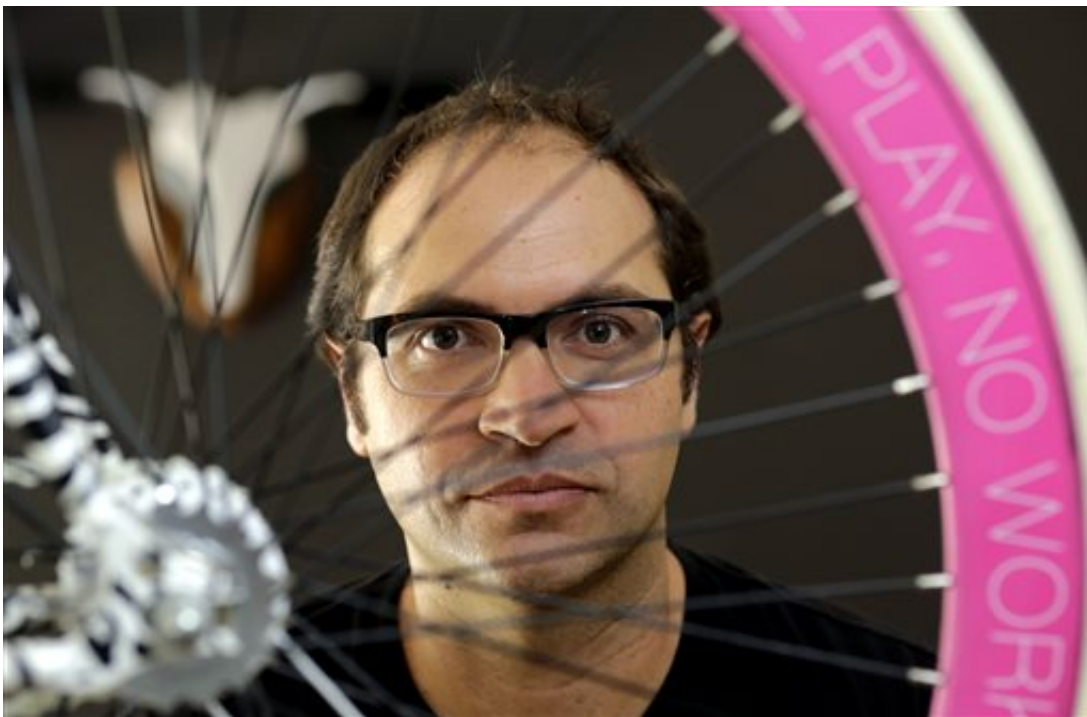


Who needs .com? Domains like .vegas, .pr, .nyc are trending

August 19 2015, byJoyce M. Rosenberg



In this Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015 photo, Avery Pack, president of Republic Bike, poses for a photograph with a custom, fixed gear bicycle manufactured at Republic Bike in Dania Beach, Fla. Companies, organizations and people are starting to forsake the familiar ".com" and ".org" Internet address suffixes, using instead hundreds of new ones like ".legal," ".movie," ".bike" and ".nyc" that have been coming on the market since early 2014. Using republic.bike is a good marketing strategy, appealing to tech-savvy customers who want the latest trends, said Pack. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

Did the website address you just went to really end with ".vegas" instead of ".com"?

It's not a mistake. Companies, organizations and people are starting to forsake the familiar ".com" and ".org" Internet address suffixes, using instead hundreds of new ones like ".legal," ".restaurant," ".solutions," ".movie" and ".nyc" that have been coming on the market since early 2014. Some U.S. companies have started using suffixes that previously were used in other countries or territories, such as Puerto Rico's ".pr." Others are catching up to a handful like ".jobs" and ".travel" that became available a decade ago.

Known to some as not-coms, the suffixes give companies a chance to get website addresses, known as domains, that include their names. Many have tried to get a ".com" domain, only to find someone else already had it. They're also used as a marketing tool, helping an organization or business show the public what they're about. The suffixes are eye-catching and trendy, especially with tech-savvy Internet users. Some not-com addresses redirect to addresses with suffixes like ".com" or ".co."

"People are much more attuned to all the quirky names out there," says Heddi Cundle, whose online travel gift card company, myTab, uses ".travel" in its domain.

Expect to see more of them after Google's announcement last week that its new parent company, Alphabet, will have a website address of abc.xyz.

"Google's action shifts not-coms from an interesting option to the 'new normal,'" says Jeff Davidoff, chief marketing officer of Donuts Inc., a company that owns some of the new suffixes.

