

the latest on



annual report '09



AfiliasSM



executive summary

In 2009, .INFO continued to build upon its strong track record, leading the market for new TLDs with over 5 million registrations. After 8 years of concerted effort, .INFO is the undisputed most successful new TLD launched to date and its experience provides many lessons applicable to the launch of new domains to come.

Indications of success are found across many dimensions. For example, .INFO continues to gain penetration into the registrar marketplace, now available with distributors that support over 90% of volume in the worldwide domain name industry.

.INFO is delivering its mission to provide Internet users with a fast and intuitive way to access information online with over 70% of .INFOs resolving to a Web site, in line with industry averages. .INFO is home to more than a million dedicated Web sites, and millions more .INFO domains deliver other useful content. .INFO's great sites are being highlighted through Web and social media projects and even have their own annual awards program. In addition, .INFOs are being made safer than ever by the establishment and vigorous enforcement of an aggressive Domain Anti-Abuse Policy, which has effectively discouraged criminals from using .INFO for phishing and malware exploits and resulted in overall safety improvements on the Web for Internet users in general.

.INFO is now a well established part of the Internet with global reach and value. It's rise to the number 7 rank among all 270+ top level domains has been driven by a combination of:

- 1) its value as an intuitive string with broad appeal;
- 2) near universal registrar support;
- 3) consistent deployment of effective registry programs;
- 4) a reliable, secure and standards-based technology foundation supported with continuous investment; and
- 5) support from an experienced team with a track record of success in the ICANN community.

Nevertheless, in an intensifying competitive environment, .INFO is not resting on its laurels; rather it will continue to improve every aspect of its operations in a manner consistent with its status as a global leader.

.INFO

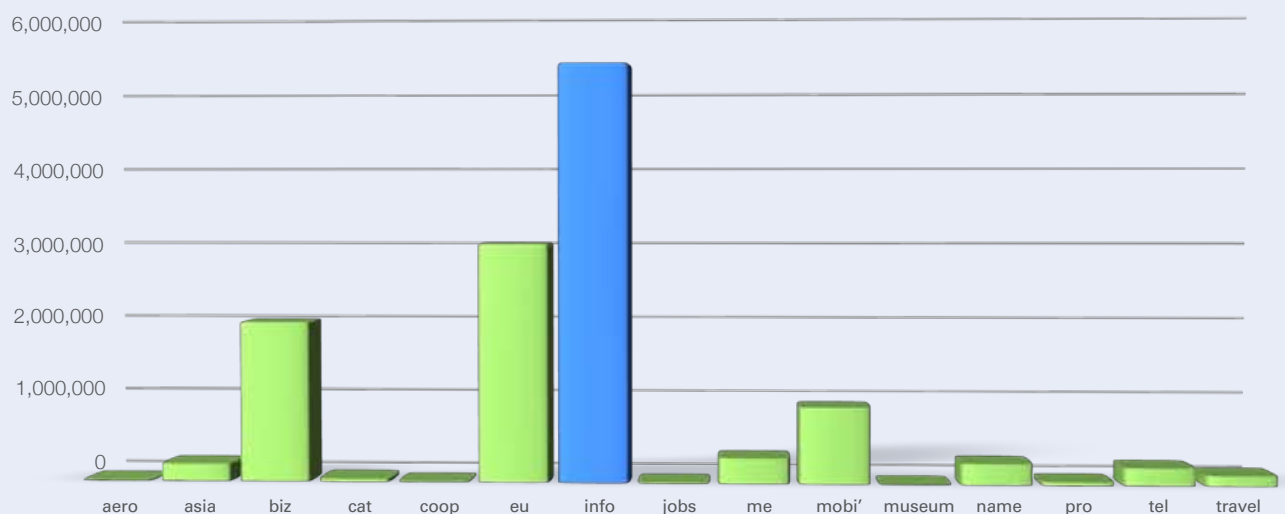
the first—and most successful—new TLD

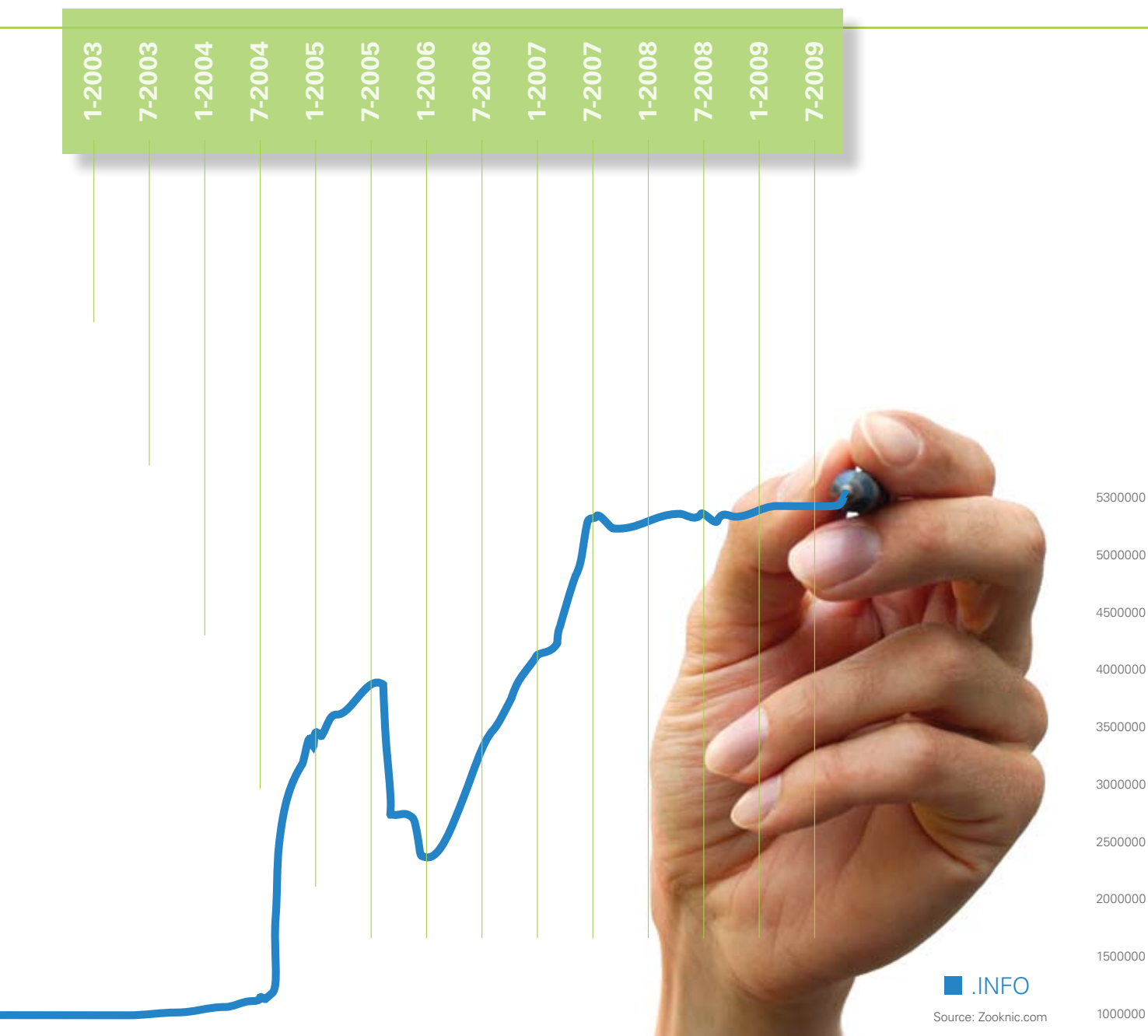
In 2009, .INFO celebrated its 8th birthday on the Internet. Officially launched to the public for open registration on October 1, 2001, .INFO has proven itself as the largest and most successful new top-level domain (new TLD) introduced on the Internet to date.

