

Company Marketing Intelligence from Subdomain DNS Records

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Marketing intelligence refers to any information about a company's market base. It not only reflects industry trends but also refers to any information about the organization's target market, existing customers, and even competitors. In particular, [94%](#) of companies invest in competitive intelligence, a significant part of marketing intelligence.

While there are several marketing intelligence sources in existence, one less tapped source is the Domain Name System (DNS). DNS records, such as mail exchange (MX) and TXT entries and subdomains, can help companies answer these questions:

- What external services do competitors or key industry players use?
- Are other industry players set to launch new products? What are these?
- Are there potential mergers and acquisitions (M&A's)?

In this post, we demonstrated how [Subdomain DNS Record lookup](#) tools that glean data from a DNS database could help enrich marketing intelligence.

Competitor Analysis

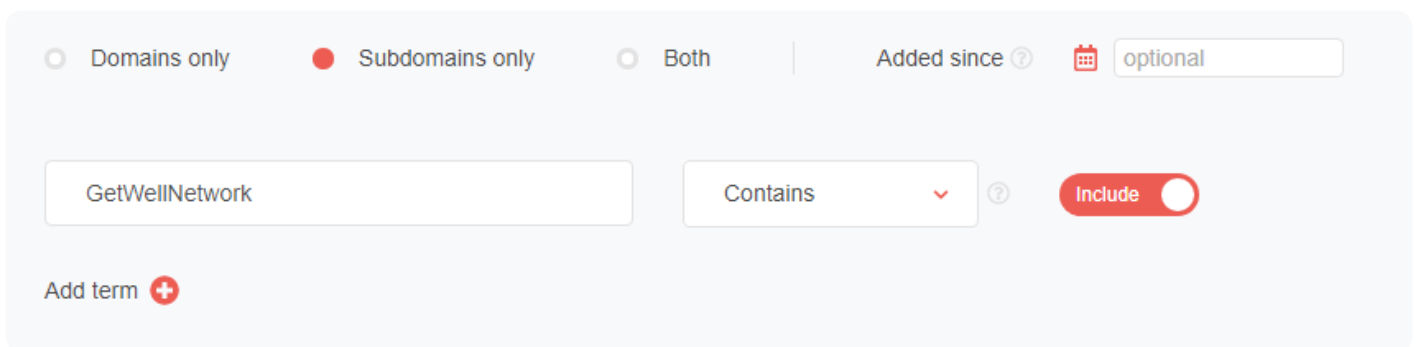
Competitive analysis includes identifying competitors and their products, services, and strategies. It entails studying them, revealing their strengths and weaknesses, and learning how your business compares to theirs. In the process, you could also learn what works for them and apply such insights in your strategies.

Services Used by Competitors

Some information about competitors might be relatively easy to obtain, such as products and pricing plans that are often publicly available on their websites. However, you might want to know what external services they use, and their subdomain DNS records can provide insights. For instance, healthcare application developers might want to get a glimpse of the services GetWellNetwork, a U.S.-based digital patient engagement solution, uses. To do so, follow these

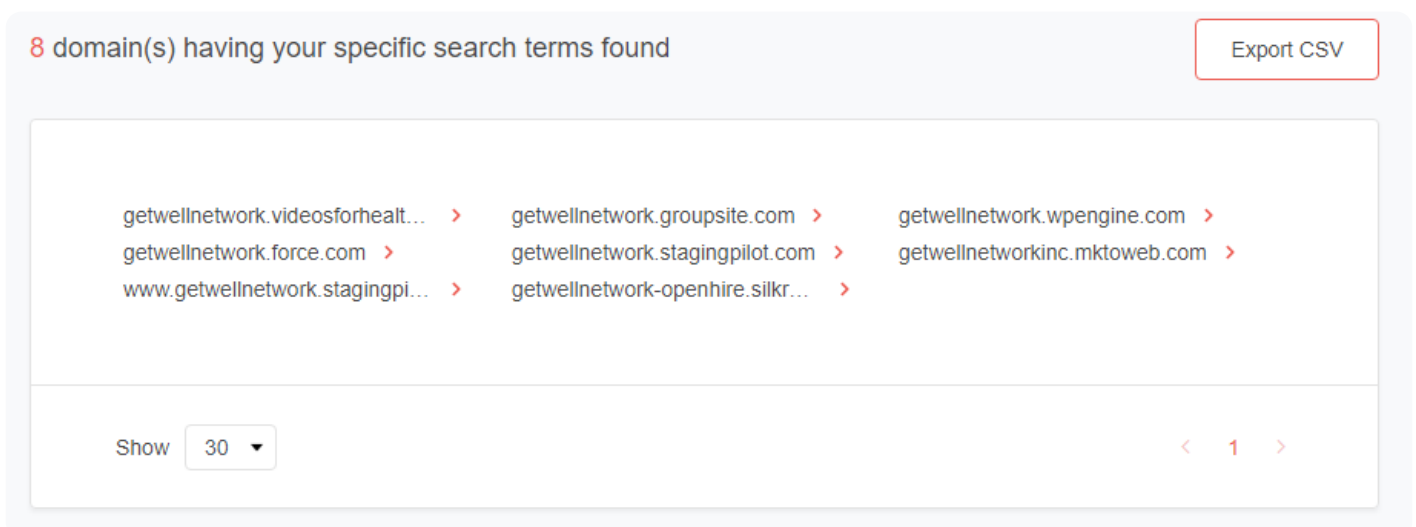
steps:

- Access [Domains and Subdomains Discovery](#).
- Search for subdomains that contain the company name. For example, we typed in “GetWellNetwork” and selected **Contains** as the search parameter.



