Authentic Web Inc.

Domain Pain - Steps to Health
Corporate Domain Name Management in the New TLD Era.

An Enterprise Guide for Brand, Digital and Domain Management Owners.

DOMAIN PAIN • STRATEGY STARTERS • POLICY STEPS • DOMAIN HEALTH

Domain Pain
Steps to Health

"Enterprises have bigger problems in their domain and DNS management practices than they know. As the new TLD era continues to expand, so do complexity, risk and opportunities are all accelerating.

Enterprise leaders in brand, digital, marketing and DNS infrastructure who come together to get control and then drive a new TLD and brand registry innovation mission will leave their competitors behind."

Peter LaMantia, CEO, Authentic Web Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Your company, customers, suppliers and partners live and do business on the Internet. The Internet is where you create and engage with audiences on digital identities and through experience engagement. Your corporate website, microsites and service delivery portals are your identity. These properties are identified, searched and found based on the domain names you registered and publish content.

Your business owns many domain names. Together they comprise your corporate domain name portfolio. Prior to 2015, you owned Second Level Domains (SLDs) such as *company.com* on a few legacy Top Level Domains (TLDs) such as: .com, .org, .net. You also likely registered country codes such as: .us, co.uk, .ca, de. There are two broad classes of domain names that enterprises register and hold;

1. **Brand Identities:** These are domain identities used to anchor messaging and services promoted to engage target audiences. This domain class is registered to generate returns on investment for the business.

2. **Defensive Positions:** These are domains registered for brand protection purposes. They are registered to prevent nefarious actors from infringing on your brand. This domain class is a cost to the business, registered to mitigate brand infringement risk.

Brand protection in digital is a difficult enterprise problem. As a result, domain name portfolios and the associated cost of defensive positions have ballooned. Enterprise business owners, their IT and IP service groups are at a loss to stop the continued growth of defensive portfolios. Which domains should be let drop? The risk of culling a domain portfolio and allowing names to be released back onto the market may have consequences operators are not prepared to take. Efforts to streamline domain portfolios rarely get acted upon for fear of making a mistake. When the leaders who occupy the seat of decision are asked if a domain should be renewed they struggle without data insights to arrive at a comfortable decision. They may also not have an updated Domain Strategy to help guide decision-making. The default is to pay the fee and renew. Low risk? Just cost? Result: **Domain portfolios continue to balloon.**

Now with the Top Level Domain expansion, brand managers are faced with a level of protection and domain management complexity that is orders of magnitude greater than anything they have faced in the past. There are currently over 800 new TLDs live with approximately 11,000,000 domains registered. Growth is expected to continue expanding to thousands of new TLDs introduced over the next decade. Brands can no longer employ a broad defensive position strategy sinking funds into defensive registrations. It just does not make sense. It will not be effective. For further reference and learning on the New TLD Expansion program, see our Market Information Report Whitepaper

Get a copy at: tldprogram.authenticweb.com

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Time to rethink? Ask yourself the question.

WHAT IS YOUR CORPORATE DOMAIN NAME STRATEGY?

- What domain names do we own and what is the DNS query traffic?

- What domains should we renew and which should be culled?

- Why did we buy certain domains, who requested them and for what purpose?

- What domains should we register in the new TLDs?

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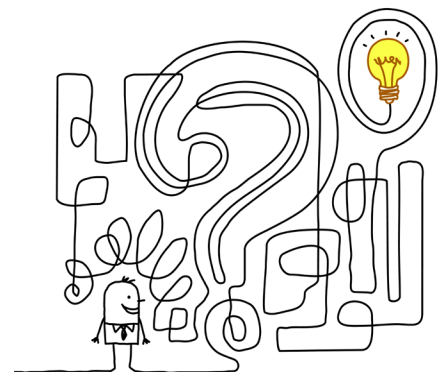
Read further to help frame your team discussions with useful guidance and actions you can take to understand and address corporate domain pain and develop a Domain Strategy designed for the New TLD Era.

A CASE OF HIDDEN EXPOSURE

Subdomain and Directory Addresses

It is a regular practice to request, provision and publish content on subdomains and directory URL address. For definition purposes,

- **Subdomain aka Third Level Domain:** Example: http://pain.authenticweb.com
  Typically provisioned by the IT team member responsible to manage domain name zone files.