As we look forward to the potential introduction of new TLDs by ICANN, it is important to take into consideration .INFO's experience in the marketplace as a new TLD and the amount of effort that is required by registry operators and registrars to make new TLDs successful. .INFO's success has been based on not just the fundamental utility of the string, but on 8 years of aggressive marketing and sales programs that have enabled registrars to offer .INFO as an attractive alternative for sharing information online.

.COM continues to maintain a dominant market share, accounting for over 40% of all domains under management. All other gTLDs combined (including .INFO), account for about 16% of the total domain name industry. ccTLDs such as .IN (India's country code) account for the rest.

Since the first introduction of new TLDs to the Root in 2001 when .INFO launched, all new TLDs combined now account for a total of less than 7% of the total domain name industry. This underscores the difficulty of generating registrant and Internet user demand for new TLDs, which must overcome both low/no awareness and the suspicions of an increasingly wary Internet user population. Eight years in, .INFO has successfully overcome these obstacles, and now accounts for over 40% of the volume for all the new TLDs introduced so far.





.INFO Volume Trend

It is also important to note that, since the launch of .INFO, Afilias has helped introduce more new TLDs than any other provider. These include .mobi, .asia, and .me. Today, Afilias supported TLDs are 54% of the new TLD marketplace.

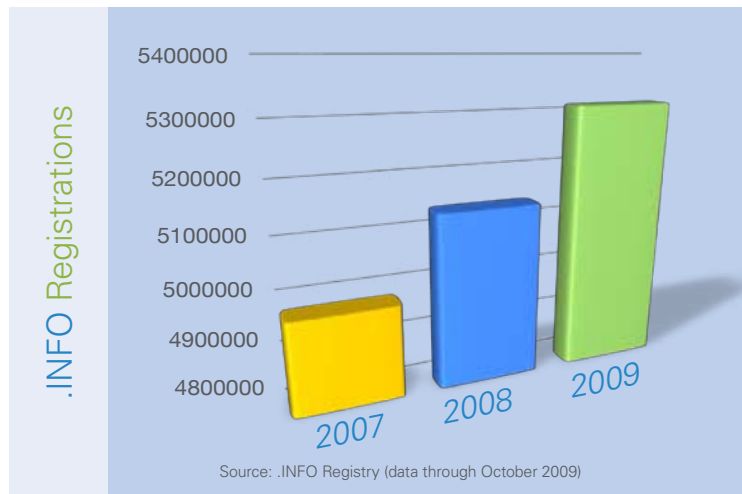
The experience of .INFO, originally a “proof of concept” TLD, shows that launching a new TLD is not an effort to be taking lightly. While .INFO has inherent and intuitive appeal

for sharing information, which we see echoed by .INFO registrants around the globe, .INFO has only reached its level of success through consistent and aggressive marketing and sales initiatives and the dedication of a highly skilled group of accredited registrars. Indeed, Afilias’ registrar relationships coupled with its reliable and secure technology have been the keys to the success of more than half of the new TLD marketplace to date.

registration trends & statistics

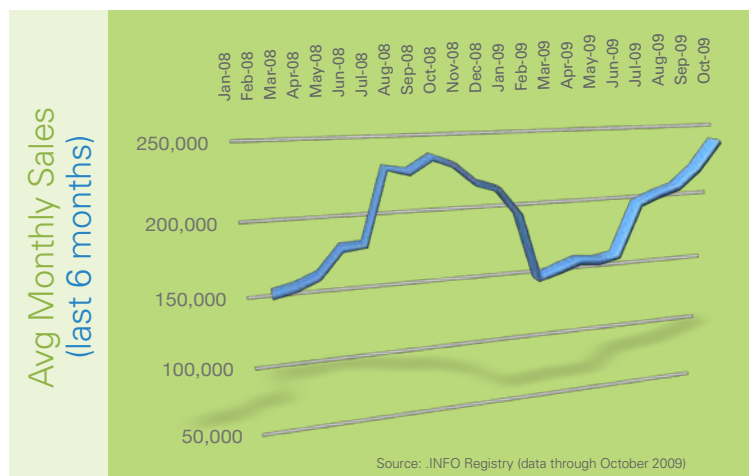
.INFO Registrations Indicates Continued Steady Growth

As of October 31, 2009 there were 5,311,013 .INFO domains registered in the .INFO registry. Through October, Registry data indicates a steady growth already on par with 2008 levels, even before the year has concluded.



