

# THE (IN)SIGNIFICANCE OF DOMAIN NAMES FOR E-COMMERCE

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## **Abstract**

The 21st century society together with its global market relies heavily on using information and communication technology and on employing e-commerce. Well established and regarded academic and practical opinion streams proclaim the heavy importance of e-commerce on current business. No doubt e-domiciliation has a technical significance. However, the impact of the verbal transcription of an e-address, a domain name, for e-commerce and its success is yet questionable. This issue requires interdisciplinary study and comparative analysis reflecting business reality, legal framework, behaviour patterns, consumer choices, national particularities and industry specifics.

This paper researches and summarizes the underlying setting, concepts, functions, and attempts to analyze the features, role, and function of domain names from a Czech, European, and even global and super-temporal perspective and link it to the manner and success rate of e-commerce. Various surveys, data collection and case observations are linked to published opinions in order to be compared, contrasted and if possible reconciled. This leads to a number of conclusions reflecting the ultimate goal. This is to enhance awareness about differences in perception of various types of domains based on the origins of business and customers as well as involved industry branches. From both business and consumer perspectives, the recognition of the significance of domain names for e-commerce and the interaction between the business itself, its intellectual property portfolio, domain and domain name is on the rise.

**Keywords:** Domain name; Top Level Domain (TLD); Internet; e-Commerce.

## **Introduction**

Today, any successful business conduct requires using various approaches, strategies, and techniques. With the advent and increasing use of the Internet, the e-form becomes more or less compulsory for businesses. Naturally, businesses can, and probably should, develop other forms, including the maintenance of brick and mortar stores. As available data and professional and semi-professional publications strongly advocate and advise for facilitation for online shopping, then e-domiciliation is more or less a must. Yet what is the role and importance in labeling such an e-address? Do businesses need to just have domain availability or do they need to have a very particular domain availability?

If strictly sociological and technical aspects are left aside, then the question of the (in)significance of domain names for e-commerce can be approached by combining a comparative, function-systematic, and narrative analysis with a touch of the Socratic method while addressing a set of critical topics and issues. The starting point is the determination of Internet, e-commerce and their importance (1.) followed by the description of the nature and functions of top level domains and domain names (2.). Then can be scrutinized the potential of domain names to support or undermine e-commerce (3.). This information and analysis is projected to the real business scenery from the business (4.) as well as the consumers' perspective (5.) with a particular focus on the Czech Republic. The emerging significance of

domain names for e-commerce is further supported by additional statistics and data (6). Naturally, recommendations and suggestions for deepening and extending of the study in this field are offered as well. Thus the ultimate conclusions are just a first step on the way to place domain names where they belong - in the very heart of the e-commerce.

## **1 The Internet, e-commerce and their importance**

Today's society, very reliant on information technologies, increasingly stresses the correct use of the Internet for business conduct, globally [11]. The Internet is a net of nets, probably the most important net is the World Wide Web (www). The access of computers or other information technology devices is organized via the hierarchy of domains [18]. In the virtual Internet space there are large domains (TLDs) and each of them is further divided into sub-domains (second level domains), sub-domains of sub-domains (third level domains), etc. [10].

Technically, the Internet is a global, worldwide and free connection of network knots through computer networks. These knots are personal computers designated for access to the Internet, server computers for hosting sites and even Internet sites, websites, as such. Each knot has its own unique numeric code address determined by protocols - Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) an Internet Protocol (IP), i.e. TCP/IP and the Domain Name System (DNS) allows the use and conversion of a verbal transcription of a domain IP numeric code address. Currently, two protocols and their combination are used – IPv4, IPv6 and IPv6 Dual. The use of a numeric code version of an e-address is most impractical and not very consumer friendly. Therefore, DNS offers a conversion system translating the numeric code version of an e-address, into a verbal version, a domain name. A set of *prima facie* meaningless numbers is converted into a set of letters and numbers able to have a meaning and thus easy to memorize.

Business is conducted within the global and unified, or at least standardized and protocol-formatted, Internet space distribution. As a result, e-presentation, e-marketing and e-shopping are now vital hallmarks of current businesses. A broad definition of electronic business, e-business, would be conducting business with the assistance of telecommunication and telecommunication-based tools [4]. Electronic commerce, e-commerce, is generally known as one rather fundamental phase or level of electronic business, e-business, which entails electronic sales. Thus, e-commerce involves an exchange of data related to ordering, selling and generally completing business transactions increasingly important to conducting business. The volume of business transactions via the Internet has rapidly increased while the value of goods, services, and information exchanged through the Internet appears to be annually doubling or even tripling [20]. The potential of e-commerce to facilitate operations, increase revenue, and lower the cost and consequently stimulate strong economic growth is great [13].