- **Directory URL Address**: Example: http://authenticweb.com/pain
  Typically provisioned by the webmaster without need to edit the domain name zone file.

No problem, your team members do this all the time. They are easy to set up. There are no additional vendor costs and these addresses allow your business to build web experiences for specific campaigns. It works just fine, however, these domains are not intended to be permanent. Most are set up for specific marketing communication and engagement initiatives. Ideally, they are set up, used and measured to inform next actions and then at conclusion, de-provisioned. In reality, they are set up, marketing teams execute the campaign, conduct analysis and the teams move on to the next campaign in a mad dash to hit quarterly goals. Since IT takes direction on web changes from the business, digital or marketing teams, it is not IT's mandate to circle back to clean up the old addresses and domain zone files.

The result is that these properties remain live. Before long, the individuals who set them up move on to new roles or leave the organization. These marketing destinations are now completely forgotten and hidden. They exist in cyberspace without management. Many, even smaller businesses have hundreds of these dead-end or stale content destinations live on the Internet without even knowing it. Certain security risks exist if, for example, a subdomain that was provisioned to a cloud server IP, that is later turned down. However, the IP remains in the domain zone file. When the cloud provider reassigns the IP to a new client, that new client can publish to the subdomain. Who knew?

This is an example of hidden domain portfolio exposure, a problem enterprises have difficulty managing.   Related impacts can include:

1. Audience confusion and demonstration of poor digital housekeeping.
2. Display expired digital programs to audiences.
3. Tarnishes brand, trust and goodwill.
4. Sub-domain potential to expose security and branding issues when not removed from the zone file.

This discussion highlights just one of the challenges for brand managers. It does not stop here.

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Domain management pain is a reality for all enterprises. It is now more challenging with new TLDs.

Below are additional highlighted domain pain conditions. If you are like most companies, the problems have built up in legacy system environments by personnel long since departed from the company.

NOW as complexity increases with 100s of new TLDs a reality businesses recognize they can no longer maintain the status quo.   It is TIME TO TAKE CONTROL of YOUR DOMAIN SPACE.

It is your opportunity to INNOVATE and gain a competitive advantage with domain health.

DOMAIN PAIN

Enterprise domain, brand, IT, finance, marketing and digital teams face several domain management challenges. We call it 'DOMAIN PAIN.'

While every organization has different levels of domain pain, reviewing this simple questionnaire will help you identify areas of particular domain pain that exist in your organization. These pain symptoms need to be understood and treated to achieve good domain health.

1. How many domains do we own?
2. How many sub-domains are set up?
3. How many domain registrars do we use?
4. Do we know where these domains resolve?
5. Do these domains resolve?
6. Do we know all our name servers in use?
7. What is the DNS query traffic?
8. What is the cost to the business?
    a. Vendor Cost
    b. Internal Cost
    c. Total Cost of Ownership
9. Do we have an updated Domain Policy and Procedure or Domain Management Process in place?
10. What is our Domain Strategy for the New TLD Era?

How sick is your company?

Depending upon your answers to these questions, you probably have a good idea of how much domain pain exists in your company.

Let's look closer at **FIVE** common **Domain Pain** challenges for enterprise managers.

1. Brand Protection
2. Domain Data Visibility
3. Team Execution Agility
4. Registrar Consolidation and Automation
5. Domain Name Strategy Formation

