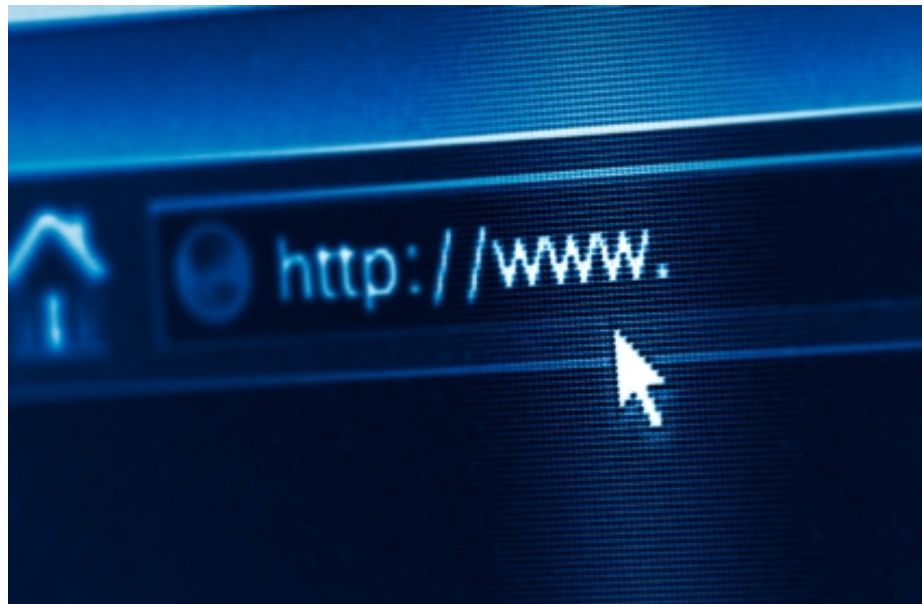Self-Starters **with** *Lynn Terry*
Weekly Tips

Learn the Difference Between Websites that Cost
You Money... and Websites that *MAKE* You Money!

How to Pick the *Perfect* Domain Name

*A brainstorming guide to help you
choose the best domain name
for your online business!*

A guide by Lynn Terry of
www.SelfStartersWeeklyTips.com

IMPORTANT

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**Learn the Difference between Websites that *Cost* You Money
and Websites that <u>*MAKE*</u> You Money! - Open Discussion:
http://www.SelfStartersWeeklyTips.com/members/**

I've Had My Share of BAD Domain Names...

In a recent [interview](#), professional domainer Kenny Goodman asked me about the worst domain name I ever registered. I had to laugh. The very first domain name that I registered (which cost around $70 back in the 90's, by the way!) was... my phone number.

Yes, www.867-5309.com
(not the real number, of course)

It wasn't my personal number, but the phone number of my business. I owned an electronics shop where we specialized in computer builds & repairs, computer training, network game tournaments, and – well, "everything electronics".

My thinking was that regular customers who knew our number would easily remember the domain name. And people who found us online... would then have our phone number handy. Pretty funny, huh? It seemed genius at the time. LOL

I graduated from that mistake and went on to register a number of ridiculous domain names. Such as the long and painful [SelfStartersWeeklyTips.com](#) that is still active today.

After more than a decade in business and working online, it's high time for me to share what I've learned along the way about choosing the perfect domain name...

Finding *Great* Domain Names Can Be Frustrating!

If you've ever sat in front of the [domain search box](#), trying every combination of words you could think of, only to find every possible domain name you can think of is already taken... you know firsthand just how frustrating it can be to find that perfect domain name.

Desperation sets in and you start trying dashes (hyphens), adding numbers, using clever misspellings, or looking at strange domain extensions.

I feel your pain. I've sat in front of that same box myself. That's exactly why I wrote this report. So read on, because you're about to learn everything you need to know to choose awesome domain names... from now on!

Domain Name Registration *(and a Word of Warning!)*

There are a number of domain registrars you can use to register domain names. I use GoDaddy, which is labeled as the *World's #1 Domain Name Registrar,* but you can use the registrar of your choice. Personally I prefer to use only one registrar, and manage all of my domain names in one place.