New Sales Indicates an Upward Trend

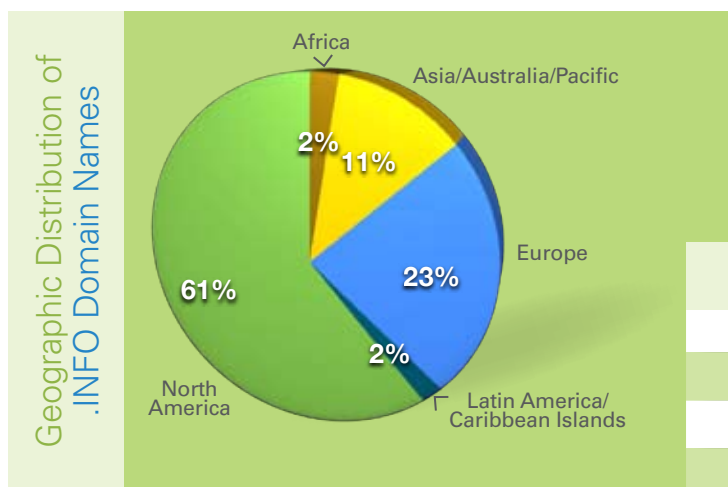
.INFO's monthly sales activity also indicates a strong business. While the average 6 month rolling averages reflects seasonal ups and downs, .INFO sales in general show a steady upward trend through 2009.



North America Dominates Geographic Distribution

As a thick registry, .INFO is able to track registrations by the registrant country, enabling detailed geographic analysis. North American ownership of .INFO domains has grown to 61% of .INFO's registration base. Both the US and Canada are among the top five countries worldwide. Europe now accounts for 23% of registrations, and the remaining three of the top five countries: Germany, UK, and France. Asia, with its

rapidly increasing Internet usage, has gained market share and now holds 11% of total registrations. Japan and China are quickly strengthening their numbers and are climbing the list of top country markets for .INFO domains. Japan currently holds the number six spot and China number nine. The Latin American regional distribution has remained steady since last year at 2%.

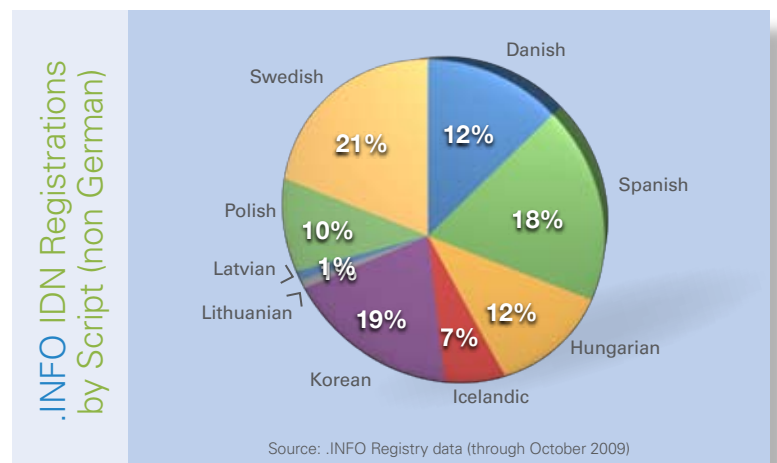


Top Countries of Registration for .INFO Domains	
RANK	COUNTRY
1	United States
2	Germany
3	United Kingdom
4	France
5	Canada

Source: .INFO Registry data (through October 2009)

German still Dominates IDN Registrations

.INFO first launched Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) registrations in 2004 with the launch of the German (DE) script. Since then, Afiliat has added nine additional scripts making .INFO IDNs widely available. The total number of IDNs in the .INFO Registry today is nearly 26,000. .INFO IDN domains are almost entirely owned by non-US registrants (96%). The German script (DE) continues to be the most popular IDN script available with over 21,000 registrations. Others are shown on the chart at the right.



Source: .INFO Registry data (through October 2009)

.INFO Registrations Trend with Current Events

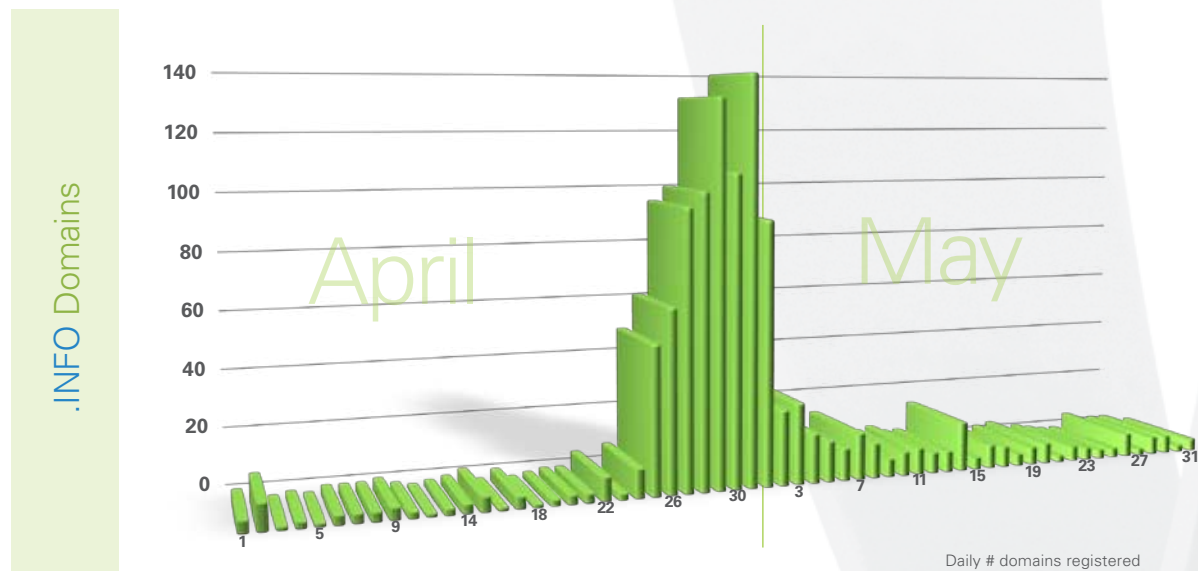
A number of major events have shaped news coverage over 2009. Similarly, Afilius has seen these events shape .INFO registrations and interest in specific names.