Thus, it's very instructive to study e-business, to see and judge its basic levels: www presentation, e-commerce, integrated services of e-commerce and e-business conduct. E-commerce can really impact actual results of a business and definitely should be considered when addressing current critical business issues. Today's business should master "e" format, taking advantage of connecting the business strategy with new technological elements. Notably, most Czech businesses recognize the e-mandate and can be designated e-businesses with an e-presence, yet often they remain only at a basic level, not offering integrated services of e-commerce nor achieving e-business conduct. They do not have a faithful e-clientele, ultimately the e-commerce constitutes only over one quarter of their total sales [2].

## **2 The nature and functions of top level domain and domain names**

Every Internet domain is unique and every domain name must be different from every other one. The longstanding practice of domain name registries is based on the acceptance and

processing of domain name applications on a first-come, first-served basis without any deep (or even at all) consideration of the legitimacy of the applicant to file such an application [1]. A domain name is a unique translation of a numeric code address pursuant to IPv4, IPv6 or IPv6 Dual. It is mainly a unique designation of an IP resource in verbal form, i.e. a verbal ID of a personal computer, server computer or website, with a clear and pre-determined tree structure, with a several letters formation separated at least by one dot. The sequences of a domain name goes from most specific to most general, i.e. the first letters in the formation, placed leftmost, concern a concrete computer and the last letters formation, at the very right, concerns a large group of computers, networks and websites – a top-level domain (TLD).

Traditionally, TLDs are grouped and categorized into two types – generic (international) TLDs (gTLDs) and country code, national, TLDs (ccTLD). The ending abbreviation of a gTLD will indicate the orientation and specialization of lower level domains appertaining to this gTLD, such as „.com“, „.org“, „.net“, „.edu“. However, if the concerned party prefers a classification pursuant to the country of origin more than the classification according to the specialization, then it can opt for a sub-domain within a TLD of a particular state – ccTLD, according ISO 3166, e.g. „.cz“, „.de“ or „.uk“. In 2012, the namespace consisted of 22 gTLDs, 250 ccTLDs and 30 international ccTLDs, each operated on a different model [12]. Yet due to the launch of the possibly revolutionary project of new gTLDs tailored on demand, i.e. allowing creative TLDs to anyone satisfying the requirements and paying the USD 185 000 fee, the scenery has been greatly modified in the last months [21].

Obviously, DNS and domain names were launched primarily due to a technical need. However, in the course of time it has become clear that the virtual and intangible domain name is not a mere facilitating instrument without value or just with a nominal value. Domain names have the potential to perform a multitude of functions with an impact on e-commerce. Primarily, a domain name is a consumer friendly verbal transcript of an original numeric code generated based on the used IP with a rather weak per se impact on e-commerce. Secondly, the domain name is similar to a business billboard [19] and thus it can be an address device, and also a marketing device and as such has a noticeable impact on e-commerce. Thirdly, the domain name somewhat overlaps with the trademark. The trademark is a collection of customers' perceptions associating the source and the product with the purpose to distinguish the goods and services from one source, to strive for customer loyalty, and to attract new customers [6]. The closeness of the domain name to the trademark leads to the potential of a domain name to meet the famous six criteria by Keller (memorable, meaningful, popular, portable, adaptable, and protection potential) [9] and become an instrument linking information and emotions, thus influencing e-commerce. Fourthly, the domain name is a key word reference and the development of browser and search engines along with the possibility to arrange for a top placing gives a new dimension to this originally overlooked aspect.

Every domain name has a pre-dot part referring to the sub-domain and post-dot part referring to the TLD. In other words, the e-address consists of a numeric or word reference pointing to the relevant TLD (a pre-set few letters behind the dot) and sub-domains (a creative conglomerate of letters before the dot). The key duty of the post-dot part of a domain name is identifying the pertinent TLD as a small sphere within the bigger Internet sphere. All domains registered under a TLD are labeled by domain names with the same few letters after the dot. Each TLD has its own regime with advantages and disadvantages, so there is no clear best TLD for business conduct and the selection of the TLD matters for business. The (in)significance of the wording of the part of the domain name pointing to sub-domains within a certain TLD appears to be arguable and complex. Unlike the post-dot part indicating the pertinent TLD and its regime, the pre-dot part does not imply a certain framework.