While I like to keep all of my domains in one place, I never combine domain names and hosting in the same place, or with the same company. I get my domain names from a registrar, and my hosting from a web host.
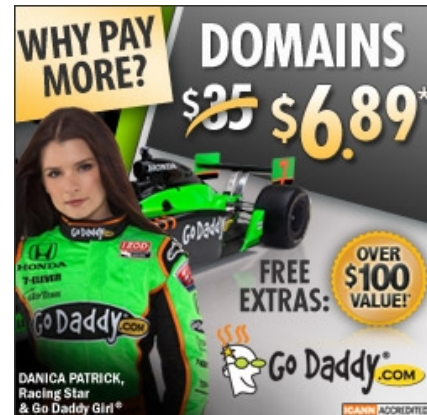
I host my sites & blogs with HostGator, by the way. You'll find my review here that explains why I moved ALL of my sites over.

Often your domain registrar will offer you hosting options, and your host will offer to sell you a domain. Again, you want to do those separately. There are several reasons why, but the main reason is that your host is not a registrar, and your registrar is not a host – sometimes its difficult to get good support for those add-on services.

Another issue you may run into is difficulty in transferring your site or your domain, if you have them both tied into one company. By keeping them separate you retain control over both properties and can easily switch web hosts or registrars without risk or downtime.

Tip: Register your domain name first, then set up your hosting account second. You'll need your domain name when you set up your hosting, which is the reason you want to do it in that order.

Ready to get started? Great! Here we go...

Before you register a domain name, you'll want to put some serious consideration into which name you choose. It can be a royal pain to change it later! While it can be done, you'll end up having to set up complicated redirects, run the risk of losing hard-earned rankings, etc. It pays to get the right domain name from the start...

Are Keywords _Really_ Important in _Your_ Domain Name??

Most people start their domain search with their Primary Keyword Phrase. For example, if you are setting up a one-page salesletter site to sell an ebook about baby shower games, targeting the keyword phrase "baby shower games", you might first think to register BabyShowerGames.com.

Actually, the domain name carries very little weight in the overall search engine ranking criteria.

The main reason that you <u>might</u> want a keyword-rich domain name is because of _the way people will link to your main page_. That's it, really.

Now if you're creating a one-page site on your domain, having your keyword phrase in the domain name IS a plus. But if you are creating a multi-page site or blog on your domain, each page will be optimized for it's own keyword phrase (relevant to the content on that specific page), so a keyword-rich domain is not near as important.

Again though, the domain name itself carries little weight in search engine ranking criteria, compared to other factors such as your off-page optimization. And by that I mean the quality of the inbound links to your domain, and the Anchor Text used in those links.

Anchor Text is simply the text or words that you hyperlink to a URL.

As an example, my blog can be found at http://www.ClickNewz.com Obviously there are no keyword phrases in that domain name. People often link to my blog with Anchor Text like this: ClickNewz or Lynn Terry. For that reason, the main page of my blog (clicknewz.com) ranks very well for both of those terms.

I make it a point to get inbound links to ClickNewz.com with specific anchor text as well – my preferred keyword phrase. So I often link to my blog like this: Internet Marketing Blog – with the Anchor Text "Internet Marketing Blog". As I write this, the main page ranks #5 on Google for "internet marketing blog":

The Anchor Text used in the inbound links that point to a page carries a lot of weight in getting search engine rankings for any given phrase. You simply use that phrase in the Anchor text of links pointing to that page.

To be honest, I haven't even tried very hard to get my blog ranked for "internet marketing blog", so the #5 ranking – even without those keywords in the domain – took very little effort.

Since ClickNewz is a multi-page content site (in this case, a blog), I'm more interested in getting individual pages & posts ranked for specific keyword phrases. Such as this post, which ranks #1 on Google for the phrase "free online business":

As you can see from these two examples, the domain name does not relate to the keyword phrases that the main page, or the post, rank well for in Google. Your rankings have more to do with on-page optimization and the Anchor Text of your inbound links.

Of course, if your domain name does include the Primary Keyword Phrase for the main page on your domain, people are more likely to link to your main page using that phrase as the Anchor Text, which can be a real plus.

There are some theories that an "exact phrase match" domain name can help with your rankings, which is only truly important if you are creating a one-page site or salesletter on your domain. For a video explaining "exact phrase match" as it relates to domains, watch:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wQE7F7d8cY

Free: If you don't quite understand SEO, or Search Engine Optimization (keywords and all that jazz) download the free SEO Fast Start guide by Dan Thies.