This spring, the world was captivated by news surrounding the outbreak of the novel H1N1 flu virus, otherwise known as “Swine Flu.” Media attention about this health incident peaked at the end of April 2009 as an official state of emergency was declared worldwide as cases and casualties climbed.

As expected, Internet users were hungry for information about H1N1 Swine Flu—and turned to .INFO sites to find it.

As a result, registrations of .INFO names tracked closely with interest in the flu. In total, between April 1 and May 30, nearly a thousand domains containing the string ‘swine flu’, ‘flu’ or ‘h1n1’ were registered in the .INFO registry. 600 of these domains, or 61%, were registered in the United States.

Registration of .INFO domains containing the strings ‘flu’ ‘swine flu’ or ‘h1n1’ began in earnest on April 25, the day when : 1) the World Health Organization called an emergency meeting to discuss the outbreak; and 2) a single New York City school reported over 100 students with flu symptoms. After this date, registrations continue to climb peaking on April 29th, the day the first US casualty was reported.



with the string ‘swine flu,’ ‘flu’ or ‘h1n1’ registered April - May 2009

Source: .INFO Registry 2009

.INFO has also been the “go-to” domain for information about the big financial issues faced this year. Nearly 1300 ‘tax’ related domains were registered between January and May of 2009, joining the more than 8000 other ‘tax’ related .INFO domains that existed in the .INFO registry by the start of the US tax season.

Registrations with the words “Stimulus” and “Bailout” spiked in February 2009 just after the new U.S. presidential inauguration and the approval of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) .

These trends bode well for the .INFO domain as the public continues to turn to .INFO to both find and communicate information on important news events and current event topics.

High 2nd Time Renewals Indicate a Strong Future for .INFO

.INFO domains continue to have a strong track record of renewals. In particular, .INFO's rate of second renewals, when a registrant renews their domain for the second time, averages around 80%. This indicates a healthy future for a steady continued base of business within the .INFO domain.

Over 1 Million Unique .INFO Sites Are Available on the Web

Based upon analysis provided by Pegasus Consulting, an independent consultancy that performs domain name analysis, over 71% of .INFO domains were "active" as of the end of June 2009. This means that nearly 4 million .INFO names resolve to a Web site on the Internet.

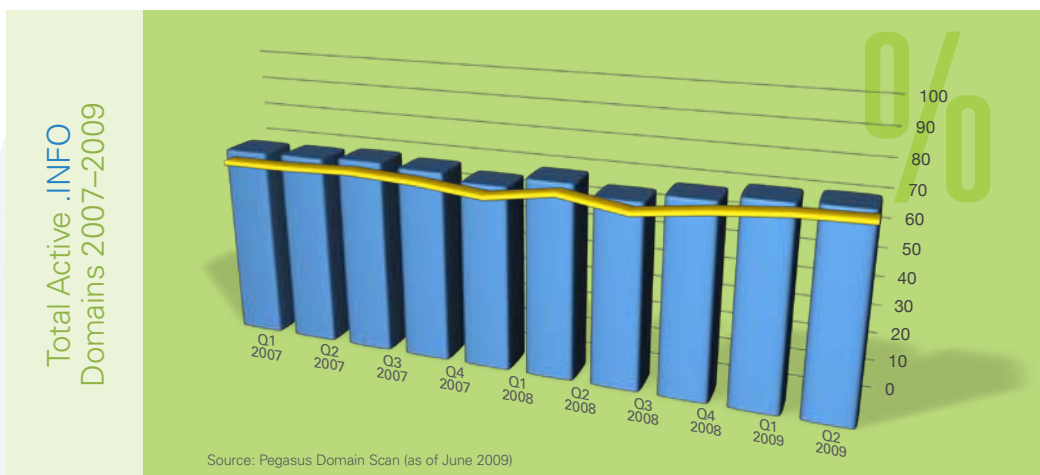
Importantly, over 1,000,000 .INFO domains are live, dedicated Web sites with apparent unique content. Another 3 million .INFO domains redirect or refer Internet users to non-INFO sites for the content they are searching for.

The percentage of .INFO domains that are "active" has been fairly steady over the last three years averaging around 70% of total registrations, consistent with industry averages for established domains. Hence, as the TLD has grown, so have the total number of active sites.

.INFO Site Content Analysis

DOMAIN STATE	%
Dedicated Sites	19.30%
Referral (links to other sites)	14%
Redirected (to another TLD)	35.80%
Parked (e.g.: "for sale")	2.70%
Total Active Sites	71.80%
Inactive and Not Found Sites	28.20%
Total	100%

Source: Pegasus Domain Scan (as of June 2009)



Since 2007, the average percentage of .INFO sites that are referring to monetization sites has also been in decline as Pay-Per-Click (PPC) has given way to more direct means of conveying visitors to the information they seek.

We have also seen the trend on .INFO "dedicated, unique content" sites stay relatively steady since 2008, indicating a strong, renewable base of business.

.INFO Prominent in the Domain Aftermarket

The general economic slowdown has weakened the overall secondary market, where already registered or reserved domains often change ownership through an auction or other process. This weakness has affected both the volume of sales and the value of those transactions. Despite this, .INFO domains remain highly sought after and regularly change hands for many times their original registration value.

In 2009 through September, according to DNJournal.com, over 185 aftermarket sales of .INFO domains were recorded at a total valuation of over \$500,000. On average, these .INFOs sold for \$2800 each, many times their original registration price (which is often less than \$10.00).

