

The New .NZ Domain Names – Protecting Your Brand

As of 30 September 2014 you can now register shorter, simpler web addresses ending with just **.nz** instead of **.co.nz**, **.org.nz**, **.net.nz** and so on.

Most people who already have an existing New Zealand domain name will be able to take advantage of a six-month period called the Preferential Registration Eligibility Period to register or reserve the shorter **.nz** equivalent of your domain name. However, if you have an existing **.nz** domain name that is similar to a domain name registered to a third party (for example if you have the **.co.nz** name and somebody else has the **.net.nz** name). You may find that your domain name is considered 'conflicted'.

If your domain name is conflicted you will need to contact the Domain Name Commission to let them know what your preference is – either you want the **.nz** equivalent for yourself; you do not want the **.nz** equivalent and do not mind who obtains it; you do not think anyone should be able to obtain the **.nz** equivalent or you do not think anyone should be able to obtain it and it should instead become its own second level domain name, such as **.co.nz** or **.org.nz**. The Domain Name Commission will then make a decision as to which of the conflicted parties has the right to register the **.nz** equivalent (if any). If a clear outcome cannot be reached, a facilitation service will be available, however if that is unsuccessful, the name will become unavailable for registration by anyone.

From 30 March 2015 the Preferential Registration Eligibility Period will cease. If you have not reserved or registered the **.nz** equivalent of your domain name, it will become available to the public for registration. This means competitors of your business or people who buy and sell domain names for a profit could register the **.nz** equivalent of your domain name.

What should you do?

Your existing New Zealand domain name will continue to work as always post 30 March 2015. However, if you choose to do nothing you risk opportunists registering your **.nz** equivalent domain name for on-sale (to you or competitors) or competitors registering to prevent you from obtaining the **.nz** equivalent or intending to direct traffic to their own website. While the Domain Name Commission offers services to address some of these issues, and there may be other legal options available, these processes are likely to be both time-consuming and costly; and your brand could be significantly affected in the meantime.

We recommend visiting anyname.nz or contacting your existing domain name registrar to check whether you have preferential eligibility or whether you have a conflicted name. If you are eligible to reserve your **.nz** equivalent domain name, it is recommended that you do so. Reserving your name is free and will give you up to two years to decide whether you want to proceed with registration. During this two year reservation period, no third parties will be able to register the domain name for themselves.

For more information on the new **.nz** domain names or on protecting your brand in general, please contact Stephanie Brown or Danielle Bailey.