The significance of domain name wording for e-commerce is even more questionable. It has not yet been established whether the pre-dot part of a domain name and/or the post-dot part of domain name and/or the domain name as such in its entirety have direct or indirect impacts on the e-commerce. In addition, the role and functions of domain names have changed similarly to those of a trademark and it can be suggested that a domain name can have a symbolic meaning. Thusly, further studies, researches, and analyses in this respect should be conducted.

### **3 Economic and legal aspects of the domain name's potential impact on e-commerce**

The e-status and e-activity of a business can be examined while focusing either on form (the e-domiciliation of the business per se – its domain name) or on content (the substance of the www pages and their functions). Domain names have become valuable information commodities, generating disputes, even positive law starts to recognize it, attempting to regulate it [14]. These attempts are more on the level of national law rather than international law, the lead taken in the USA, the EU, and Finland. Thus the backbone of the regulatory framework of domain names consists of intra-related and pre-formed Private law contracts [10]. The Czech re-codification of the Private law changes the definition of a thing (as opposed to a person), modifies the reach of ownership rights, and it (definitely) places the protection for and against domain names in the field of law against unfair competition [19].

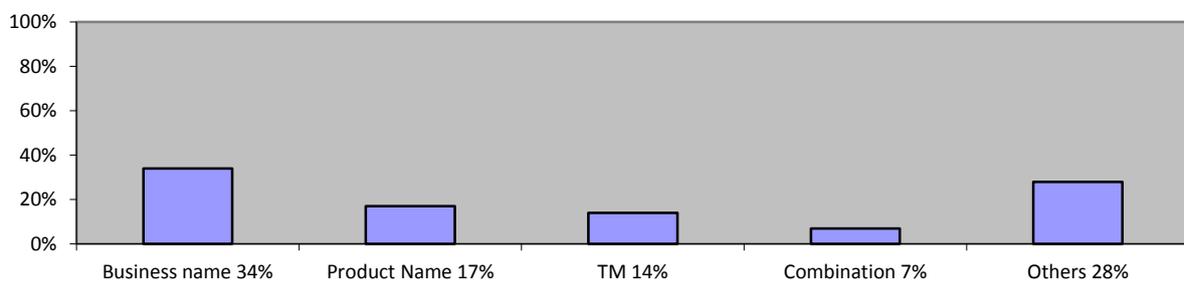
The uniqueness and implied identification role give an import and heavy potential to domain names. There are no two identical domain names within the Internet and there are no two unrelated parties using a domain name. Uniqueness doesn't imply business success, rather a chance to build it. Statements like *The domain name registration is the most crucial task amongst other tasks for you to conduct your business online* [5] correctly implies selecting and registering a domain name is the starting point, but overestimates its future impact.

The technical and economic conclusiveness of domain names clashes against legal positivism. Experts have unsuccessfully tried to put a domain name within conventional categories of assets protected by law. Some of them even felt that domain names aren't classic immovable-movable assets nor intellectual property assets and so don't have the objective right protection regime – *in rem* (such as ownership rights) and can at most be covered by the subjective and freely negotiated right protection regime – *in personam* (such as claims from a contract). In addition, there is an opinion stream trying artificially to separate the inseparable, the tangible and intangible aspects and elements of current reality and create a special Internet law for these issues, probably including as well domain names. Yet, after broad legal and philosophical analyses, it ultimately leads to an admission despite the substantial changes in contemporary society by the Internet that the fundamentals of law do not need to be revised [14].

From a practical angle, inaction, if not denial, in recognizing domain names' potential impact and importance contradicts the practical reality of current society. The lessening of the role, functions, and importance of a domain name may be reconciled with some archaic approaches to business, but definitely not with economic premises and social mandates of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is pointless to excessively dwell over the classification of domain names within conventional law categories. Rather, the observation of the current *modus vivendi* should be honoured. There is solid evidence that the domain name has the potential to have a significant value and to be a rapidly growing economic commodity and a valuable element of enterprise with a possible fair market value exceeding millions of EUR and USD [10].