1. Brand Protection

- **Our company cannot defend** our brand(s) across hundreds of new TLDs with defensive registrations.
- We need an updated protection strategy that is effective and economical.
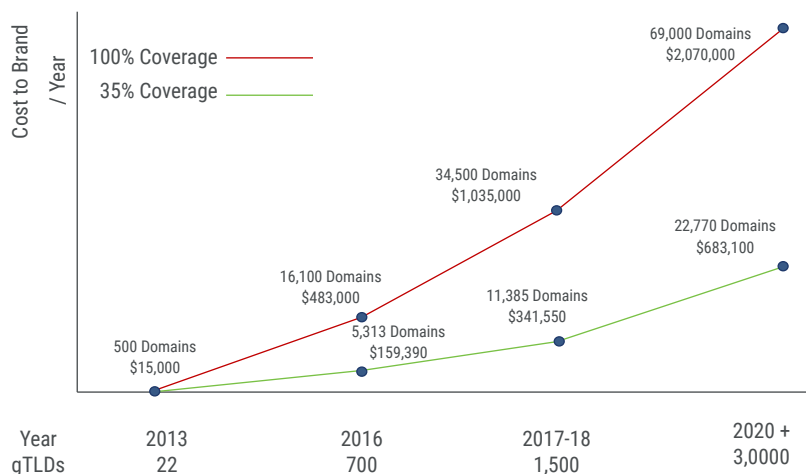
Broad defensive registration strategies were designed for the legacy TLD world of a handful of Top Level Domains and country codes.

Broad defensive domain registration strategies in the expanded TLD world will be both costly and ineffective.
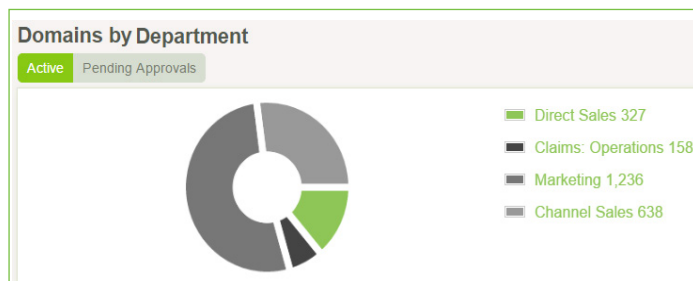
CASE: Company A owns 500 domains in 22 TLDs today @ $30/domain. They register the same brand terms and phrases across several legacy TLDs. In the new TLD era, if they maintain this strategy at either 100% or even 33% coverage as represented, the domain costs and portfolios balloon beyond reason and this is only the vendor costs. Layer onto those costs, the internal personnel costs to manage the massive portfolio. Clearly this is a nonsensical brand protection strategy for the new TLD era.
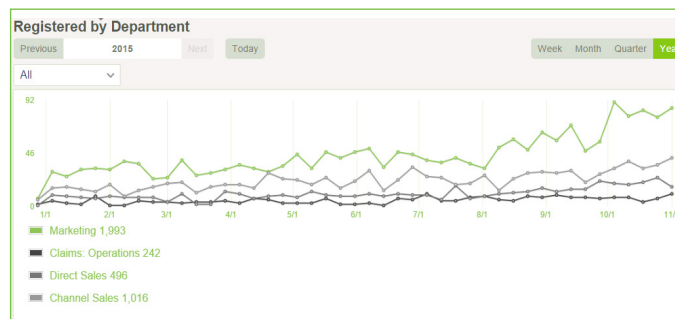
2. Domain Data Visibility

- **Our company does not** have access to accurate information required to make good business decisions.
- We need historical and real-time domain data to inform and support good decision making.
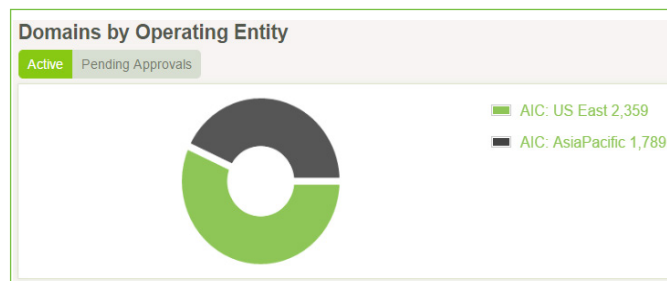
Ownership by operating entities


Domains by departments & teams

Business and domain activity

DNS Query Data: OE, dept, tags, % use, competitive intel ...

