

A domain name is a form of Internet address by which persons may conveniently locate websites and by which e-mail addresses can be constructed. For example, bloggo.com is the domain name from which the email address mail@bloggo.com is derived and a website at www.bloggo.com can be located.

Domain names are in two forms, global top level domains (gTLD's) administered by ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, which include those with the extensions .com, .net, .org, .info, .biz, .name, .int, .edu, .gov, and .mil.

There are also country code domains (ccTLD's) such as .au for Australia, and .fr for France, which are administered by national authorities. However, some national domains, such as .tv for Tuvalu, have been promoted internationally.

Complaints concerning domain names registered by pirates and cybersquatters must be addressed to the relevant authority, depending on whether it is a gTLD or a ccTLD.

In the case of gTLD's administered by ICANN, complaints can be addressed to several different dispute resolution centres, of which the most well known is that run by WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation in Geneva.

For ccTLD's, the relevant dispute resolution body or mechanism depends on that appointed by the national authority. In the UK, the national authority is Nominet, which administers its own dispute resolution mechanism.

To be successful, a complaint must usually be based on bad faith use and/or registration by the person or firm which has registered the domain name in question, and ownership by the party complaining of a prior trade mark right.

If use of a domain name causes confusion and damage to an established business but bad faith cannot be established, it will be necessary to rely on legal action instead, such as for trade mark infringement or passing off.

Trade mark registration can be essential in either case.