Note: I also have free tutorials on Keyword Research that are incredibly helpful.

Which Domain Name Extension Should You Use?

If your niche or your target market is country-specific, you want to register a Country Code Top Level Domain (aka CC-TLD) such as ".co.uk" or ".com.au".

Otherwise, you should choose the appropriate Top Level Domain: .com or .net, or .org for organizations. I always recommend .com over .net for your domain extension as it is most widely used and recognized.

If someone types in your domain by memory, they are most likely going to assume it is a .com (meaning you will lose type in traffic to the .com version of your domain name if you chose .net).

→ The .com domains also hold a higher resale value, should you ever decide to sell your domain or website in the future.

Avoid extensions such as .info or .biz, as they have often been sold super-cheap (and even given away free). This resulted in a lot of junk/spam sites popping up on these extensions, giving them a bad reputation (or low perceived value). There is also some speculation that those extensions may affect the way search engines rank pages on these domains.

Brainstorming _Awesome_ Domain Names

Ideally you want a domain name that is easy to say, remember and spell. You may mention your site to people you meet, or use your domain in: podcasts, webinars, teleseminars, radio interviews – or even in print with offline marketing strategies.

Adding in variables such as hyphens or numbers will work against you in all of these instances. Without scrolling up, would you have remembered my silly phone number domain? … I didn't think so ;-)

Coming up with a *great* domain name (that isn't already taken) takes a little creativity. You may choose to go with something short and punchy, which is best if you are more interested in branding than in keywords. ClickNewz.com is an example of that, and we'll discuss branding briefly later in this report.

Let's go back to our example of BabyShowerGames.com, which is obviously already taken, and assume you're interested in a memorable keyword-rich domain name.

Instead of hyphens or weird extensions, I like to add in *action words*.

The word(s) you use should relate specifically to what you intend to offer at your domain. In our example of selling an info-product about baby shower games, you might add in descriptive words and/or action words, such as:

- BabyShowerGamesGuide.com
- BuyBabyShowerGamesGuide.com
- SuperFunBabyShowerGames.com
- BabyShowerGamesHelp.com
- DownloadBabyShowerGames.com
- BabyShowerGamesList.com
- ShopBabyShowerGames.com
- GetBabyShowerGamesFast.com

The key is to choose words that further describe your offer, which will attract ideal visitors – or your exact target market. Even better than random action words is to choose a "long tail keyword phrase" that contains your primary keyword phrase. For example:

- FunBabyShowerGames.com
- UniqueBabyShowerGames.com
- PrintableBabyShowerGames.com
- BabyShowerGamesToPlay.com
- PopularBabyShowerGames.com

(all of these phrases are searched for across the major search engines)

Using this method will give you even more search traffic opportunities, and you can still add an action or descriptive word at the beginning or end to find a domain name that is available.

⟶ Go back to your chosen keyword phrase, and dig deeper in your keyword research tool. Find longer phrases that contain your original keyword phrase for a starting point with domain name brainstorming!

To illustrate this example further, let's say you need a domain for your new site where you sell garden fountains as an affiliate. GardenFountains.com is obviously already taken, so you start looking for creative alternatives.

Using WordTracker's Free Keyword Tool (or any keyword tool), research your primary phrase (garden fountains) to find a long tail phrase that fits:

Find keywords that include...

...the following keyword(s)

| garden fountains | Hit Me |

Adult Filter:

Remove offensive

Why not try the Keywords tool free for 7 days?

Take the Free Trial

garden fountains 2,686 searches (top 100 only)

Keyword	Searches (?)
1 garden fountains (search)	1,190
2 garden water fountains (search)	371
3 outdoor garden fountains (search)	255
4 solar powered garden fountains (search)	192
5 garden statuary fountains (search)	78
6 solar garden fountains (search)	66
7 outdoor garden fountains wall (search)	63
8 resin garden fountains (search)	48

You want to keep your keyword phrase in it's orignal order, which is called "exact match". Sine any garden fountain is likely going to be used outdoors, that seems like a good phrase to consider.

Of course, you find that OutdoorGardenFountains.com is also taken. Drats!