The screenshot shows the search interface of WhoisXMLAPI. At the top, there are three radio buttons: "Domains only", "Subdomains only" (which is selected), and "Both". To the right, there is a section for "Added since" with a calendar icon and a text input field containing "optional". Below this, there is a search bar containing "GetWellNetwork", a dropdown menu set to "Contains", and a red "Include" button. At the bottom left, there is a link "Add term" with a plus icon.

- The tool returned eight subdomains that contain the company name.



The screenshot shows the search results page. At the top, it says "8 domain(s) having your specific search terms found". On the right, there is a button "Export CSV". Below this, there is a list of eight subdomains, each followed by a right arrow icon. The subdomains are: getwellnetwork.videosforhealt..., getwellnetwork.force.com, www.getwellnetwork.stagingpi..., getwellnetwork.groupsite.com, getwellnetwork.stagingpilot.com, getwellnetwork-openhire.silkr..., getwellnetwork.wpengine.com, and getwellnetworkinc.mktoweb.com. At the bottom left, there is a "Show" button and a dropdown menu set to "30". At the bottom right, there are navigation arrows and the number "1".

The subdomains Domains and Subdomains Discovery returned may relate to the use of services include:

- getwellnetwork[.]groupsite[.]com
- getwellnetwork[.]wpengine[.]com
- getwellnetwork[.]force[.]com

Based on these subdomain DNS records, competitors can learn that the company may have used or is still using the following services:

- Groupsite for their employees' remote or online workspaces
- WordPress for the company's web hosting
- Salesforce's Force.com platform to develop and deploy apps and websites
- Staging Pilot to test website updates
- Silkroad OpenHire as a recruitment solution

Companies That Use a Specific Service

You can also use subdomain DNS records to check which organizations resort to the services of a particular company. For instance, you can look up Zendesk subdomains to see its clients. Follow these steps to do that:

- Access Subdomains Lookup [here](#).
- Type in the domain name and hit the **Lookup** button.
- The tool will return up to 10,000 subdomains.



Subdomains [Lookup](#)

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New lookup

Subdomains matching the domain name: [10000](#)

- By using the DNS Database, however, we uncovered 407,205 Zendesk subdomains.



407191	zzz54.zendesk.com
407192	zzz6259.zendesk.com
407193	zzz6848.zendesk.com
407194	zzz99.zendesk.com
407195	zzz9.zendesk.com
407196	zzzhelphelp.zendesk.com
407197	zzzhelp.zendesk.com
407198	zzzlizkao.zendesk.com
407199	zzzprojects.zendesk.com
407200	zzzsupportinbox.zendesk.com
407201	zzzsupport.zendesk.com
407202	zzzwidgets.zendesk.com
407203	zzz.zendesk.com
407204	zzzzz.zendesk.com
407205	zzzzzzhelp.zendesk.com
407206	
407207	

Similarly, subdomain DNS records from DNS Database helps you see companies that use Okta as their identity and access management provider. As of 22 December 2020, the database returned 557 Okta subdomains, the majority of which hint at the provider's clients. Below are some examples:

- ecolab[.]okta[.]com
- wordpress[.]okta[.]com
- impossibleventures[.]okta[.]com
- teslamotors[.]okta[.]com
- infusionsoft[.]okta[.]com
- bizcompliancepartnersVokta[.]com
- adaragroup[.]okta[.]com
- cambridgeassociates[.]okta[.]com
- arcpublishing-mco[.]okta[.]com

With this technique, you can see how many of your competitors may potentially work or have worked with Zendesk as their customer service software provider, and Okta as their identity and access management provider. In the same way, you can also look up your potential customers and create proposals based on whether they use these services or not.

Competitors' and Clients' Domain Infrastructure

Subdomain DNS records from Subdomains Lookup can be used to gain insights into how competitors and clients built their domain infrastructure. The domain getwellnetwork[.]com, for instance, has 56 subdomains, including:

- development[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- relay[.]getwellnetwork[.]com

- qa[.]mygwn[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- practice-stage[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- practice-dev[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- community[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- ftp[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- blog[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- appstore[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- mx2[.]getwellnetwork[.]com
- redmine[.]practice-dev[.]getwellnetwork[.]com

From these subdomains, you would already have an idea how the company uses its subdomains for core processes. For one, it suggests the use of Redmine for project management, maybe along with other solutions.

Beyond Marketing Intelligence

Aside from obtaining marketing intelligence, subdomain DNS records could also be used to map out your company's cyberattack surface—the domains and subdomains that cybercriminals could use to victimize your employees, partners, and customers. These subdomains may or may not be owned or managed by your company. For example, we found 11 Zendesk subdomains that contain the string “Adidas.”



adidas45.zendesk.com

adidasanchorcloud.zendesk.com

adidasretail.zendesk.com

adidastesting.zendesk.com

adidasuae.zendesk.com

adidasza1508846150.zendesk.com

adidasza.zendesk.com

adidas.zendesk.com

generationadidasinternational.zendesk.com

z3nadidas.zendesk.com

zadidas.zendesk.com

Some of these subdomains could be managed by Adidas but the others seem to be typosquatting on the famous sports apparel brand. The subdomains z3nadidas[.]zendesk[.]com and zadidas[.]zendesk[.]com are examples of subdomains that threat actors could weaponize. Potential Adidas customers could be made to believe that the subdomains are the company's help desk sites.

Subdomains are commonly used to arrange a website into sections methodically. They help organize a company's site and provide insights into their product offerings, services, and even plans. Including these assets in your marketing intelligence gathering could expand your

perspective, giving you more information to build your marketing and overall business strategies. For more information on the use of subdomain DNS records as part of your company marketing intelligence efforts, do not hesitate to [contact us](#).