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# Which Internet Extensions (gTLDs) to Apply For?

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January 25, 2011

The number of possible new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) to apply for is daunting. Where do you start? This essay warns against some common pitfalls and outlines three logical steps that you need to follow in making your selection.

Remember that there is money to be made in owning the right gTLD. Skeptics focus on the success, or lack of it, of previous expansions such as .name, .biz, and .info. They're using the wrong lens. Earlier gTLDs suffer from the following:

(1) Their owners never marketed them. "If we create them, the users will come" is a mistake. Don't fall for it. With the right marketing plan, a new gTLD can compete with .com.

(2) Most of them have no personality. For example, although the implied signal of .name and .me is a personal Web address, only the latter has personality.  It capitalizes on emotions and the me factor, and that has contributed greatly to the gTLD's success.

(3) Their signals are diffuse and not unique.

However, you must realize that developing cars.com requires different competencies than managing the .cars registry. The business of running a new gTLD registry is different from developing a Web site for the same generic key word. Before you move further, figure out what skills the next step requires and make sure you have those skills.

All right, you are convinced the investment opportunities are there and you know how to use them. How do you select the right gTLD? Follow these steps:

Step 1: Compile a list of business areas for which you have intimate knowledge. Don't apply for brand names, as that would result in throwing your money away on illegal ventures. ICANN is working hard to ensure that dot-brands go only to their IP owners.

Step 2: Perform a value and risk analysis on each of the TLDs on your list to narrow it down.

Step 3: Start marketing now! Don't wait until you submit you application to ICANN.

A list of proposed extensions is available at AboutDomains. ∎