



Brand Owners Overlooked Domain Names in Peripheral Touchpoint

Alex Tajirian

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Brand owners must accept some blame for not recognizing the potential danger of the lack of a comprehensive domain-name strategy for protecting their brands. More importantly, now they should learn from their mistakes so as to avoid repeating them.

Past mistakes can always be dismissed as “unknown unknowns” at the time of decision-making. However, such an attitude should be reached only after reflection and self-criticism. It is true that the role of domain names has changed since the mid-1990s, but brand owners had plenty of chances to protect themselves. By and large they chose not to. For example:

1. They ignored and ridiculed explicit warnings by a number of sites, including this one, about the need to renew domain name registrations and to register complementary domain names such as popular typos, keyword permutations, plurals, and www prefixes. The warnings began during the mid-1990s.
2. They didn't bother to follow discussions on domain forums or to engage an independent [brand-protection service provider](#).
3. They failed to recognize that registering brand-sharing domain names is a natural consequence of a registration process that is conducted first-come, first-served and at a fixed price. In other words, they faced a known risk that they ignored.

What to do?

Step 1: They must analyze the reasons for these mistakes so as to avoid repeating them. Some possible explanations:

- a. Lack of disciplined peripheral scanning, say, using [touchpoint analysis](#).
- b. Ineffective [internal organizational structure](#) for coordinating protection activities.
- c. Undervaluing domain names designated for acquisition.
- d. Lack of a domain renewal strategy.

Step 2: They must put in place a domain name strategy to manage and protect domain names, either internally or by engaging an independent third party. ■