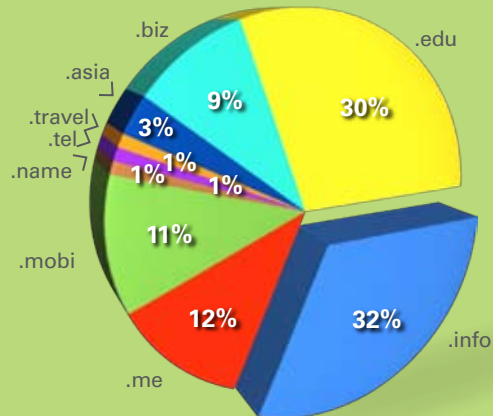
The top aftermarket sales

DOMAIN NAME	SOLD FOR	in 2009 were:
dubai.info	\$35,000	
seo.info	\$21,930	
tagesgeld.info	\$16,905	
bodybuilding.info	\$13,500	
trading.info	\$10,374	

While .INFO values remain below the top selling .com names in the aftermarket, the consistency of .INFO's aftermarket sales provides further evidence that the domain is well recognized as an established and valued TLD.

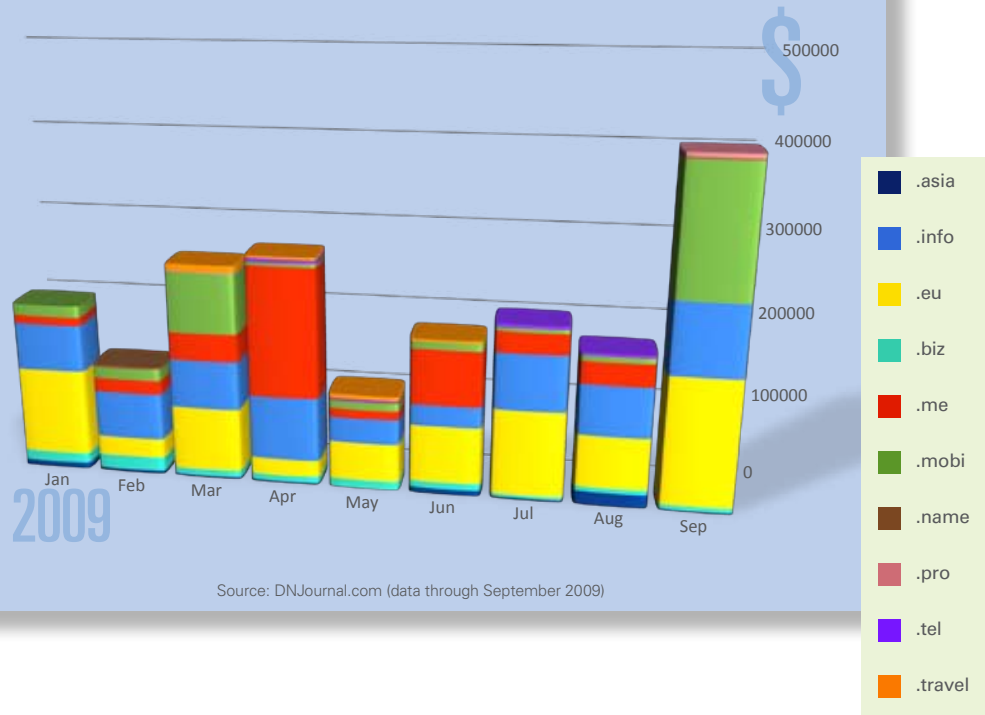
Relative to other new TLDs being sold in the aftermarket, .INFO continues to maintain a healthy share of aftermarket sales for new TLDs. As of September 2009 data from DNJournal, .INFO accounted for 32%, the highest share, of all new TLD sales across the aftermarket.

Aftermarket Sales of New TLDs
(#, 2009 thru Sept)



Source: DNJournal.com (data through September 2009)

Aftermarket Sales of New TLDs (\$, 2009 thru Sept)

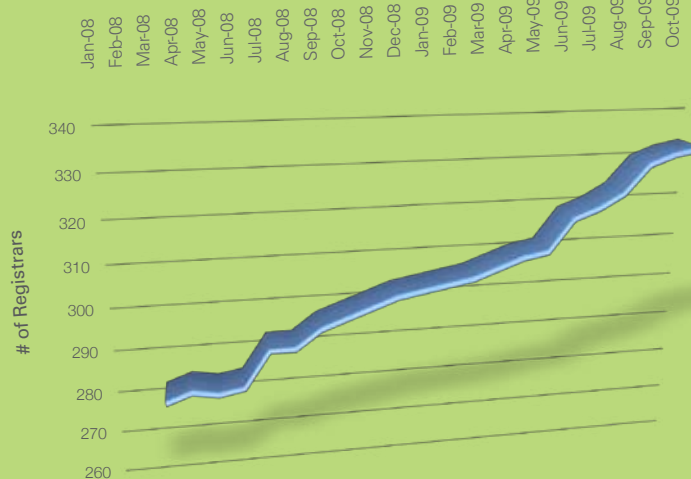


.INFO is Readily Available Through the Worldwide Registrar Marketplace

The number of ICANN accredited registrars authorized to sell .INFO domains continued to grow, increasing by 9% over 2008 levels by October 2009. In total, there are currently 334 ICANN accredited registrars that are authorized to sell .INFO domains. In fact, totaling the share of the domain

name marketplace reported at Webhosting.info for all .INFO registrars, .INFO registrars account for well over 90% of the worldwide market for domain names, making .INFO readily available to any registrant around the globe.

Growth in .INFO Accredited Registrars



.INFO

news & milestones

.INFO Scores With New Web Site & Social Media Identities

Throughout 2009, Afilias focused on making information about the .INFO domain more easily accessible by the Internet public and allowing individuals to share their support and interest in .INFO domains.

