

Q&A: Move over, .com, here come .coffee, .legal and more

August 19 2015, byJoyce M. Rosenberg

Hundreds of new Internet address suffixes that are alternatives to ".com" [have been coming on the market](#) since early 2014 and more are on the way. Companies and organizations are buying domains, or website addresses, with suffixes like ".coffee", ".energy" and ".legal."

Some details about domains and suffixes:

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WHERE DO DOMAIN SUFFIXES COME FROM?

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, the agency that oversees online addresses, issues them based on applications and payments from businesses and organizations.

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WHEN HAVE SUFFIXES BEEN ISSUED IN THE PAST?

".com," ".edu," ".gov," ".org," ".net" and ".mil" were issued in the 1980s when the Internet was in its infancy. ICANN was formed in 1998, and in 2000, it approved ".aero," ".biz," ".coop," ".info," ".museum," ".name" and ".pro." Starting in 2004, it approved ".asia," ".cat," ".jobs," ".mobi," ".tel" and ".travel."

Suffixes for countries, such as ".us" and ".uk" (for the United Kingdom),

have been issued periodically during the last three decades. Some of the names, like ".co" assigned to Colombia, are also used by U.S. companies.

HOW MANY SUFFIXES IS ICANN IN THE PROCESS OF APPROVING?

ICANN has been processing about 1,300 applications, and more than 700 have been approved, according to spokesman James Cole. Sales of names with some of these suffixes began early last year. More, including ".mba" and ".soccer," are going on sale to the public this month.

CAN BRANDS GET THEIR OWN SUFFIX FROM ICANN?

Yes. Companies including Google and international bank Barclays have applied for and received their own suffixes. Others like FedEx are in the process of getting theirs. That gives them jurisdiction over the suffix; many big companies want their own suffixes to prevent anyone else from using or abusing them.

WHO CONTROLS OTHER SUFFIXES?

ICANN releases the suffixes to wholesalers known as registries. These registries may offer names with those suffixes to companies or individuals who are willing to pay a premium to stake a claim on a sought-after name. For example, the Latin America and Caribbean Federation of Internet and Electronic Commerce, the registry for ".lat," first sold domains to major corporations that wanted to appeal to

Hispanics in the U.S. and people in Latin American countries. It then opened up sales to the general public Aug. 1.

Registries also sell suffixes to registrars, companies like GoDaddy that are domain retailers.

HOW DOES A BUSINESS OR INDIVIDUAL GET A DOMAIN? HOW MUCH DOES ONE COST?

There are hundreds of companies that sell domains under various suffixes. Some also host websites for businesses and people.

Domains can range from a few dollars into the millions of dollars if someone else already owns it. Many companies are using the new [domain suffixes](#) because they couldn't get the ".com" domain they wanted without spending a lot of money.

WILL THESE SUFFIXES HELP WITH SECURITY AND FRAUD?

Perhaps. Some companies are buying various domains, including typos and other variations, to prevent scammers from using them to trick customers. But for every [domain](#) a legitimate [company](#) buys, there are scores of variations that aren't claimed.

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