (Berlin Cathedral) (L) on the Unter den Linden avenue in the central eastern Berlin district of Mitte

Berlin became the world's first city on Tuesday to have its own Internet domain name under plans to cater for Internet expansion.

Companies and individuals in the German capital can now request an Internet address ending in .berlin, beyond the traditional options of .com,

.org or the German national ending .de.

Obtaining a dot-berlin website address costs about 50 euros (\$70) a year and will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit told a launch event that the domain "offers the possibility to highlight digitally that Berlin is where you live your life or base your business activities".

Dirk Krischenowski, of dotBERLIN, the company organising the rollout of the new domain name, said it created "more room for diversity, ideas and the naming" of things.

Several dozen other large cities are in the process of equipping themselves with their own Internet [domain names](#), including .paris, .nyc, .london and .roma.

In 2011, the agency in charge of website addresses, ICANN, launched a scheme to widely extend the catalogue of so-called Top-Level Domains, which it says are needed due to the expansion of the Internet.

Other German cities domains such as .hamburg and .koeln (Cologne) are set to be launched in the future.

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