Using a Domain History Checker: How to Avoid Gaining a Nasty Reputation from an Expired Domain

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Have you ever thought of a domain name as one of the greatest business assets you could own? This may be the right time. A domain name serves a variety of purposes:

It's an organization's online distinct means of identification. It is what makes it stand out from the crowd, while usually containing the same or very similar terms as a business's brand name. That is why it needs protection from abuse, such as copyright or trademark infringement.

It builds up a company's brand awareness and credibility, as evidenced by its search engine ranking. The more authoritative a domain is, the better. Authority, after all, is what puts an organization's site on the first page of search engine results.

Various factors contribute to a domain's authority, and one of them is age. Older domains tend to perform better on search engines. For that, it has become common practice for entrepreneurs to purchase and use "old" domains. While useful for search engine optimization (SEO), however, this practice comes with certain risks.

This post tackles the pros and cons of buying expired domains and provides recommendations to those interested in doing so. It also talks about WHOIS History API, which can help organizations avoid the unwanted consequences of ending up with domains that have a checkered past.

Advantages of Buying Expired Domains

While buying a new domain is an excellent way to start cementing your online presence, an expired domain has a few advantages you may not be aware of. Old domains whose registrations have lapsed retain their reputation and SEO ranking, at least for a while.

So, instead of starting from scratch, new owners may just need to pick up where the previous owner left off. What's in it for you then?

Be an Instant Authority

Setting up a new site and building up its authority takes time. It requires strategic content creation and effective backlinking. Becoming an authority means using the right SEO keywords, publishing content on a regular schedule, and building backlinks from reputable sites with high domain authority.

Use It for Site Redirection

Old domains' SEO value, or at least part of it, can also be transferred to a new domain using a 301 redirect. If you, for instance, bought the expired domain "sample.com" but want to put up the new domain "active.com" instead, you can still take advantage of sample.com's domain authority by redirecting its traffic to active.com.

Sell It for a Profit

Some people these days earn from domain flipping. They typically buy expired domains and sell them to site owners who wish to improve their SEO ranking or domain authority. Domain flippers typically buy expired domains in auctions. They then increase the domains' value by improving their SEO ranking.

Why Is Checking a Domain's History Important?

While expired domains offer much to their new owners, some can come with risks. Their previous owners may have abandoned them for good reasons. Therefore, domainers or website owners

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must take the necessary precautions. Ending up with a bad domain will be worse than building up a new one from scratch.

To avoid the hassle that a bad domain brings, domainers and site owners can use WHOIS History API to conduct a thorough background check on it before the actual purchase. The tool provides information on the domain's entire lifecycle. Making sure that it does not have a shady past is one way to prevent having to deal with the problems below, which can be detrimental to your business later on.

SERP Violations

If you're getting an old domain for its SEO value, make sure that it does not have existing search engine results page (SERP) violations. If the site is blacklisted on Google's Safe Browsing Index, then no matter how old it is, it would not contribute to your cause because no one can access it.

Cybercrime Association

Any domain with ties to cybercrime has a bad reputation. Such a domain is included in security solution providers' and other publicly accessible blacklists. It may even be blocked from most computers.

Hijacked Domains

Not all expired domains put up for sale were legally obtained. Some may have been stolen from their rightful owners. You may end up dealing with litigations as a result of their use, so make sure sellers actually own the domains they are offering.

How Can a Domain History Checker Help?

Each website comes with its own WHOIS record or records (depending on whether it used to have various owners in the past). All WHOIS records are kept in a database that users can access through APIs and lookup tools. Aside from providing the usual ownership details and contact information, WHOIS History API helps users to get the whole picture of a domain's past, including all of its previous owners, nameservers, and other data points. As such, it is an excellent means to learn everything you can about a domain before deciding to buy it.

On a more technical note, WHOIS History API is available through our "bestwhois" command-line application for power users who need a RESTful API for integration into existing programs and scripts.

A variant of this service, WHOIS History Search is also available on our new Domain Research Suite dashboard for conducting interactive web-based investigations.

Much like in real life, having a checkered past could negatively affect one's future online. While age is a factor in gaining domain authority, it is also essential to make sure it does not come with infamy. Use a domain history checker like WHOIS History API to dig into any domain's past so you won't end up regretting your decision.