In 2009, .INFO added Facebook and Twitter profiles which keep viewers up



to date on the latest .INFO news, statistics, and photos and allows them to post their own comments about great .INFO's in use. These profiles also enable users to track updates on the .INFO "Deals Page" (see next).

.INFO Shares Registrar Specials On .INFO Names In Real Time

In July 2009, Afilias launched a new 'Deals' page on the INFO.INFO site. The 'Deals' page was added to the info.info Web site to provide one location to view registrar special promotions on .INFO domain names. The new service aggregates .INFO Authorized Registrar special offers and sales onto one page on the .INFO Web site. This service was added to allow registrars a place to post their special offers, and to provide an easier way for people who are interested in purchasing .INFO domain names to find them. A .INFO Deals widget is also available for Facebook and iGoogle users to provide easier and quicker ways to get information on the latest deals.

This feed populates to both Facebook and Twitter. Bargain shoppers now rely on this information to find the best current deals on .INFO.

.INFO Directory Makes Finding .INFO Sites Easy

The .INFO Directory is a The .INFO Directory (www.info.info/directory) is a resource for people who want to both submit and search .INFO sites. The Directory features over 170 .INFO sites that were all submitted by the site's owners. Visitors to the Directory can search .INFO sites by using a search bar or by browsing through nineteen different categories of sites.

In September 2009 Afilias announced a new ".INFO Site Rater" for the Directory. The ".INFO Site Rater" allows visitors to the Directory to rate the sites on a scale from one to five stars. The site's star rating is displayed to all visitors to the Directory and the top ten highest rated sites are featured on a "Top 10 .INFO's" page. Through the use of these ratings, visitors to the Directory can now easily view the best .INFO sites as rated by the users.

2009 .INFO Awards Selects the Best .INFO Site of 2009 - thueringen.info

This year Afilias conducted its 3rd annual .INFO Awards program to recognize the best .INFO Web sites from around the globe. The Awards program was conducted in Germany for two years and was so popular it was expanded worldwide in 2009. Afilias received over fifty entries from eighteen countries, highlighting .INFO's global appeal and adoption.

A panel of judges with experience in the fields of Web site design and media were assembled to produce a short list of sites from the submissions. The 2009 panel of judges included: Dominik Grollman – Editor in Chief of Internet World Business (Germany), Peter Prestipino – Editor in Chief of Website Magazine, Gautam Chatur – Senior Director at Qorvis Communications, Michael Stephanblome – Managing Director of AdJug UK, Katy Tafoya – Editor of ConstantChatter.com, and Philipp Grabensee – Chairman of the Afilias Board of Directors.



.INFO Awards top 10 list and reasons why they chose .INFO

These judges scored the sites based on the following criteria presentation of content, functionality of the site, design, usability, and originality. The short list was published on November 2 and opened to public vote. The public votes obtained through November 6 were combined with the judges' scores to produce the winners.

The Winners were announced on November 9th, 2009. First place was awarded to [thueringen.info](http://www.thueringen.info), a travel information portal in the Thuringia area of Germany. Second place was awarded to [gps-tour.info](http://www.gps-tour.info), a peer to peer file sharing service where people, tourist regions or organizations can share and download outdoor GPS tours. Third place was awarded to [turkel.info](http://www.turkel.info), a travel and tourism marketing agency in the United States.

1



<http://www.thueringen.info>

They chose a .INFO site because it is short and *fitting for the sites informational content.*

2



<http://www.gps-tour.info>

They chose a .INFO site to provide transmission of communications.

<http://www.solicitor.info>

They chose a .INFO site because people search the Internet for information. *Therefore, .INFO is perfect.*

<http://de.med.info>

They chose a .INFO site because it is the *best for an informational Web site.*

<http://www.digitaldruck.info/>

They chose a .INFO site because of the great second-level-domain (Digitaldruck) and the informational character of the website.

<http://your-affiliate.info/>

They chose a .INFO site because their site is an informational portal for affiliates and merchants tips and tools for Affiliate Marketing.

<http://www.zulassungsdienst.info>

They chose a .INFO site because .DE was not available.

<http://www.westsussex.info>

They chose a .INFO site because the site is intended to be full of useful information about West Sussex.

<http://www.troop153.info/>

They chose a .INFO site because it was an available name and seemed to be appropriate for the type of site they wanted.



3

<http://www.turkel.info>

They chose a .INFO site because .com was not available.

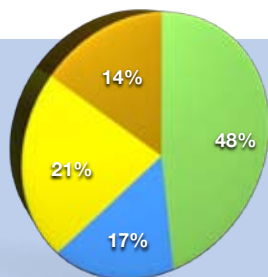
.INFO

fans speak out

*"...best for an
informational Web site."*

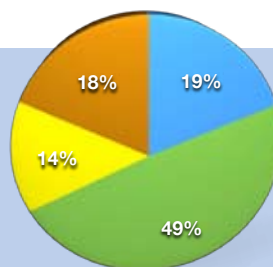
Informal user surveys from the INFO.info Web site confirm that users closely associate .INFO with sharing information online. During our surveying in 2009, 48% of respondents indicated that their primary reason for purchasing a .INFO domain was because .INFO conveyed information. On average, 42% of visitors to our INFO.info site own under 5 .INFO domains, while 14% owned more than 25.

Why did you register a .INFO domain?



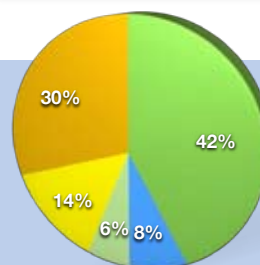
.INFO is about information ... 48%
My name was not available in another TLD ... 17%
Price ... 21%
Other ... 14%

Which term best describes how you use .INFO?



Inform ... 49%
Share ... 19%
Know ... 18%
Read ... 14%

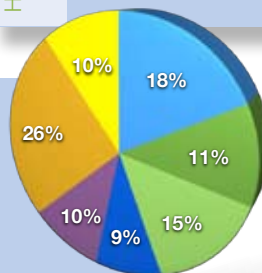
How many .INFO domain names do you own?