#### 4 Domain names established impact on e-commerce from the businesses perspective

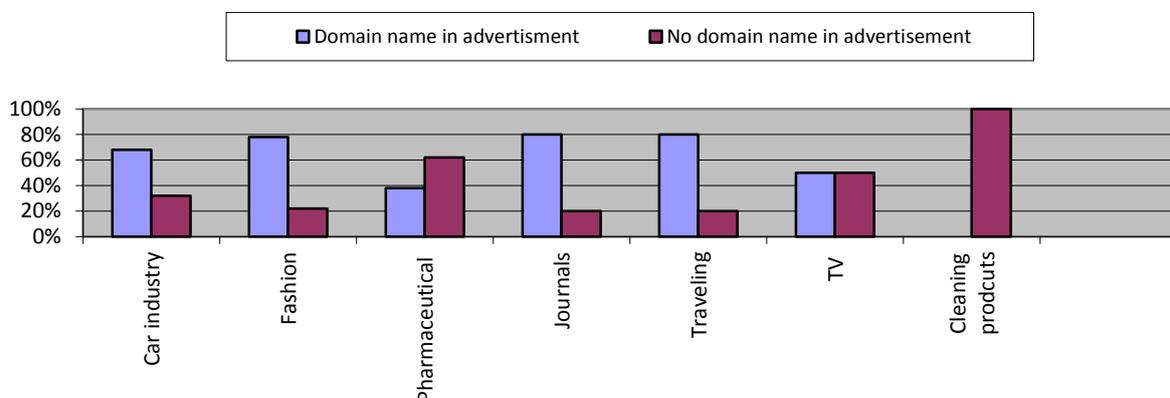
Creating and maintaining a domain labeled by a domain name is a long process requiring time, effort and expense. Despite certain technical limitations due to the IP functionality and required uniqueness of a domain name, there remains much space for discretion and for one's own personal preference manifestation. Businesses are aware that their domain names are their unique and hopefully longstanding not only addresses, but as well references. This is instrumental for their self-presentation and for attracting and maintaining the clientele. Due to the virtually and intangibility of e-commerce, an established "guaranteed" marking can be critical, or at least businesses appear to believe in it. Almost all businesses in the EU and in the USA have established their e-presence on the Internet and have at least one domain name. German businesses, in particular, perceive their domain name as a key for their identity, thus their domain names mirror their business name, i.e. the business designation registered within the Commercial Register is often copied into the domain name [15], as shown in Fig. 1.



Source: [15]

**Fig. 1:** Composition of the pre-dot part of a domain name

Statistics from business and industry support general conclusions of the link between domain name and business name. Other factors able to become a part of a domain name or shape it are the designation of the business key product and key trademark. Less influence is held by indicating the line of business, the business association membership or just creativity leading to fancy labeling [15]. Combining these elements, e.g. business name plus Trade Mark (TM), is rather rare, perhaps due to the desire to keep the name "short&sweet" and thus consumer friendly. The domain name is a tag used for e-commerce communication, but the domain name potentially can serve as an element in marketing and advertising campaigns especially in certain businesses branches, e.g. banking, financial, insurance, etc. [15] as shown below in Fig. 2.

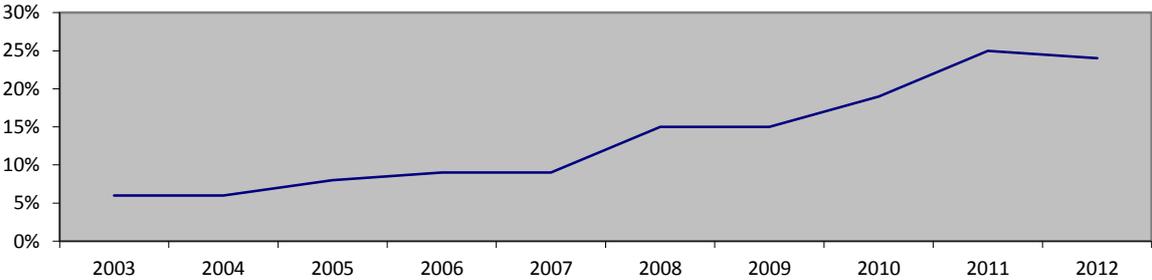


Source: [15]