3. Team Execution Agility

- **Our company does not** have process and system tools for teams to source domain intelligence and execute with agility.
- We need to define our domain management processes and then lock it down with systems to improve our performance.
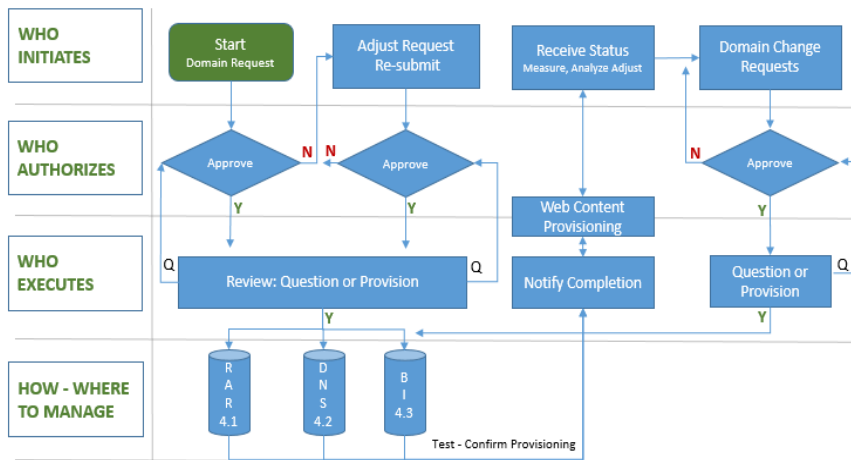
Domain portfolio management processes of yesterday do not support business innovation needs in the new TLD Era.

Revisit and define processes.

Deploy systemically with intuitive workflow, origination, approval, edit, task management, team notifications and provisioning and reporting tools.

Accelerate team execution pace and reduce human touch cost and error rate.

4. Registrar Consolidation and Automation

- **Our company cannot** continue with multiple registrars & disconnected systems limiting automation, execution agility & analysis.
- We must consolidate, set automated and intelligent processes to improve innovation agility, reduce costs and error rates.
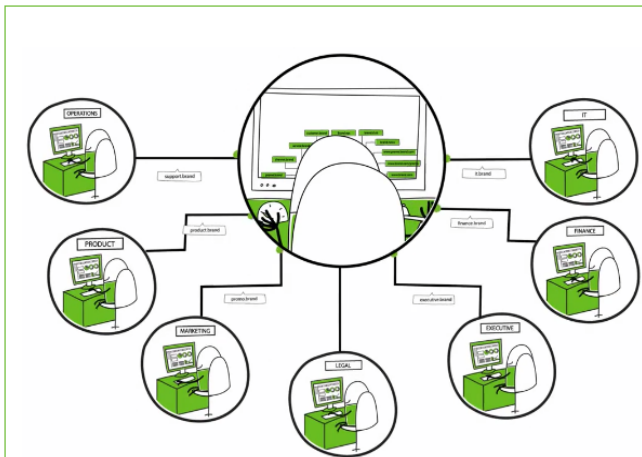
Consolidate domains on one registrar platform. Empower teams with systems and intelligence to execute with pace and outcompete. Gain control, oversight and insights.
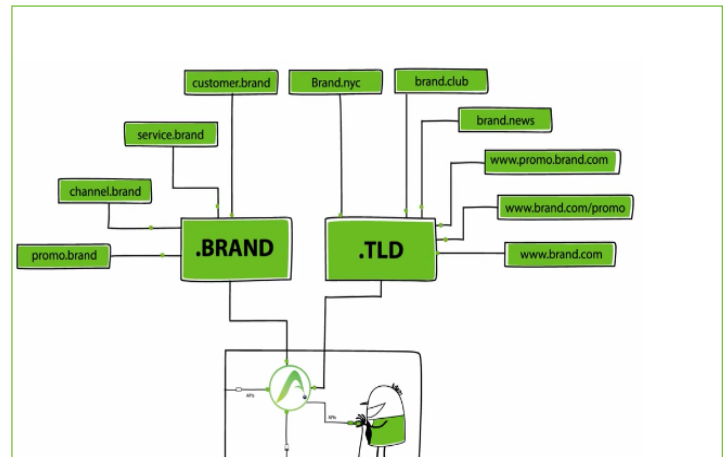
Manage open TLD experiences and brand registry ecosystems with technology. Connect domain system data and events with internal and third party systems to facilitate provisioning automation.