1-5 ... 42%
6-10 ... 30%
11-25 ... 14%
25+ ... 6%
None ... 8%

What do you think is .INFO's best feature?

Was able to get the name I wanted ... 17%
Internationally recognized ... 11%
Unrestricted use ... 15%
Affordable ... 9%
Easy to remember ... 10%
All the above ... 25%
Other ... 13%



.INFO

continues to improve domain security and address domain-abuse

Working with Industry Partners and Coalitions to Curb Abuse

The .INFO Designated Registry Operator, Afilias, continues its leadership in the domain name industry and beyond, working with an array of partners to develop policies and procedures that curb online crime and identity theft.

Afilias' Director of Domain Security, Greg Aaron, is the Chair of ICANN's Registration Abuse Policy Working Group. The RAPWG is creating policy guidance to ICANN regarding several abuse areas, including e-crime and domain name disputes. The group's initial report is expected to be published in March 2010.

In April 2009, Afilias became the first domain name registry to join MAAWG – the Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group. MAAWG is the leading global organization focusing on preserving electronic messaging from online exploits and abuse, with the goal of enhancing user trust and confidence. Afilias presented at the year's MAAWG meetings in San Francisco and Philadelphia, updating the membership about developments in the domain name world and providing insights into how the community can better fight spam.

Afilias continues its work on the steering committee of the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG), the global pan-industrial and law enforcement association focused on eliminating online fraud and identity theft. Afilias' Director of Domain Security co-authors the APWG's semiannual Global Phishing Survey. This report is the major industry examination of where and how phishing is taking place, and tracks major developments that responders, phishing targets, and policy-makers need to know about.

Afilias also provided new data and reports to policy-makers and industry partners at ICANN meetings in Mexico City, Sydney, and New York; the ECO Anti-Spam Summit in Germany; and the Internet Governance Forum USA in Washington, D.C. Afilias continues its board position at the Registry Internet Safety Group (RISG), the global group of responsible Internet companies who work collaboratively to combat Internet identity theft. Recently Afilias has helped RISG create a program that will allow registries, registrars, and security companies to share data and mitigate malicious uses of domain names.

Conficker – The Work Continues 1 Year Later

One of the major security stories of 2008-2009 was Conficker, the most dangerous computer worm infection to occur in years. Beginning in November 2008, Conficker spread to millions of computers worldwide, including businesses in the U.S., military computers in Europe, and the U.K. House of Commons. Conficker is controlled via an update mechanism that uses pre-determined domain names in various TLDs. In order to thwart the criminals behind Conficker, Afilias and other registry operators began blocking the relevant domain names, rendering this update mechanism ineffective. Afilias became a key member of the Conficker Working Group, which coordinated the global response.

Afilias protected .INFO, as well as all 11 of the TLDs we support that were targeted by Conficker, more than any other entity in the world. In total Afilias blocked 1.5 million domain names in 2009. On behalf of our registry operator customers, Afilias performed domain name blocking, investigated suspicious registrations, and kept in touch with law enforcement. This effort will continue in 2010.

2009: A year of Anti-Abuse Success in .INFO

As .INFO has grown in popularity, it has inevitably also attracted some unwanted attention. To address this, .INFO announced its new Anti-Abuse Policy in October 2008. The policy clearly defined abusive uses of domain names, and in 2009 Afilias worked with its registrars and law enforcement to address problems as they occurred (and sometimes before). Afilias' actions resulted in the suspension of a number of .INFO domain names that had been registered to perpetrate illicit activities such as phishing, spam, malware distribution, the hosting of child pornography, and denial-of-service attacks (DDoS). As a result of the program, .INFO has effectively discouraged phishers, criminals who use fast-flux hosting, and other perpetrators from using .INFO's illegally. The program's success has also led at least two other domain name registries to adopt similar policies and procedures. This collaborative, proactive program has been a model of effectiveness that leverages partnerships with registrars, and protects end users and registrants.

.INFO Spotlights

Arts & Humanities

<http://www.ancientmystery.info/>

AncientMystery.info provides a historical directory to ancient mysteries. They chose a .INFO site because it was a logical choice for an information Web site.

Blog

<http://www.guillon.info>

Guillon.info is a blog about domain name news and global information on actual Top Level Domain projects. They chose a .INFO site because blogging is information and there .INFO made sense.

Business & Commerce

<http://www.ReadytoMove.info>

ReadytoMove.info is a site for Andrea Maddox's Real Estate Services. She chose a .INFO site because it "Suits my business perfectly...I provide up to date INFORMATION about the local Real Estate Market every day."

<http://www.solicitor.info>

This UK solicitors directory helps people find a local solicitor (Lawyer) they can trust - based on feedback from its own clients. Solicitor.INFO chose a .INFO site due to the low cost, the availability of the name they wanted, and due to the site's content of useful information.



<http://www.westsussex.info>

WestSussex.info is a guide to enjoying leisure time in West Sussex – whether it's the arts, sports, charity and community events, tourist attractions, etc. WestSussex.info is an informational site and so the .INFO suffix actually conveys an idea of what users can expect to find at the website.



Health

<http://www.med.info>

MED.info is an online portal for patients and physicians in Germany. MED.info chose a .INFO domain due to the site's content, which contains information about medicine, diseases and health.

Causes/Non-Profit

<http://www.efficient-energy.info>

Efficient-Energy.INFO provides general information concerning renewable energy resources as well as information and tips related to home improvement. They chose a .INFO since the main objective of the site is to deliver information related to renewable power and efficient living.

Education

<http://www.japanesehistory.info>

Japanesehistory.info is a site dedicated to providing the history of Japan from prehistoric times to today. They decided on a .INFO site since the content was information about history.



Computers & Interest

<http://www.getipv6.info>

The ARIN IPv6 Wiki is hosted by the American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN) to facilitate discussion and information-sharing on IPv6 topics and issues. ARIN says that they chose a .INFO domain for their site because it is designed to facilitate information-sharing amongst network engineers, system administrators, and other technical professionals.