What you want to do is click on "search" or find even longer phrases that contain this new phrase. Unfortunately there weren't any good general phrases for this particular search, that weren't too descriptive for our site idea. You would find "menards outdoor garden fountains" or "asian outdoor garden fountains" - but you're offering more than that on this site...

This is when you start adding in action words or descriptive words. Since we are selling products on this site, we'll start with the obvious:

BuyOutdoorGardenFountains.com

And just check this out...

Instant Domain Search

This is a free service that instantly checks .com, .net, and .org domain name availability. We automatically apply a $7.49 coupon for .com names when you click on Go Daddy's link. When you click any link, we'll open a new window so you don't lose your search.

buyoutdoorgardenfountains	Search

.com is available!	.net is available!	.org is available!

See how easy that was? :-)

Of course, by the time you read this report, that particular domain name may be taken. But you can use the same process to come up with great domain names of your own!

Creative Action Words & Modifiers

Here are some idea-starters to get your creativity flowing:

- buy
- order
- shop
- get
- deal
- online
- download
- request
- search
- find
- now
- today
- discover
- save
- research
- join
- special
- free
- achieve
- new
- uncover
- eliminate
- increase
- sale
- quick
- easy
- simple
- fast
- great
- learn
- try
- cool
- secret

Remember – you want to choose descriptive words, or action words, that are specific to what you are offering on your domain. Consider the call-to-action on the main page of your domain, and let that be the starting point for exploring potential action words to use IN your domain.

There are still A LOT of great domain names left!

Now let's really prove a point, and take something super-competitive that would normally just be near impossible to get a decent domain name for... like "web hosting". First, we'll look at the keyword phrases for our niche...

	web hosting 43,661 searches (top 100 only)	Want more *web hosting* keywords?
	Keyword	**Searches (?)**
1	web hosting (search)	7,334
2	free web hosting (search)	3,315
3	cheap web hosting (search)	1,962
4	web hosting services (search)	1,382
5	web site hosting (search)	1,328
6	small business web hosting (search)	1,007
7	best web hosting (search)	987
8	web hosting companies (search)	785
9	affordable web hosting (search)	783
10	business web hosting (search)	661
11	free web site hosting (search)	660
12	web hosting reviews (search)	627
13	web hosting company (search)	589
14	web hosting service (search)	527
15	web hosting directory (search)	519

We can tell by looking at the keyword phrases that people are researching their options. They are looking for services, companies, directory – they want to see what's out there, and compare the results to pick the best web host.

As a hosting affiliate, you can create a site that features the top web hosts, and offers comparisons and reviews to help visitors choose the best web host for their specific needs.

Or you may just create a content-rich website and monetize it with contextual advertising. This can be profitable in some super-competitive niches.

Regardless, you need a great domain name.

Just by adding a descriptive word to some of the keyword phrases in the list above, I came up with 3 awesome domain names that are currently available (again, as I write this)...

SearchWebHostingServices [Search]

| .com is available! | .net is available! | .org is available! |

GetAffordableWebHosting [Search]

| .com is available! | .net is available! | .org is available! |

FindWebHostingCompanies [Search]

| .com is available! | .net is available! | .org is available! |

You'll notice I didn't choose random words, but descriptive words. Words that are specific to the website, and to the *intent* of the ideal visitor.

It's really not that difficult, and there are plenty of great options if you just get a little creative. So drop the hyphens, the weird extensions, the odd misspellings, and go register a keyword-rich domain name that makes sense... and adds a little credibility to your site & business! ;)

Tip: If you have multiple websites you can brand all of your sites with the same word. I have done this with several groups of domains myself, and it's a great way to create a sense of branding, and also have keyword-rich domain names.

For example, using the word "next" (not a good word, just an example) so you might have: NextBabyShowerGames.com, NextBabyShowerFavors.com, etc.

⟶ This works backwards as well – meaning, it's a great way to find new niches when you are researching buying markets or commercial niches to target.

I often start by researching action words like: buy, order, online, shipping, shop, shopping, best, deal, comparison, review, etc. By researching these words, you'll find loads of niches and website ideas that are based around a buying market.

For more on that topic, see: Keyword Modifiers

On Using *Names* in Domains...

People often ask me about using product names, company names, or even a person's name in a domain name. My advice is this:

Never create a website or a business around one product, one merchant/company, or one person.

Instead, create websites around topic or markets.

