Computer Corner

Your Domain Name Is Your Online Business Identity - Choosing a domain name that pops

This month we are focusing on a couple of important decisions you should make about your domain name.

Make It Easy to Remember

First, choose a name that is easy to remember and communicates with your market. When I worked in the online newspaper industry, one of my publisher clients decided that the domain name tdlawco.com would be the best name for his newspaper. I failed to see the meaning. He told me that the name stood for “Times Dispatch Lawrence County.” Clever, but no cigar! Or, rather, no communication. No one in his town could actually remember that domain name, and it took Times Dispatch two years to admit to the marketing mistake.

Here is one that is easy to remember, but the communication factor is unintentionally misleading: truckersexpress.com. This name looks somewhat different as a domain name than on a sign outside the Truckers Express building.

Pick More than One Name

Second, if you are having a difficult time choosing one domain name, choose several! You can “aim” multiple domains at the same website to appeal to different markets. Coke.com and cocacola.com go to the same site. Also, any names that you don’t register, someone else will!

My personal domain name is TheComputerGal.com. Other people have registered ThatComputerGal.com, TheComputerGal.us and other variations. It feels like being tightly surrounded by the competition. You don’t want to search your business name and have similar domain names come up first in the search engines.

Look up Names When You’re Ready to Buy One

As you are thinking about your domain names, it may be tempting to see if the names are available. Only check if the names are available with your credit card in hand. If you search for a domain name, find out it’s available, and don’t buy it immediately, you may find a week later that someone else has purchased it! That is because the domain name registrars offer a service where they charge people to see what other people have been searching for!

Nora McDougall-Collin, National Network of Forest Practitioners - Director of Web Services, (740) 856-1529, nora@nnfp.org