5. Domain Name Strategy Formation

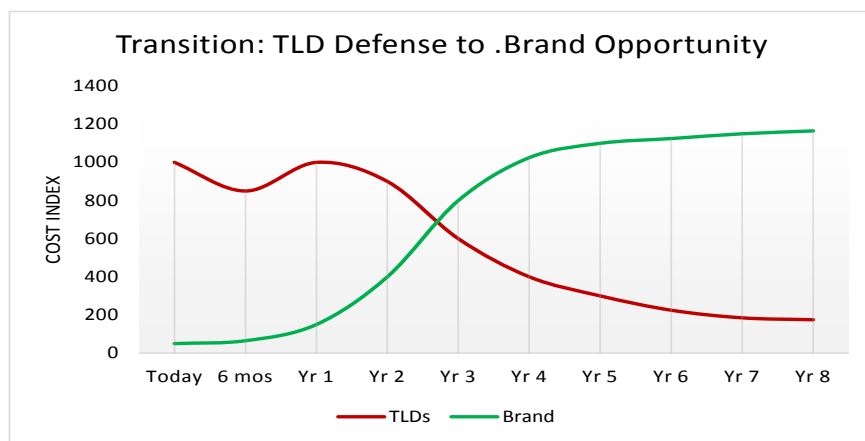- **Our company does not** have a comprehensive domain strategy designed for the New TLD Era.
- We need a new strategy designed for innovation on either our own brand registry and/or in our Line of Business TLDs.

Transition: TLD Defense to .Brand Opportunity

Strategic Direction - Option A

Secure your brand registry.

Consider positions in Line of Business TLDs.

Over time, transition domain-spend on non-performing domains to your brand registry.
Build awareness and trust in the new brand registry ecosystem. Innovate the experience.

Subscribe to quality digital monitoring services.

Strategic Direction - Option B

Your brand does not own a brand registry.

Optimize your current portfolio based on performing domains, competitive intelligence and necessary brand potection positions.

Subscribe to quality digital monitoring services.

Secure relevant positions in Line of Business TLDs and other TLDs that represent your brand initiatives with clear concise brand labels. ie: brand.club, brand.green, brand.news ...

FINANCIAL

.BANK	.BANQUE	.TRADING	.CAPITAL	.BROKER	.CREDIT
.FOREX	.CASH	.LOANS	.CREDITCARD	.ESTATE	.EXCHANGE
.FINANCE	.FINANCIAL	.FUND	.HOLDINGS	.MORTGAGE	.INVESTMENTS
.INSURANCE	.LOAN	.PAY	.MONEY	.CPA	.ACCOUNTANT

RETAIL - CONSUMER GOODS

.CLUB	.BARGAIN	.DISCOUNT	.COUPON	.DEAL	.PROMO
.SALE	.GIFT	.BIKE	.FREE	.FOOD	.KITCHEN
.MENU	.SHOES	.SHOP	.STORE	.APP	.TOYS
.LUXURY	.FURNITURE	.BOATS	.CAR	.DESIGN	.DIAMONDS

MEDIA

.LIVE	.AUDIO	.ART	.APP	.BOOK	.CHANNEL
.DIGITAL	.FILM	.NOW	.MEDIA	.MOVIE	.MUSIC
.NEWS	.BLOG	.PRESS	.RADIO	.REVIEWS	.SHOW
.TALK	.TODAY	.VIDEO	.WORD	.GEOS	…

ENTERTAINMENT

.ACTOR	.ART	.MOVIE	.BAND	.BROADWAY	.BUZZ
.CLUB	.FILM	.GAME	.TICKETS	.MUSIC	.PARTY
.PHOTO	.PICTURES	.RADIO	.SHOW	.THEATER	.AUDIO
.TOUR	.VIDEO	.WATCH	.WOW	.BIO	…

DOMAIN NAME STRATEGY

There is no one size fits all. A domain name strategy best suited for your organization depends on a number of factors that should be centered on your business objectives and market dynamics. Below are some starting points. If your organization owns or intends to own a proprietary brand registry, your starting point is to understand and build the organization's .BrandIQ. .BrandIQ is a continuum along the curve of understanding and readiness. It defines the corporate persona of intent and readiness around brand registry innovation initiatives. For further reading: Download the .BrandIQ Ebook

A Starter: Re-Think, Re-Invent and Re-Tool

The New TLD Era requires every organization to revisit and rethink their Domain Name Strategy. The following provides a management construct to help organizations move through stage gates from ideation to strategy and along the introduction path toward launch and management. It is a construct that uses a best practice framework of: **People • Process • Story • Money**. At each stage, flesh out the layers of complexity to form an executable, costed and measurable Go-To-Market success story.