The reason is because products go off the market, product names change, the merchant may close shop or close down their affiliate program. You'll be limiting your profit potential, and your site may become outdated very quickly.

As for domain names, it's best not to use names or trademarks in them even if your registrar allows you to register that domain. You run the risk of losing all of the time & money you invest in that domain, including: rankings, traffic, income. The person that name belongs to can have you shut down and leave you with nothing to show for all your hard work – so it's best not to chance it.

"Do as I say, not as I do."

I've been known to register domain names that contain a product or person's name – or their trademark/brand. I shouldn't, because I really *(seriously)* dislike it when people do that with my name or brand.

I don't develop sites on those domains. I generally use them only for domain name redirects, and redirect the domain to their site anyway (as an affiliate). Still, I don't recommend that you do that... Especially if you're not at a point in your business where you can afford the risk (lawsuit, loss of revenue, etc).

Cool Domain Name Brainstorming Tools

I use http://www.InstantDomainSearch.com as a quick and easy way to check domain name availability. Other tools that can help you with your domain name brainstorming include:

http://www.PsychicWhois.com
Very fast, brings up lots of creative options!

Domain Name Wizard – garden fountains

Font size
A **A**

The following table shows results from the search for gardenfountains. If your domain is free, you can select it or right click for more options. Try hovering over the word 'wizard' for more options or see the table below.

Domain	.COM	.US	Alternatives	Thesaurus
gardenfountains	Taken [13May11]	Taken [27Jul13]	Wizard	garden fountain s

Change which Top Level Domains (e.g. .com, .us) are displayed

The following table shows the different tools to find available domain names (with example results shown on the right). Click on the link to see that page

Page	Example results
Domain Name Search	gardenfountains, garden-fountains
Cool Domain Names	coolgardenfountains, okgardenfountains, absolutegardenfountains, acegardenfountains, highgardenfountains, badgardenfountains, goodgardenfountains, chillgardenfountains, chilledgardenfountains, dandygardenfountains
Business Domain Names	businessgardenfountains, actiongardenfountains, activitygardenfountains, affairgardenfountains, careergardenfountains, commercegardenfountains, commercialgardenfountains, enterprisegardenfountains, companygardenfountains, corporationgardenfountains
Premium Domain Names	premiergardenfountains, capitalgardenfountains, cardinalgardenfountains, championgardenfountains, chiefgardenfountains, firstgardenfountains, foremostgardenfountains, frontgardenfountains, headgardenfountains, highestgardenfountains

http://www.domainnamesoup.com/domain-name-wizard.php

Domain Name Soup
Super fast, and gives you some very creative ideas!

Domain Exposer - Domain Name Search Tool

http://www.DomainExposer.com/
Gives you groups of words to combine with your keyword phrase such as verbs, adjectives, colors, and more. A great way to brainstorm a variety of options!

Domain Names & Branding

Isn't it ironic that most people bang their head against the wall trying to come up with a good keyword-rich domain name so that they rank well on... Google, Yahoo or Bing.

Yeah.

Even the search experts themselves, that run this whole game, don't have a single keyword in their own domain name. What does that tell you? Maybe they're on to something. ;-)

How about Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Stickam, ClickBank, Amazon... the list goes on and on.

There's definitely a time and a place for branding. If your business or site has the potential to catch on and go viral, to become a household name, branding should be your top priority.

As I showed early on in this report, lack of keywords in a domain name is not going to hurt your potential for great search engine rankings. Each page on your site can easily rank well for it's own keyword phrase with proper optimization – regardless of the domain name.

A great place to brainstorm odd or interesting words and word combinations is in the online Urban Dictionary. For example, just by browsing the letter "Z":

http://www.urbandictionary.com/popular.php?character=Z

… we find that the word "zaya" is defined as: a 10/10 or perfect girl, british slang. There are all kinds of ideas around that one! ZayaChat.com is available, FindingZaya.com is available, etc.

This can be a great place to find random combinations of words for super cool blog names. Like UberliciousWallflower.com or GadgetProps.com or Marathoning.com (for the person who watches an entire season of a TV series, consumes tons of movies or television in one sitting, and wants to blog about it)...

The ideas are out there. And something cool will always be better than yourname.com. Both for branding and for anonymity. That's why Heather Armstrong holds one of the top personal blogs at Dooce.com... instead of HeatherArmstrong.com

Tip: Trademark your brand! If you choose to go with a "buzz word" or a cool name to brand your entire business, be sure to speak to a professional and get your name trademarked.