The suffixes have been approved by the Internet Corporation for

Assigned Names and Numbers, the agency that oversees online addresses. Businesses, organizations and individuals can buy a domain from brokers known as domain registrars. These brokers, in turn, get the names from suffix wholesalers like Donuts, known as registries.

More than 6 million domains using the new suffixes have been registered, says Mike McLaughlin, a senior vice president at GoDaddy Inc., a company that sells domains to the public. There are an estimated 150 million ".com" domains in use.

"When somebody has a kernel of an idea, one of the very first things they do is (check on a name's availability) to see if they can capture the essence of their idea in a name," McLaughlin says.

While many of the companies using the new suffixes are startups, established companies are also adopting not-coms. And some huge companies are getting their own suffixes, including the international bank Barclays, which has ".barclays," and delivery company FedEx, which is working on getting ".fedex." Big corporations apply for suffixes with their own brands to be able to control how they're used.

A look at the domains some companies use:

DOMAIN NAME: republic.bike



In this Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015 photo, Avery Pack, president of Republic Bike, poses for a photograph with a fleet bicycle manufactured at Republic Bike for Johnson Space Center, in Dania Beach, Fla. Companies, organizations and people are starting to forsake the familiar ".com" and ".org" Internet address suffixes, using instead hundreds of new ones like ".legal," ".movie," ".bike" and ".nyc" that have been coming on the market since early 2014. Using republic.bike is a good marketing strategy, appealing to tech-savvy customers who want the latest trends, said Pack. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

OWNER: Republic Bike Inc., a bicycle manufacturer based in Dania Beach, Florida

WHY ".BIKE"? Using republic.bike is a good marketing strategy, appealing to tech-savvy customers who want the latest trends, says Avery Pack, president of the company that sells custom-made bicycles, electronic locking devices and other gear to consumers and companies.

"It's kind of a nod to our customers that what we're doing is not traditional," Pack says.

STILL HAS THE ".COM": The company uses republic.bike in ads. It still uses its original domain, republicbike.com; when people type in republic.bike, they're taken to the ".com" site.

DOMAIN NAME: quinn.pr

OWNER: Quinn, public relations business based in New York

WHY ".PR"? Quinn made the change as part of a company overhaul. It had shortened its name from Quinn & Co. and broadened its customer base beyond travel and real estate clients to include spas, architects and retailers. It chose ".pr" because it described what the company does—public relations.

"It's clearer, it's fresher and it's very much my style," says Florence Quinn, owner of the business.

NEW TWIST ON OLD DOMAIN: The company selected ".pr" although it has been the domain used by Puerto Rican companies. If visitors type in the old address, quinnandco.com, they're taken to quinn.pr.

DOMAIN NAME: mytab.travel



In this Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015 photo, Avery Pack, president of Republic Bike, right, talks with employee Tim Hignett, left, as he assembles a fleet bicycle manufactured at Republic Bike, in Dania Beach, Fla. Companies, organizations and people are starting to forsake the familiar ".com" and ".org" Internet address suffixes, using instead hundreds of new ones like ".legal," ".movie," ".bike" and ".nyc" that have been coming on the market since early 2014. Using republic.bike is a good marketing strategy, appealing to tech-savvy customers who want the latest trends, said Pack. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

OWNER: myTab, travel gift card company based in San Francisco

WHY ".TRAVEL"? Two reasons, one practical, one strategic. The company had been using the address mytab.co because it couldn't get a ".com" with its name when it launched in 2013. It would have cost \$100,000 to buy the ".com" domain from its current owner, an amount the company couldn't afford, president Heddi Cundle says. Some people were confused by ".co" and typed the ".com" address, so ".travel"

eliminates that problem. The address mytab.travel also lets people know instantly what the company does, Cundle says.

NOT-COM A NON-ISSUE: "Nobody has batted an eye. No one even questions it," Cundle says.

DOMAIN NAMES: pbt.vegas, certifiedpublicaccountant.vegas, taxaccountant.vegas, 401kaudit.vegas

OWNER: Piercy Bowler Taylor & Kern, accounting firm with offices in Las Vegas and Salt Lake City

WHY ".VEGAS"?: Using ".vegas" will help the firm be more visible when someone searches for Las Vegas-area accountants with specialties like helping businesses with 401(k) retirement plans, says Shannon Hiller, the firm's marketing director. Also, the firm was unable to get names like taxaccountant.com. The ".vegas" addresses take visitors to the ".com" site, which also serves the Salt Lake City office.

A DOMAIN SYNONYMOUS WITH AN INDUSTRY: "We thought '.vegas' ties in to our brand because our firm works with gambling and hospitality companies. It's a good fit," Hiller says.

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