**Fig. 2:** Use of domain names in marketing and advertising

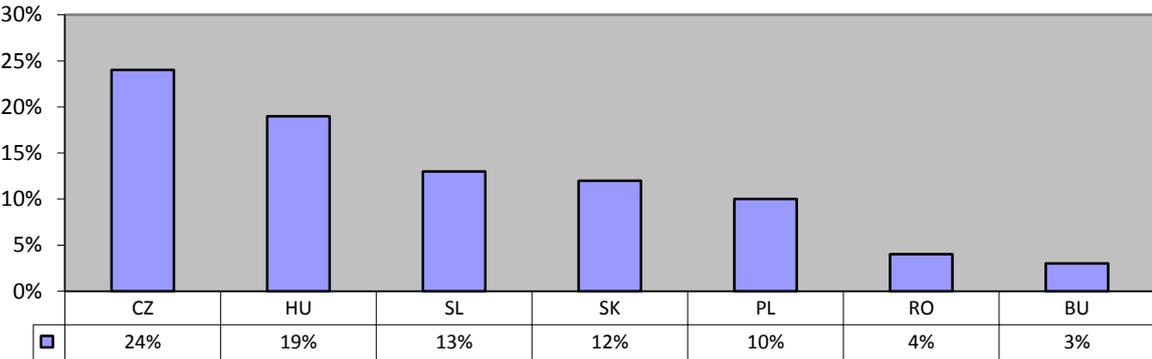
The collected data suggests various strategic management styles and different levels of employment of domain names for business conduct. Some businesses make their domain names an integral part of their business conduct and use it for e-commerce transactions as well as for Public Relation purposes, other businesses are more conservative and opt only for the use of domain names as a designation of the platform for e-commerce. Finally, there are businesses avoiding the Internet, or at least e-commerce. Regarding the first group, businesses embracing new technologies and including domain names in their business plans, strategic and operational management, one can discuss the manner of processing. Either domain names are created to fit into the strategically planned advertising and marketing endeavors of the particular business, or the domain name shapes the wording of advertising and marketing. Naturally, other factors should be taken into account, such as the possibility to be found through search engines or the (in)appropriateness to be presented in the Internet setting.

However, ultimately businesses consider their turnover, sales and profit. In this respect, the Czech businesses clearly increase their e-commerce, not lagging behind businesses from other members states, as illustrated by the data from Eurostat. In other words, currently over 20% of sales of businesses with more than 10 employees are done in the Czech Republic by e-commerce and this exceeds even the average for the entire EU, which is just 15% [22] as shown below in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4.



Source: [22]

**Fig. 3:** E-sales by Czech businesses with more than 10 employees



Source: [22]

**Fig. 4:** 2012 e-sales by businesses with over 10 employees from selected EU member states

The growing popularity of e-commerce in the Czech Republic is shown by the strong Czech customer drive to find the best (cheapest deal) on the Internet and can be contrasted with an e-commerce indifference in other member states accessing the EU in or after 2004.

Most businesses know that domain names in the entire wording perform various functions and aid in their e-commerce. They know that the post-dot part of a domain name is mainly a regime indicator and source of general orientation, the pre-dot part has a strong marketing and self-image potential to be expanded on. This common perception and awareness by business is clearly shown by prices for transferring a number of domains and their domain names belonging to the TLD Number 1 for business, TLD.com, which have several times exceeded one million USD in recent years [5]. Naturally, this is just the tip of the iceberg, and many deals and sales are confidential, or at least the amounts of negotiated and paid prices are.

Due to the first-served concept of domain name registration, businesses have formed several strategies to address a situation when their favourite domain name is already taken and they can't or don't want to buy it or litigate for it or against it. To these strategies belong the hyphening, adding numbers, or incorporating the post dot TLD reference part in the wording for consumers [15]. This can be shown via a hypothetical case of a Telecom company from Germany unable to offer their products and services through telecom.com or telecom.de, and so moving to t-e-l-e-c-o-m.com or 123telecom.com or tele.com. The level of creativity is high, but the ultimate judge is the consumer who is inclined towards name simplicity.

In sum, businesses do care and expend much time and effort to phrase the pre-dot part of their domain name and to fight for it and against it, they definitely recognize the business significance of the pre-dot part of their domain name and are prepared to pay for it. The very wording depends upon the industry involved and generally tends to mirror the business name, or in certain cases, to reflect the line of production or the very product.