Gap & Ideation ● Strategy Plan ● Execution Plan ● Go-To-Market

Successful businesses commit to innovation. Here are 10 starter questions for team ideation on Domain Strategy formation.

1. What are your business objectives? Short term and long term. General business and digital.
2. What are the dynamics of change in your market(s)? Where is it going versus where it is today?
3. What line(s) of business are you in and in what geographies/languages do you operate?
4. What is the purpose of each domain identity? ie: Brand awareness, direct response marketing, client services, services delivery ...
5. Who are your target audiences? What do they want and what are your audience engagement strategies?
6. Who are your competitors and what are they executing?
7. What are your social and mobile strategies? How are they related to or everaged by your digital identities (domains)?
8. What is your budget for digital and how does it split out? How will it change? What are the triggers for change?
9. Who are the internal stakeholders in digital initiatives? When do you bring them into strategic planning?
10. What are the KPIs of today? How do you expect they will change over time?

These are just a few starter questions designed to assess a base line and directional intent. Authentic Web recommends you assemble a team to flesh them out further and identify the unique factors of your markets. Then consider the top level domain expansion, your situation, where you are today and where you want to be in the future. Finally, consider the implications of the new top level domain era on your business.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Define - Manage - Refine

No domain strategy is complete without aligning with published Policies and Procedures. Here are 12 starter questions to get you going.

1. Who makes the decisions for defensive and opportunity classes of domains?
2. What is the organizational structure and who are the people involved in domain name procurement and ongoing management?
3. How do internal stakeholders communicate domain related requests today, new requests and edits? Are they logged systemically?
4. What are the BIG business challenges today, ie: time, approvals, notifications, provisioning, errors, data intelligence, cost, audits, etc?
5. What types of domains should be used for what campaign use cases, ie: vanity, subdomain, directory, .brand, etc? How to enforce?
6. How do you decommission domain names, directory addresses and sub-domains? How do you communicate and ensure completion?
7. How do you process change requests? What are the problems here?
8. Who owns it, or more accurately who owns what aspect of the domain name life cycle?
9. Is it an orphaned business process? **Yes/No?** Which part, origination and renewal decisions, NS settings, web, cost, brand, etc?
10. How do you allocate costs in the enterprise? How does that affect decision making, i.e., departments, affiliates, subsidiaries, etc?
11. How do you report or gain visibility into domain portfolios, their performance and lifecycle?
12. How do you address personnel change and the related loss of institutional knowledge?

These starter questions will server to help you initiate and then articulate the Policy and Procedures for the business.   Most businesses operate with broken enterprise domain processes. With the arrival of new TLDs, enterprises the world over are recognizing that the status quo is no longer sufficient. Policy and procedure documentation is critical for effective team execution of a defined domain strategy.

PEOPLE PROCESS STORY MONEY

TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TO DOMAIN PORTFOLIO HEALTH

If domain processes have been ignored and/or you are suffering symptoms of pain, here are first steps to treat your domain ailments.

1. Assemble the stakeholders and gather input on domain pain. Start the ideation process to discover and diagnose the impact it has on the business. ie: Decision paralysis, total cost of ownership, process, team execution, lack of innovation capabilities, etc.

2. Obtain a complete list of corporate domains from all registrar sources. Examine the domains, sub-domains and directory addresses. Analyse DNS query traffic. Redirect low performers or mark them for deletion.

3. Check sub-level domain names and make sure the IP addresses are current and under business control.

4. Establish a project and reporting framework with stakeholders to advance initiatives with domain performance data, and start making smart decisions based on data intelligence. **Set Actions**

5. Keep track of which operating entities, departments and affiliates are registering domain assets.

6. Keep track of why domain assets were registered or renewed. Log it for audit and learning.

7. Review the new TLDs available. Develop a Domain Strategy and your Policies and Procedures.

8. Register your trademarks at the Trademark Clearinghouse (www.trademark-clearinghouse.com)

9. Subscribe to digital brand protection monitoring services. There are several innovative providers who have recently emerged.

