

# Selecting a domain name: blunders to avoid

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When it comes to business, the domain name of your site is a critical element of your identity and branding. It is therefore important to take time choosing a domain name.



Making the wrong choice could have detrimental long term consequences on your business. Here are some of the common mistakes you should avoid when selecting a domain name.

## Using the wrong extension

Your choice of a [domain name extension](#) or suffix is very important. Your first choice should be a .com extension since it is the most memorable. If not available, you could consider other top level domains such as .net and .org. Avoid cheap and risky extensions like .co.com or .cc since they are typically linked with spammers. If you have a national business, it would be advisable to use a local domain such as .ie for Ireland and .fr for France.

## Making it too long

Whether you should use [long or short domain](#) names is debatable. However, it is often advised to keep domains as short as possible. A general rule of thumb is that you should not exceed 20 characters. The longer your domain is, the more difficult it will be for people to remember it. To keep your domain name short, it would be advisable to use one word or at most two.

## Using hyphens

Many people opt to [use hyphens](#) when they find that their preferred domain names have already been taken. This is not a good idea for several reasons. Firstly, people are likely to forget the hyphen when typing your domain name, as a result ending up on a different site altogether. Secondly, such a domain name appears unprofessional and could negatively impact the credibility of your business. If you find your desired domain name taken, it would be more advisable to use a different extension rather than insert a hyphen.

## Using numbers incorrectly

One of the biggest mistakes people make when choosing domain names is substituting words with numbers. For instance, someone could choose a domain such as Dance2shape.com or Cake4you.com. However, when people are looking for your site, they are likely to type 'to' and 'for' instead of the numbers. This will mean loss of valuable traffic for your site. If you [must use numbers](#), it should be something like pizza247.com or fitness365.com.

## Having hard-to-spell domains

If a website has a name that is difficult to spell, people are likely to forget it very easily. For example, a domain name like Snickr.com looks trendy but will only end up confusing people. The best policy is therefore to keep it as simple as possible.

## Choosing domains too similar to existing ones

At times, due to ignorance or in an attempt to confuse customers, some people choose domain names that are similar to those of their competitors. For example, someone might register a domain such as twitta.com. However, selecting such a domain name infringes a registered trademark and you are likely to find yourself charged in court. To avoid [trademark infringement](#), be sure to search databases before making a final decision.

## ABOUT CHARLES MBURUGU

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