YOUR CORPORATE DOMAIN PORTFOLIO

SEVEN BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS

WHITE PAPER

Ask anyone in a company what they think about their domain management practices and the frequent answer is, "It's a total pain."

The pain has distinct symptoms and here are just a few:

1. *Lack of process and clear ownership*
2. *No single point of visibility, control or change management over domains*
3. *Absence of useful data (domain/DNS) and business intelligence*
4. *Managing by Excel lists and/or emails to your registrar*
5. *Broken domain settings – resource record issues…*

A general observation about domain management is that most IT managers operate without a corporate domain management system. They rely instead on their retail registrars and/or various system login portals for managed DNS edits; which works for registering/renewing domains, setting up zone files, A records, MX records and the like – but little else.

Enterprises seem to have a high tolerance for pain. They'll go on for years in the above mode and just live with it. Pain however is a warning sign and here's what it's trying to tell you:

- *Inefficiency creates excess cost, errors and time cycles*
- *Lack of business intelligence impairs effective decision making*
- *Broken domains lose valuable web traffic and open potential security holes*

So how should an enterprise set about improving matters? We think IT is the logical place to start. Your friends in Marketing will thank you too!

PRACTICE 1:

USE A SINGLE CORPORATE REGISTRAR (VS. SEVERAL REGISTRARS)

Retail registrars like GoDaddy and Network Solutions are fine for small businesses with a handful of domains. Enterprises with hundreds or even thousands of domains have much different needs. When your company has domains spread across multiple registrars and separate DNS provider(s), you've got a major management headache!

Get all your domains (and your DNS) under a single source so you can see them, control them and manage them easier.

PRACTICE 2:

INTEGRATE YOUR DOMAIN REGISTRAR WITH YOUR DNS PROVIDER

Domains and DNS data belong together. When they are kept separate, a lot of value falls through the cracks. Don't marketing folks want to know which domains are gaining or losing traffic? And wouldn't IT like to know which of the thousands of resource records are failing to resolve without having to inspect each one?

Connect your domain registrar to your DNS service and gain a wealth of actionable business intelligence to benefit the whole organization.

PRACTICE 3:

MONITOR YOUR DOMAIN HEALTH

A review of several large, global enterprises from the finance, insurance and publishing industries reveal an astounding number of domains that fail to resolve, resolve incorrectly or display file errors. A company with just 500 domains can easily have 10,000 resource records of which 40-60% may be incorrectly configured. Even allowing for parked domains that you don't care about, this threshold of error opens you up to a lot of problems, many of which are hidden from view.

Have an automated means to verify that all your domains' resource record issues are identified for correction.

PRACTICE 4:

IMPLEMENT SECONDARY DNS

DNS network failure is extremely rare. But it happens. The consequences can be catastrophic. A secondary DNS infrastructure is an inexpensive way to establish redundancy and thereby prevent painful and avoidable business outages.

Implement a secondary DNS infrastructure for redundancy.

PRACTICE 5:

RIGHT SIZE YOUR DOMAIN PORTFOLIO

Once upon a time the domain world was a simpler one. Dot com, org, net and a few ccTLDs that mattered made up the landscape. Then the new gTLDs exploded. Many companies got caught up in registering huge numbers of domains across multiple TLDs strictly for "brand defense" reasons. And the TLDs just keep on coming. Based on some simple analytics, most enterprises can easily shed over 20% of their domain portfolio along with the attendant cost and management effort.

Analyze your domains. Get rid of the ones you don't need. Save money and hassle.

PRACTICE 6:

DOCUMENT YOUR PROCESS – OR BETTER YET, AUTOMATE IT

Managing the life cycle of a domain from inception, to approval, to set up to ultimate perpetual renewal (or expiry) is just a process. Organizations function best when processes are documented understood and followed. This is especially important when multiple departments, stakeholders and operating entities are involved. If business process management applies to the rest of your company, why exclude domain management? A fully automated system for domain management takes this one step further. Automated process management is more secure, reliable and ensures compliance.

The 2nd best way to establish an effective business process is to define and document it. The best way of all is to automate it with a change management system.

PRACTICE 7:

ACQUIRE YOUR OWN .BRAND TLD REGISTRY

There are hundreds of new generic TLDs now available to enterprises. Perhaps of all the new TLDs, the most exciting are the Brand TLDs. Companies like IBM, Canon and Audi have secured their own Brand TLD with .IBM, CANON and .AUDI. Having their own registry gives these brands unprecedented control and security as trusted spaces for audiences. They also benefit from enhanced network authentication and other innovation possibilities. Brand TLDs are likely to become table-stakes for large brands. Over 550 brands own their own TLD from ICANN's first application round. Thousands are expected to follow suit in the coming new rounds.

The Internet is evolving and your own Brand TLD offers you and your customers a safe and trusted space to engage in the digital world.

Investigate the benefits of having your own Brand TLD – and start your planning for the anticipated ICANN 2nd Round applications.

SYNOPSIS

1. *Get all your domains (and your DNS) under a single source so you can see them, control them and manage them easier.*

2. *Connect your domain registrar to your DNS service and gain a wealth of actionable business intelligence to benefit the whole organization.*

3. *Have an automated means to verify that all your domains' resource record issues are identified for correction.*

4. *Implement a secondary DNS infrastructure for redundancy.*

5. *Analyze your domains. Get rid of the ones you don't need. Save money and reduce hassle.*

6. *The 2nd best way to establish an effective business process is to define and document it. The best way of all is to automate it with a change management system.*

7. *Investigate the benefits of having your own .Brand TLD – and start your planning for the anticipated ICANN 2nd Round applications.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

White Paper: Market Information Report: New TLD Expansion Program
.Brand TLD Updates: BrandTLD.news
Case Studies: Live Examples of IT Best Practices in Domain Management