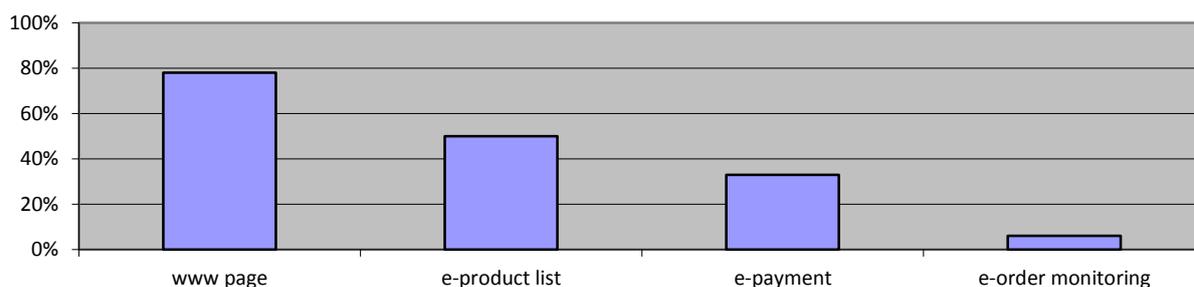
## **5 Domain names established impact on e-commerce from the consumer's perspective**

Empirical results show that the readiness to use the Internet highly depends on the relevance of information available and ease of operations. Thus, consumer's interest in e-commerce chiefly depends upon their level of mastering Internet use and their individual evaluations of the value of goods, services, and products offered [17]. Consequently, consumers engage in e-commerce when they understand it and see it as a venue to get a better deal.

Consumers' behaviour and appreciation of domain names with respect to e-commerce seems to show even bigger differences than the attitude by businesses. The perception and acting of consumers, as potential customers, in this respect significantly varies upon the social group and country of origin. Even within the EU, we can observe these variations and different patterns pop up, suggesting that not all consumers endorse the business self-proclamation drive through domain names mirroring business names.

From an EU consumer's view, the two big benefits of e-commerce over traditional shopping are related more to the process than to the result, i.e. home comfort and ability to shop anytime. But Czechs observe other gains, the chance to get a cheaper price, to master the timing of selection and purchasing, larger selection, and the ability to view feedback from other buyers [20]. Maybe 'brick and mortar' overpricing and poor customer care have not completely disappeared from the Czech Republic, but consumers don't want to tolerate it, and gladly embrace other options, such as e-commerce. The domain venue seems to help Czech customers avoid a major shopping annoyance, being disturbed by rude shop assistants. Though most EU consumers start on-line shopping by visiting the www pages of the selected business individual or entity, under the domain name which probably sounds like business name, Czech consumers go for "best deals/ sale" using online comparative search engines [2]. In the Czech republic, over 25% of sales come via e-commerce and more than 78% of businesses have (access to) the basic platform for e-business, the www pages. Yet Czech

businesses seem reluctant in the use of their www pages, as less than half of them have on their www pages their products/services price list, one third of them accept online payment by customers and just 6% of them offer monitoring the status of the order placed by customers [2], as shown below in Fig. 5. Sale portals like Vypkupto.cz or Slevomat.cz are exceptions, confirming the rule about a weak readiness for e-commerce in the Czech Republic. That half of the Czech adult population explores sale portals comes from the big drive of Czech customers to get the best prices, seen as the lowest price, making concessions regarding quality and loyalty. Thus, the eagerness of Czech customers towards domains of comparing and sale portals can mean the insignificance of domains of other businesses pursuant to Czech customers.



Source: [2]

**Fig. 5:** Level of e-business by Czech Businesses

Actually, 49% of Czech consumers do e-commerce mostly searching through price comparing pages and media and 92% of Czech consumers at least sometimes use them. Czech consumers seem to care little as to what domain under what name they finally land to make a purchase. The wording of part of a domain name is stripped of a number of its functions, “degraded” to serve just as an address where reportedly the goods or services can be bought for the lowest price. This is an extreme example within the EU consumer basis, since the rate of consumers from the entire EU using the price comparing search engines is only 27% [2].

This apparent discrepancy can be explained disparately. Czech consumers are open to make bigger concessions concerning quality versus price in order to reach the cheapest price than consumers from the rest of the EU. Considering functions of domain names, it is worth noting that after a huge campaign and heavy promotion, 60% of Czech consumers give occasional priority to goods marked with the trademark for quality, i.e. Klasa or Czech made, while just one fifth of them frequently buy such products. The significance of such branding increases with the age of consumers, but in no one age group it becomes the critical factor [6].

