

Web Guides for Women

Jargon free help sheets & one to one support

BUYING A DOMAIN NAME (WEB ADDRESS)

Summary: If you are planning to set up a website you will need to buy a web address which is referred to as “a domain name”, for example www.visiblewomen.co.uk It is not always easy to get the web address you would like as so many popular domains have already been bought. There are several things to consider when choosing a domain name for your business, including:

- Keep it brief
- Avoid difficult spellings
- Make sure that people will understand it when you say it over the phone
- Avoid too many hyphens
- Make it relevant. If you are starting up a new business, you could find a name which explains what your business does, for example www.buyagift.co.uk

Checking whether a domain name is available

You can buy a web address from a number of places and the prices vary enormously. Be careful that you don't spend more than you need to. We suggest that if you buy a domain name before you buy your web hosting package (see guide on web hosting) you buy it from the web host that you will use in the future. This will make it easier for you when you come to publish your website in your webs space and attach it to your web address.

We have found the following sites offer a reasonably priced and professional service for sole traders and small businesses. Be careful about free domains and free web hosts as you may find that they don't give you the freedom you need to upgrade or move to a different host later on.

www.oneandone.co.uk
www.easily.co.uk
www.fasthosts.co.uk

Each of the above sites has a domain search box where you type in the name you would like to buy and it will tell you whether it is available or not. You will need to take notice of which web extensions are available as you probably only want to buy a co.uk, .com or .org address. You may sometimes find that the name is available but not with the extension you require.

If not, you can try other names in the search box until you find one that is available. You can then click the buy now box and pay online for your web address. You will be sent confirmation that you own the address for 1 or 2 years and it is then ready for you to use once you have set up your website.

What type of domain should you buy?

co.uk – if you plan to trade only in the UK or don't mind being seen to be based in the UK

.com – if you are looking to trade in the UK and Europe, US and outside the UK
.org or org.uk if you plan to set up a community website or non profit making business

You may want to buy both the co.uk & the .com address. You can have them both attached to your web address so that your customers can find you by typing in either. It also keeps your competitors out of the way and stops them buying one of those names. There are other domain extensions but they are unlikely to apply if you are starting a new business.

How much will it cost?

It will be easier and cheaper for you in the long run if you buy your domain name at the same time as you buy your web hosting package (see web guide on web hosting) as many web hosts throw in a free domain name when you buy hosting. As a guide you can usually buy a web hosting package which includes a domain name for around £5.99 per month.

Likely Price Guide

A co.uk address should not cost you more than around £5 per year
A .com address should not cost you more than around £12 per year

Be careful about sites that charge more than this. Also be careful about letting your web designer buy it for you as you need to own it.

Checking who owns a co.uk web address

When you buy a co.uk address, you will be asked to register it with www.nominet.org.uk which is register of all UK addresses. To search to see who owns a UK address use the search box on www.nominet.org.uk

Are you still unsure?

If you would find it useful to discuss your options before taking action, we can offer you support with one of our e-business advisers via telephone or email at a cost of £50 + VAT for a half hour session. To find out how we can help you ring 0208 305 2222 or email info@visiblewomen.co.uk . We will make an appointment for the online session and payment will be requested via Paypal or cheque prior to the session taking place. We offer practical guidance and support to help you get started and grow online.