



DOMAINS

Web terms 101: the difference between a URL, domain, website, and more.



When you decide to bring your business or brand online, you're going to start seeing a lot of terms like domain name, website, URL, domain registrar, and more. While they all are related to having a website, they don't all mean the same thing. Luckily, they're simple to explain, and we've spelled out the basics right here. Once you discover the differences between each term below, you'll be ready to make your way around the web with confidence.

A domain name, website, and URL are not the same thing.

Domain name

Simply put, a domain name (or just a domain) is the name of a website. It's what comes after "@" in an email address, or after "www." in a web address. If someone asks how to find you online, what you tell them is usually your domain name.



The first step in creating an online presence is purchasing a domain name. Anyone can purchase a domain name by going to a domain host or registrar (see below), finding a name no one else is using, and paying an annual fee to own it. You can also choose from various domain name endings (or “TLDs”), like .com, .coffee, or .photography. If you’re thinking about buying a domain name, [check out our tips on how to come up with a good name](#).

URL

A URL (aka “Universal Resource Locator”) is a complete web address used to find a particular web page. While the domain is the name of the website, a URL will lead to any one of the pages within the website. Every URL contains a domain name, as well as other components needed to locate the specific page or piece of content.

Examples of URLs:

<http://www.google.com>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/umami>

<https://www.youtube.com/feed/trending>

Website

Though one leads to the other, buying a domain name doesn’t mean you have a website. A domain is the name of a website, a URL is how to find a website, and a website is what people see and interact with when they get there. In other words, when you buy a domain, you have purchased the name for your site, but you still need to build the site.

In digital terms, a website is a collection of content, often on multiple pages, that is grouped together under the same domain. You can think of it like a store, where the domain is the store name, the URL is the store address, and the website is the actual store, with shelves full of products and a cash register.

Luckily, building a website is much easier, faster, and more economical than building a store or office. Today, there are many great companies who make it possible for anyone to build and customize a beautiful website in just a few hours — and most don’t require any knowledge of HTML

- A domain name (such as [yoursite.com](#))
- A domain registrar and host (such as [Google Domains](#))
- A do-it-yourself website builder, like [SquareSpace](#) or [Wix](#), or a web designer
- Digital content — the text, images, videos, and other media that visitors will see when they come to your site.

Domain registrar

A domain registrar is a company that sells domain names that aren't currently owned and are available for you to register. A simple search on a domain registrar's page should tell you if the domain name you want is available and how much it will cost. Most of these companies also offer domain hosting.

DNS host

A DNS host is a company that manages your domain's configuration (also known as DNS resource records) that makes sure your domain name points to your website and email. Most domain hosts also offer domain name registration.

Domain registrars should offer WHOIS privacy for free.

WHOIS Directory

The WHOIS directory is a public listing of domain names and the people or organizations associated with each name. There are many free online WHOIS directories. You can use the directory to find domain owners and IP addresses, as well as mailing addresses and telephone numbers.



Well done! Now you know the difference between basic web terms, and how they all play a part in creating a web presence for businesses and brands. At Google Domains, we want everyone to feel informed, secure, and empowered to grow their business online.

Ready to take the first step to get online? [Start searching for your domain name with Google Domains.](#)

Talk to us

We're working hard to offer our customers the best domain experience possible, and we welcome your input, questions, and feedback.

CONTACT US BY PHONE, CHAT, OR EMAIL

Stay up to date with Google Domains

Send me periodic emails with product updates, special offers, and insights.

Please enter your email address

SIGN UP

Business essentials

[Business Solutions](#)

[Google Ads](#)

[G Suite](#)

[Google Analytics](#)

[More business products](#)