10. Seek outside knowledge expert support, and establish control, visibility and automation with systems designed for the new TLD era.

HAVE FUN WITH IT. THIS IS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY TO INNOVATE !

SUMMARY

We hope you found the whitepaper guide valuable to help inform your thinking, educate peers and set initial actions to domain health.

What was learned:

1. All businesses own domain names. Two Classes. 1. Brand Identity 2. Defensive Positions.

2. Defensive domain portfolios are ballooning, but culling domains is risky without good information.

3. The new TLD expansion program requires a new corporate Domain Name Strategy.

4. The case of subdomain and directory address hidden exposure is the tip of the iceberg.

5. Domain Pain: Existing process and systems are ineffective. Challenges include; security, protection, total cost of ownership, visibility, execution efficiency, automation, registrar consolidation and a lack of a domain strategy designed for innovation in the new TLD era.

6. A new domain strategy is required to manage the increasing complexity and ensure businesses get and keep good domain health.

7. No domain strategy will be effective unless it includes defined policies and procedures and systemic workflow control.

8. Take the first steps to get your business on track to good domain health and competitive advantage.

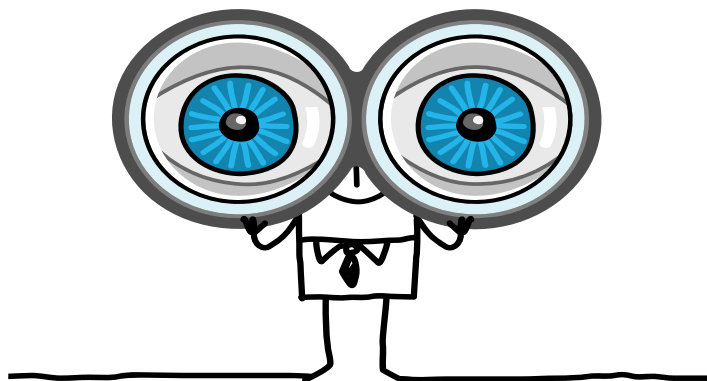## IT'S HAPPENING NOW. THE INTERNET IS CHANGING!

Your business needs to change with it or suffer competitive erosion. Simply put. **"INNOVATE OR DIE"**

December 2015

• Over 11 million domains are registered in the new TLD spaces.

• Over 500 brands have signed their registry agreements with ICANN.

• Many brand are already gaining a competitive advantage, deploying innovative use cases on brand registries and on new TLDs.

The New TLD Era is here!

Are you ready for change?

MORE LEARNING …

ABOUT AUTHENTIC WEB INC.

Authentic Web is a platform and services company addressing the needs of enterprises to deploy, innovate on and scale brand registry ecosystems and optimize domain portfolio management.

MISSION

Deliver intelligent technology and service solutions to enterprises seeking to execute domain centered innovation.

Design build and integrate technologies that leverage the new capabilities of proprietary brand registries.

TECHNOLOGY

The company offers next generation enterprise domain management platform services built for enterprise stakeholder teams.

The company's platform solves operating challenges and delivers innovation capabilities with tools built for the new TLD era.

Visibility	Control	Simplicity	Automation	Extensible	Performance

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The company offers Professional Services to support client domain strategies and tactics.

Professional Services	Authentic Web brings decades of experience in registrar, registry, digital marketing and technology deployments. We support, inform and guide internal teams.
	1. Corporate domain portfolio registrar consolidation.
	2. Domain name strategy for the new TLD era.
	3. Domain health audit check and guidance.
	4. Domain policy and procedure development.
	5. Brand Registry strategy and deployment: Ideation to Go-To-Market.
	6. Brand Registry business case development.
	7. Brand Registry ICANN application preparation, submission and management.

CONTACT US

Authentic Web helps enterprise teams get and keep a competitive advantage in domain health.

Systems and services designed for brand innovations in the new top level domain era.