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What's in a Domain Name?



Haven't registered your own domain name yet? No problem. You did register it, right? but have no idea what to do next? No problem. Wait, you registered your domain name but you don't seem to have any control over it? That's a problem.

First, let's try and understand what a domain name is. Simply, a domain name is like a telephone number. You cannot, ever get a telephone number that someone else is already using. Every single telephone number has to be unique. Otherwise when you call someone, how else can the telephone company ensure that you reach the person you intended to call?

The domain name works the same way, only it is on the Internet. If you enter the address www.activerain.com, you are guaranteed to reach this site. So if it's that simple, why are we having so many problems with this?

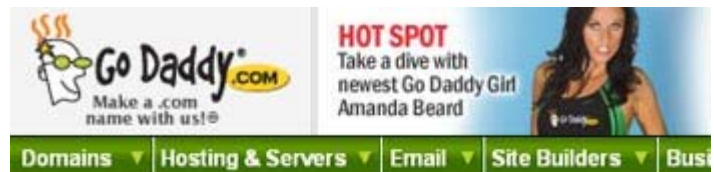
Remember when we only had one telephone company? If you wanted to get a phone, you called "The Telephone Company", we didn't have any other options. Now however, we have a whole bunch of options. There are dozens of companies for all categories of calling (business, local, long distance, wireless, VOIP, etc.) Today, getting a phone is more complex than ever.

As simple as domain names are, it seems more complex because the Internet and computers are still relatively new to most of us. In addition, there are thousands of companies who want to provide service for you. **So where do we start?** Many of us have no idea what to do except what some service provider is telling us that is best for us. In reality, we don't know if it's best for us or best for them.

My suggestion, if you have not already registered a domain name. Go to a Domain Name Registrar, this is a company dedicated to providing domain names and holding them in a **Domain Name Server (DNS)**. Their primary business should be to do just that. Here's a list of just a few Domain Name Registrars (there are many others):

enom.com
godaddy.com
networksolutions.com
register.com

I like register.com for researching. If the name you are looking to register has already been taken, they recommend a list of similar names that are available to register or buy. They also provide a "whois" link, which tells you who owns the domain name (in case you're interested). Godaddy.com seems to be very popular these days, I've never used them, but I'm sure they are one of the better ones and should have everything you need to register a domain name.



Now that you have a registered domain name, what do you do? The most important thing is to maintain control and ownership of your new domain name. Don't give out your username and password to **anyone**, treat it like your house key. There will never be a need for anyone else to keep it, use it, move it, etc.

There are 2 other major components of a website. One is, "**who will build your website?**" and the second is "**who will host it?**" Neither of these 2 things have anything to do with ownership and registering your domain name. Your domain name should be residing at some independent **Domain Name Server (DNS)** that is controlled by you.



3 major components of a website:

- **Domain Name** - you should always maintain control of this regardless of who the website builder or website hosting company.
- **Website Builder** - webmaster - this could be you or anyone who knows how to design & build websites.
- **Website Host** - server which stores all of your web pages - this is a computer which physically resides anywhere in the world and provides your website pages when people enter your domain name.

Process of getting to a website:

- Enter a web address ex: activerain.com
- Your browser sends a message to the DNS (Domain Name Server)
- The DNS knows where the website is residing and connects you to the web hosting company server
- The web hosting company sends the webpage to your computer
- The website is now displayed on your browser

And you thought it was hard? There really is a lot going on, but all of this happens at lightning fast speed at the click of a mouse. Any other questions about domain names? just ask.

Finding a webmaster: when you see websites that you like, ask who the webmaster is. If you know some one who is good, let us know.

Finding a hosting company: I use Aplus.net, but there are many other great web hosting companies. Ask friends and if you could recommend one, let us know.

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