

Selecting the right domain name requires some careful research, but the resulting boost in the number of visitors to your web site can make it all worth while. Keyword-optimized names will help you climb to page one rankings in the search engines.

## **Choosing the Right Domain Name Is Critical to Bringing Visitors to Your Web Site**

By Charles Jacobs

Now that your new book is nearing release, the irresistible power of the Internet has convinced you to mount your own web site to promote it. You've got a pretty fair idea of how and what you want to present. But what to call it? That's the question.

When the great bard Shakespeare puzzled over "what's in a name," he concluded that a rose by any other name smells just as sweet. That may be true in the garden, but it falls far short of the precision required in selecting a "domain name."

A number of authors choose to use the title of their book as the web site's domain name. That's fine, as long as the title also incorporates quality keywords that relate to the subject of your book and your site.

You've got to tailor every element of the site to the goal of reaching page one of the search engine rankings for your subject. That means that you optimize your domain name and as much of the text of the site as you can by incorporating meaningful keywords into them.

### **Definitions**

I'm sure by now you know the definition of the term "keyword." They are words and phrases used most frequently by Internet surfers searching for information on a given subject. For example, if the subject of my book was politics in ancient Greece, keyword lists might include words like "politics," "Greece," "agora" or even "antiquity."

Keywords, however, can also be phrases. As we think of the subject of the example I used above, those phrases can be simple two-word combinations like "ancient Greece" or longer phrases like "politics in ancient Greece." Phrases are often used in place of single keywords because they point to the subject with greater precision.

Choosing the best keywords or phrases is a challenging task. Begin by taking the most basic verbiage that relates to your subject. Using our example, that would be either "ancientGreece" or possibly "politics of ancient Greece." Enter that onto one of the keyword research sites.

“Wordtracker” is one of the most popular keyword directories, perhaps because you are able to try it at no cost. There are many others that you can find on the Internet. You enter a word or a phrase, and the site will produce a large selection of related words.

On a more sophisticated level, it can show you the frequency with which those words are used and their effectiveness. Take your time, and conduct this research with great care because it can make a major difference in your search engine rankings.

### **Registering Your Domain Name>**

Before we go on, let’s clarify another often-confusing distinction. While many computer users interchange “URL” and “Domain Name,” there is a technical difference that you should be aware of.

A URL is the total Internet address of the site. In the example we are using, it might be “http://www.ancientgreece.com.” The “.com” represents the domain and the “ancientgreece” is the name. The combination of these two becomes the domain name.

Domain names must be registered by an authorized source before they can be used. They are assigned to specific entities, a person or a company, and only authorized registrars can issue them. I use “GoDaddy” because it is reasonably priced and gives excellent service. However, there are a number of other authorized vendors that you can find in your favorite search engine.

The registrars will notify you if your choice of domain has already been assigned to someone else. In many cases, if you are willing to switch your domain (I.E. .com, .net, .org, etc) you may be able to maintain the name itself under a different domain.

The most popular domain is .com. It is the one most appropriate for authors. However, you may be willing to accept an alternate domain in order to post the name you feel is best, and there is nothing wrong with doing that. Among the several domain names I use, you will find .com, .net and .biz.

The domain name is leased to you for a specified period of time. It may be a year or a number of years. If at the end of the period you do not renew, someone, possibly a competitor, may jump in and snatch away your domain name.

You are at liberty—and it is an extremely wise move—to register several domain names that are very similar to your own even if you have no plans to use them. While our hypothetical “ancient Greece” name ends in .com, you would be wise to register .net and .org, if they are available. In addition to protecting the domain of the web site, many authors also register a domain for their personal name, I.E. www.jimjackson.com.

You will find it difficult at times to select a domain name that hasn’t already been registered. In fact, there are people who buy up what they consider potentially very

popular names and offer them for sale, usually at exorbitant prices. Beware of that as the expiration of your registration approaches.

Make certain you re-register on time, for very often these prowling “wolves” wait for those moments and snatch up the site knowing that you must have it to continue. They will then set the price excessively high, allowing them to make a substantial profit because they know how desperately you need that exact domain name. Although the going price on most domains is in the teens, I have seen demands of \$2,000 and more.

Using care and creativity, the domain name of your web site and the keywords you scatter properly throughout the text will ensure that your site rises high in the search engines ranks where eager information seekers can readily find you.