

# New .bank domain to improve security

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The rollout of .bank domains may comfort online bankers particularly in light of the many phishing sites which are also a common occurrence potentially resulting in financial loss.



Stuart Miles via [freedigitalphotos.net](http://freedigitalphotos.net)

This is because only banking institutions may apply to register a .bank domain, a domain signifying improved security features to be verified by Symantec.

These technical features will need to include enhanced encryption, prohibition of proxy/privacy registration services, meaning that details of the banking institution and any related services via the website are fully disclosed, email authentication and mandatory verification of charter/licensure for regulated entities.

On 18 May 2015, national and international banking institutions could stake their first claims to domain name registrations ending with the new gTLD - .bank, 18 May being the start of the .bank sunrise period or priority period for banks with Trade Mark Clearinghouse ("TMCH") verification

National and international banking institutions and registered trademark proprietors - Absa, Bank of America, Bank of China, Barclays, Capitec, Investec, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Lloyds, NatWest, Nedbank and Standard Bank to mention but a few - can take advantage of this sunrise period which will enter general availability as of 24 June 2015.

## **.sucks**

Coinciding with the .bank sunrise period the controversial .sucks sunrise period has been running since 30 March 2015 and ending 21 June 2015.

.Sucks aims to create online space for consumers to freely share opinions about businesses and brands. Undoubtedly risky, therefore, trademark owners beware. The one option is to take advantage of the sunrise period, utilise TMCH

verification and claim your .sucks domain prior to 21 June 2015. Alternatively, as of 22 June 2015, applicants can register a block on any available domain on a first come, first served basis.

There are no restrictions or other requirements to own or hold a trademark in order to purchase a block other than an annual registration fee. Opting to block may be the obvious and more cost effective solution, though only available after the sunrise period and also only in respect of available domains.

## **Trademarks are key**

Over one thousand three hundred gTLD's are being introduced and many are still to launch. Each gTLD launch has a sunrise period and only trademark owners with prior TMCH verification can take advantage of a sunrise period.

TMCH verification is an administrative clearance process meaning that once ownership is verified the trademark owner has first option to register domains incorporating these verified names and trademarks.

In our fast paced digital world trademark owners are advised to exercise their proprietary rights, first and foremost applying for TMCH verification. With TMCH trade mark owners can then be the first to secure new domain names, not only useful for innovative marketing but also cautiously and defensively preventing those that have no right at all.

Domains in the wrong hands can result in confusion and misrepresentation. It goes without saying that cybersquatting, the act of registering a name in bad faith, is problematic. Cybersquatters can include competitors, extortionists and opportunists who may use the misappropriated domain to point to a website often containing illegal or inappropriate content.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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