

Domain Management

Your domain registration account is the most important part of your web site. If you do not have control over your domain name you have no control over your web site.

Many web owners are confused as to what a domain name is. They think that it **is** their web site when in fact it is only part of it and a very important part.

Think of a domain name like what your street address is to your house. It is a registered name assigned to where you live but it is not physically your house. Without an address nobody could send you a letter or find you.



What if someone had control over your street address and assigned it to a different house in a different neighborhood? This unfortunately is what can happen to your domain name if you do not have control over the registration account.

Ok so if the domain name isn't the web site what am I clicking on in my browser?

Good question. In order to have a web site visible on the internet you also need a web hosting account. This is like a rented apartment space where you put your furniture. So web hosting is the physical space that you put your web site files. Your domain name points people to where your web site files are located so that they can see your web site. So your domain registration account works in tandem with your web hosting account to provide collectively what we call a web site. I know some of you may find this rudimentary but I explain this to new web owners all the time.

Web Owner Responsibility

Domain name registration and web hosting are not very expensive. However, over time you will be investing heavily on web marketing and print material to drive traffic to it. The domain names you purchase will increasingly become more valuable to you. Keeping good records is important.

There are two things that you will want to make sure of when purchasing a domain. That is the login information and keeping the credit card information current.



At [Site Mechanix](#) we routinely set up domains and hosting for our clients and we always produce a document that includes login information. You have heard me say this before: "**these are the keys to the car you bought**".

From there it will be your responsibility to make sure the domain registration account is current. Make sure that when your credit card expires that you update the account with new information so that the registration renewal goes through uninterrupted.

Some domain registrars will mail you an invoice but the majority will just email a notice that your domain registration account is about to expire and they do this with great frequency.

It is a good idea to have a **Base Email** for important notices like these so that you can be reminded if and when you need to take action. Because domain emails will be subject to the expiration of your domain, it would be a good idea to have a **Neutral Email** account for your company set up somewhere else like Google gMail or Yahoo.

domain email = info@yourdomain.com
neutral email = mycompany@yahoo.com

Where to buy Domains

You want to purchase your domains at a reputable ICANN compliant registrar and there are many registrars to choose from. Some charge more for registration than others. All registrations are based on annual terms.

I set up all my client on Webcentrica.com. They are ICANN compliant and it is possible to have all your domains and multiple hosting accounts all in one client account. It makes management so much easier.

Beware of companies that manage your registration for you. On the surface it seems nice that they take care of everything for you for your money but you will not have control over your domain that you bought.

Always ask if you will have **direct access** to the domain registration account to be able to make DNS changes yourself.

DNS = Domain Name Server

Example:

NS1.MYWEBHOSTINGSERVER.COM
NS2.MYWEBHOSTINGSERVER.COM



If they say that "all you have to do is make a request and we will change it for you." move on. You do not want to do business with them. Companies like these often hold your domain hostage.

Registration Period

Many registrars offer discounts for buying domains for more than one year, like 5 or 10 years. I have never done that because I regularly purchase domain names and I like to audit my list every time a domain comes up for renewal. It is just a hobby of mine.

Buying a domain for 5 to 10 years may sound attractive because you know nobody else will be able to take it away from you for that long but consider this, things change over time. Will you have the login information available to you that long?

It seems easy enough to keep an important document like your account information in a folder but what if you lose it?

Point of Contact

You, the owner of the company, should ultimately be responsible for the management and maintenance of your domain registrations.

If you need to have some one else who is more computer savvy to register domains for you at least make sure that they provide you with the login information and you should test it to make sure you can get in.

Do not give this responsibility to an employee solely. If you do, make sure you get all the documentation including login.

Also make sure that you give instructions as to what information to put in the domain registration. This would be the company address and contact information. **You** as the owner of the company should be the registrant of record and the administrator for the account even if you don't physically login to do the updates. Use that Neutral Email address we talked about earlier.

Domain Transfers

There are many reasons to transfer your domain from one registrar to another. You might find a better deal somewhere else and want to transfer to the new registrar or you might want to consolidate all your domain registrations into just one account.

I have many clients who purchase domains at random at different registrars by basically going to the computer and purchasing from who ever comes up first.

Some even create multiple accounts from the same registrar because they never thought first to login into their original account. It then becomes a registration nightmare.

There are requirements in order for a domain transfer to take place:

First, is the **Domain Unlocked**? This will make the domain available for transfer.

Second, can you get the **Authorization Code** from the losing Registrar?

And third, do you have access to the **Administrative Email** that is included on the administrator contact information block associated with the domain. This is very important because the new registrar will be sending an Acceptance Authorization Code to initiate the transfer. You need to be able to retrieve this information from this email account. If this is someone else's email than you are out of luck.

You can find out who the administrative email is by checking the [WHOIS](#) data.

Brain Storming

It is difficult to come up with short unique domain names these days because so many people are on the internet creating web pages. Also, because domain names can be valuable there exist what we call "Squatters" or "Domainers", people who buy thousands of domain name possibilities in the hopes that someone will want to buy them at a premium.

Here are some things to think about when coming up with a domain name.

- Try to keep your domain name as short as possible
- Only numbers, letters and hyphens are allowed
- Use key words in your domain name
- Consider .com, .net, .info, .biz and .us extensions
- You can point many domains to one web hosting account

Coming up with a domain name for your web site will probably be the most fun you will ever have with your web site so have fun and contact [Site Mechanix](#) for help. You will be glad you did.

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