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What's in a name?

If you have a presence on the internet (or if you are considering it) then having your own internet domain name adds to your credibility. It also means your I.T. infrastructure can change behind it, but your customers still have the same website address to visit. Your domain name can also be used within your email addresses (e.g. me@mybusiness.com instead of me@emailforfree.com). This month we look at some of the traps of internet domain name registration.

Naming Rights

Depending on which country you are in, different rules apply regarding who can register a domain name that has your company name in it. In some cases you may need to provide proof that you own the company name (e.g. a business registration certificate). In most cases, anyone can register 'generic' addresses including phrases (e.g. www.fixmywashingmachine.com). If someone else has already registered the name you want, they own it for the period that they have paid for.

Registration & Renewal

Domain names are not permanently 'owned' – instead they are registered for a set period of time, usually 1, 2, 3 or 5 years. This is done with a company called a 'domain name registrar'. When that period of time is up, the owner may be advised that it's time to renew the registration. The details of the domain name include contact details for both the owner and a technical contact (usually email addresses), so it's important to ensure that these details are correct if you change email service or technical support companies. If your domain name registration expires, your email and websites can stop functioning and someone may be able to take over the registration and become the new owner!

There are many domain name registrars available on the internet, handling both international domains (e.g. .com, .net) and national domains (e.g. .co.uk, .com.au).



However, there are also a number of questionable companies that use underhanded tactics to try and convince you to transfer your domain name to them. If you receive postal mail or email regarding the renewal of your domain name, contact your local Computer Troubleshooter to ensure that it is legitimate.

Other Services

A domain name by itself is useless, much like having a street address but no building! To communicate with someone in your 'building' you still need a phone number for phone calls to go to and a letter box for postal mail to go into. Likewise, your domain name also contains details for where your website is stored and where your email needs to go.

Passwords

Your domain name registration comes with a password to allow you or your technician to alter the details of your other services mentioned above. It's only really needed when things do change, which makes it easy to lose! If your domain name has old, incorrect email addresses listed, then getting the password reset can require things like the business owner's signature on company letterhead paper. This tight security is in place to prevent other people from trying to reset your password and gain control of your domain name. Other security features include locking your domain name so it can't be transferred to another domain name registrar and hiding your contact details from public view.

Domain names are just one component of the technology that makes your website and emails work. Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooter to ensure your registration is current and protected.



**Contact your local Computer
Troubleshooters**

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