.INFO Spotlights

Entertainment

<http://www.amxhd.info/>

The American Xplorer HD television series features an expedition style adventure travel experience, bringing viewers to the far corners of our planet to explore foreign cultures, lost worlds, and wild adventure. The site owners say that they selected a .INFO site because "What better and more descriptive domain name could there be for a travel show than dot info?"



Government

<http://www.lapd.info>

LAPD.info is a mobile phone directory for the Los Angeles Police Department. They chose a .INFO site because .INFO stands for information, which is what the site provides.

News & Media

<http://www.webhosting.info/>

WebHosting.Info continuously releases data presenting statistics about the Web Services industry. They chose a .INFO site because Webhosting.info basically gives information on various Webhosts through Hosting Reports, Registrar Reports and Registry Reports.

Personal Sites

<http://www.mayankarya.info/>

This is a personal site with the owner's resume and social networking profiles. They chose a .INFO domain because the site's content is information about the owner.

Recreation & Sports

<http://www.commonwealthgame2010.info/>

The site contains details regarding how to reach New Delhi, accommodations, weather and other information for The Commonwealth Games 2010. They chose a .INFO site "since the visitor to the Web site will receive information about The Commonwealth Games".

Reference

<http://www.picaridin.info/>

Picaridin.info is a popular seasonal resource for information on controlling mosquitoes and ticks. They chose a .INFO site since "it is a perfect fit for an informational Web site".

Travel & Destinations

<http://www.camping.info>

Camping.INFO allows visitors and campsite operators to collaborate so they can provide the best evaluation of over 23,000 campsites to help assist people when deciding on a camping location. They chose a .INFO site since their Web site collects information from different sources and publishes this information broad-based in 27 languages.

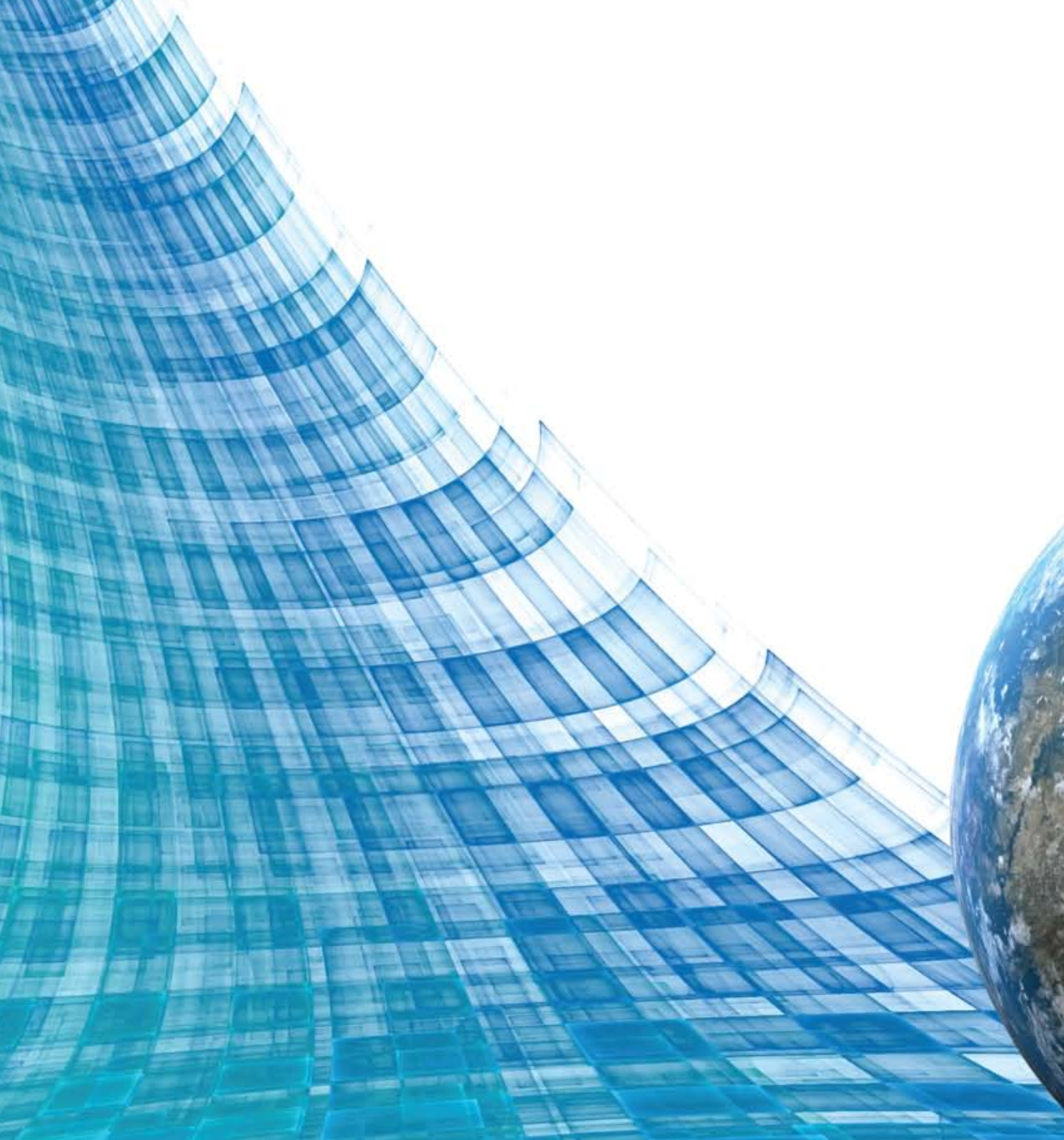


<http://www.westbourne.info>

Westbourne.info is a site that provides a useful guide to the up class district of Westbourne in Bournemouth, UK. The site includes a business directory with user reviews, local news and weather, and an events calendar for the area. Westbourne.info decided on a .INFO domain due to their intent to provide locals and tourists with information about the Westbourne District.



See more great .info sites in our directory at www.info.info/directory



Afilias™



Contact us for more information: www.info.info