

Starting a Website? Then Choose Your Domain Registrar Carefully

A domain name is a valuable property of any business or any individual who would like to establish a presence online. It is extremely important to register your domain name carefully and with the right registrar. I would like to share my experience with you and hopefully you can use it to pick a domain registrar that will treat you fairly.

When you set up a website there are two important institutions that you must deal with, first the registrar and secondly the hosting firm. If your hosting firm treats you badly all you have to do is to change the "DNS" settings and move to a new hosting firm where you can upload your files. The process takes only 24-48 hours and involves little disruption.

However, if your domain name registrar mistreats you, you can end up losing your domain name entirely. A registrar is simply a company that has been entrusted to sell domain names to companies and individuals for a certain fee. The fees that are charged vary considerably and the service that the registrars provide also varies quite a bit.

A good price for a dot com name nowadays is about \$10 per year. Beware of someone selling them very cheaply. For example, Yahoo was advertising domains at \$1.98 and \$9.98 per year and now is going to raise the price (July 2008) to \$34.95. Anyone who stocked up on a lot of domain names will be in difficulty.

Yahoo is a big company and they are a problem. Even worse are small companies who actually resell domain names as agents for larger companies. Some of these firms have no contact details (telephone, physical address) and if they go out of business it can be a problem for you.

There are other firms that never notify you when your domain is about to expire. I have had particularly bad experience with Enom and with resellers of Enom domains. The minute your domain name payment is overdue, they shut down your domain (putting up ads instead) and if you wait for more than a month you may lose the domain entirely or have to pay a huge fee to get it back.

So choose a domain name registrar that has proper contact details and that has a good record in notifying its clients about pending expiration and renewal dates. A very solid company that I have used is www.directnic.com. They notify you 90 days, 30 days and one week in advance of renewal dates and do not shut down the domain if you are late. They currently charge \$15 per year.

Another popular domain registrar with a good record is godaddy.com (Although I don't like their website interface which always tries to convince you to buy various services that you may not particularly need).

I would avoid [Enom.com](http://enom.com) and any reseller of Enom and, I am sad to say, Yahoo should also be avoided like the plague! Visit the prospective registrars and see if it is easy to understand their websites. Look at their contact and support information, and if necessary take the help of friends and colleagues who already have websites.

About the Author

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