



Safeguarding Your Valuable Domains and Websites





Your company's domains and websites are valuable assets that deserve to be protected. You rely on them to communicate with your customers, clients, audiences, and internal teams.

They have become such a basic part of your company's day-to-day business that it's easy to overlook this important housekeeping.

Why This Housekeeping Matters

Imagine what would happen if you were no longer able to access your website.

What if someone else owned and controlled your domain name? Your company's identity and reputation are now out of your control.

Companies often rely on the individual web designer or outsourced company to maintain their website. It's important to ensure that your company maintains control over your web assets.

Anyone can register an available domain name. They are not required to have any ownership or legal interest in a company. This means you have a responsibility to safeguard your company's domain name and access to it.

Tech Words in Plain English

Before we get started, let's translate the tech terms into practical business words.

Domain name: The human-friendly text that a user types into a browser address bar to reach a website. For example, google.com or linkedin.com.



IP address: Is a series of complex numbers that are the actual address for a website, such as 192.0.1.2.

DNS: When a user enters the human-friendly text into the address bar, servers across the internet use a service called DNS to map the text to the IP address numbers. Through a series of complex protocols, your request is routed across the internet until it reaches your desired website.

Registrar: Is a business that handles the registration of domain names and the assignment of the IP addresses for these domain names. For example, GoDaddy is a registrar.

Owner: While people usually say they ‘own’ their company’s domain names, it’s the registrar that owns the names. Purchasing a domain name gives a person the right to use the name as long as the registration is paid for, usually 1 or 2 years at a time.

If the registration is not renewed, then it becomes available for anyone to purchase and use. There does not need to be any relationship between the domain name and the person or company purchasing it.

Web host: Is the business where all your website’s content is stored and delivered to the user’s browser. There are a lot of technical pieces that we won’t go into here. What’s important to know is that your hosting provider is the holder of all your website content. Like with your domain registration, having access to this account is critical for your business.

Steps to Get Started

Domain Registration

- ☐ Grab your copy of the Excel Website Organizer.



- ☐ List all the domain names that your company owns.
- ☐ Include domains that are used internally, are private, or currently don't have any content.
- ☐ For each domain list where the domain is registered. This is known as the registrar.

If you are unsure or want to verify the information you have, go to a domain lookup site such as <https://lookup.icann.org/> or <https://www.whois.com/whois/>

- ☐ For each domain add the login information for the registrar. This information is critical. Without it you cannot manage your domain registration.
- ☐ Login to each domain. Locate the administrative and technical contact information. Every registrar is slightly different in the presentation, but they all will make this information available to you.
- ☐ Make sure that both the administrative and technical contacts are officers of your company. See recommendations below for managing this information.
- ☐ Update contact information as needed.

Website Hosting

- ☐ For each domain list the hosting company. If you aren't sure or want to verify the information, you will find the hosting company in the whois lookup above.

Your website might be hosted by your registrar or by another company that provides hosting services.

For example,

1. The registrar is enom.com



2. Your website is hosted on a webserver your web developer maintains for you at godaddy.com.
3. enom.com has records called DNS records that tell enom.com to send anyone looking for your company's website to godaddy.com.

See the How Do You Get to a Website PDF for a simple step-by-step illustration of this.

- ☐ It's important to know where your website is hosted and how to access it.
- ☐ Record the login credentials for each website.
- ☐ Login to each website to verify the login credentials.

Wrapping It Up

- ☐ As part of your company's security practices, move these login credentials from this Website Organizer to your secure password manager.

Domain Contact Recommendations

- Never make a third-party the contact for your domains. This gives them the ability to transfer ownership, claim ownership, and manage domain renewals. It is not uncommon for a third party web developer to list themselves as the contact when they register your domain name.



- Never use an employee's name or their individual email address even when it is a company account.
- To simplify changes that will naturally happen over time, ask your email administrator to create an email alias. Then forward all email for this alias account to several key people within your company.

For example, create an alias named `webadmin@yourcompany.com`. Include your internal IT lead, company owner, and CFO in the list of forwarded email accounts.

Use this alias for all the administrative and technical contacts instead of an individual email address.

Additional Tools and Resources

Website Organizer [Excel]

[What is DNS](#)

[How Do You Get to a Website \(PDF\)](#)