Have You Registered YourName.com ?

Even if you don't plan to create a website or blog at YourName.com, it pays to go ahead and register it before someone else does. I made that mistake and missed out – there's a photographer in Missouri that owns LynnTerry.com.

While you're at it, go ahead and register the names of your children and your spouse. This is a great place to put your photo, links to your social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter, and of course any websites you want associated with your real name). It's called a "one page".

It's also a great place to link to your Resume too, if you're career searching or open to being contacted with new options.

Find out if YourName.com is Still Available!

How to Set Up Your Domain Name

Your domain name is like your business address. But if there is nothing at that address, nobody will be able to find you. You also need a hosting account, which is like your storefront or office. You'll point your domain name to a hosting account, and your website and files will reside within that account.

Once you register your new domain name, you'll need to point it to your hosting account.

I use HostGator to host my websites and [WordPress blogs](#) because they make it easy to install, and they have great online & phone support. They are also very inexpensive at less than $10/month for unlimited domains, sites and/or blogs on that one account.

Use [this link](#) then use the coupon code "wordpress". That will give you the first month free (or, for a penny – which is about as close to free as you can get).

Next, check your Inbox for the account details for your new hosting account. Inside this email you'll find 2 nameservers. Keep the email open and go back to GoDaddy (or the registrar you used).

Log in to your account, find your new domain name, and edit the nameservers to the two shown in your HostGator email.

○ I want to **park** my domains.
○ I want to **forward** my domains.
○ I have a **hosting account** with these domains.
● I have **specific nameservers** for my domains.

Nameserver 1: *   **Nameserver 2: ***

NS151.HOSTGATOR.COM   NS152.HOSTGATOR.COM

It can take up to 72 hours for your domain name to point to your new hosting account, so you want to do these steps right away.

Bonus Tip: Domain Name Forwarding

I often register domain names to use in place of long, ugly affiliate links. This makes it very easy to give affiliate links when you are talking to someone over the phone or in person, or when you are doing podcasts and webinars. They also look better than plain affiliate links, and tend to get a higher click-through rate.

For example, I recommend a guide by Darren Rowse who is known as "Problogger". My affiliate link to Darren's guide is a long and ugly "ejunkie" link. So I registered the domain name http://www.ProbloggerWorkbook.com which looks and sounds much better.

You can set up Domain Forwarding very easily within GoDaddy (and I assume most other registrars). Here is a screenshot of my domain forwarding for that particular domain:

Forwarding and Masking

Forward PROBLOGGERWORKBOOK.COM to: _Preview_

https:// ▾ | www.e-junkie.com/ecom/gb.php?ii=258839&c=ib

☑ Update my DNS settings to support this change. (Recommended)

If you click on the link you'll see the forward in action:
http://www.ProbloggerWorkbook.com

Another benefit to domain forwarding is that if that affiliate link ever changes, like if Darren moves his affiliate program to ClickBank, I can simply update my forwarding URL and all of my links on the web will continue to work. This is much easier than trying to track down every instance of my affiliate link and change them manually all over the web.

(Again, I don't recommend you register a domain with someone's name or brand. Like I said earlier, "do as I say, not as I do" -there's just too much risk involved...)

No More Crappy Domain Names!

Use this guide to come up with creative new ideas for all of your future domains.

Remember: keep it simple, make it relative, and for goodness sake – make sure we can remember it AND spell it!

Action List:

- Check Domain Name availability at GoDaddy
- Set up a Hosting Account: HostGator (coupon code: wordpress)
- Checklist: How To Start A WordPress Blog

Best,

Lynn Terry

p.s. If you need help, or have any questions along the way, you can find me on Twitter @LynnTerry. If you can ask it in 140 characters or less, I'll answer it! :)

Be sure to join my discussion forum as well. It's a great community, and a good place to brainstorm ideas, get technical help, find the resources you need along the way... and meet other super cool people that work online!

Join us at: http://www.SelfStartersWeeklyTips.com/members/
Crappy Domain Name... Awesome Community!

I would love to hear your thoughts on this guide! You can leave a comment at:
http://www.clicknewz.com/2421/choosing-a-domain-name/