Czech consumers do care about domain names, but research has not yet established it. Perhaps they really don’t care about domain names and don’t wish to spend time checking individual domains of businesses, extract information including data about price, and conduct a comparison by themselves. There is an issue of a lack of loyalty and respect on both sides. Perchance the Czech businesses are behind in their use of domains and domain names. There are more questions than answers, and taking into consideration the importance of e-commerce, it would be very instructive to identify the underlying problems and address them.

With consumers various views on the import and impact of the domain name on e-business, a statement about the (in)significance of domain names for e-commerce from the consumers perspective should be diversified, i.e. a set of statements and evaluations should be presented.

## 6 Domain names established impact on e-commerce – evidence by statistics

Any investigation concerning an intangible and virtual asset, such as a domain name, and its (in)significance for e-commerce within a postmodern information society should definitely entail data about the current use of domain names. Thus, the above-developed presentations about the general significance of domain names for e-commerce from the businesses' perspective and the diversified (in)significance of domain names for e-commerce from a consumer perspective should be completed by the objective data about domain name use.

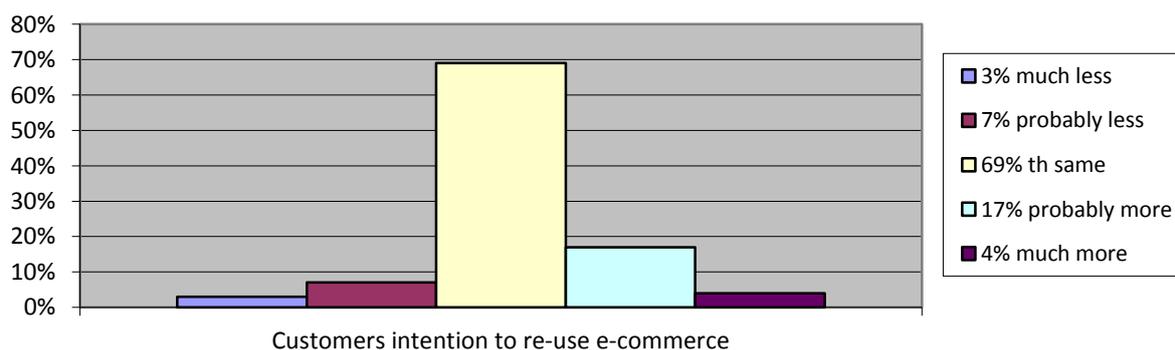
First, it should be stressed that most domains and domain names aren't used and so cannot be significant for e-commerce. More than 50% of domain names aren't used and don't lead to a functional www page, at least 90% of domain names have no potential to become an asset that can be commercialized at all and 99% of domain names cannot be negotiated for significant amounts [7], so only 1% of domain names are able to be sold for large amounts of money. At the same time, if a domain name is not for sale or is not for sale for a lot of money, it still does not necessarily mean that it is worthless and without an impact on e-commerce.

Secondly, regardless of the economic crisis, domain names auction and selling houses are busy, the largest one, Sedo, offers over 13 million domain names [7]. There are instances of the payment of millions of USD and EUR for domain name transfers, mostly for domain names with the post-dot part ".com", but this information should be completed by learning of the impact of the transferred domain name on the e-commerce of the transferee.

Thirdly, domain names factor in the evaluation of the intellectual property portfolio of a business and it is a 'given' that the value of the intellectual property constitutes the biggest value of an enterprise. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate about the objectiveness, correctness and exactitude of these expert appreciations.

Fourthly, domain names are close to trademarks which are inherently linked to the brand symbolism with functional and emotional significance. [6] True, domain names serve for the functional purposes, but they can be as well a source, if not instrument, of reassurance that the products offered and sold through such a domain name will meet some expected standards.

Fifthly, consumers increasingly use e-commerce, it is unlikely the trend will change (Fig. 6).



Source: [20]

**Fig. 6:** Customers intention to use e-commerce again

Sixthly, the number of TLDs and domain names grow; their use is expanding, taking various faces. As the e-business world flexibly develops to address consumer's new needs and interests, the domain world promptly follows. There are strong indications that TLD.com has achieved a strategic advantage, which competitors cannot attain [16], and should maintain its leading position as the best general TLD for business conduct, including e-commerce. Yet,

the TLD scenery should be shaken by a small revolution, new gTLDs, which might be followed by a big revolution, such as substituting the DNS by another system, e.g. a system based on key words [16]. Another unknown in this respect is the issue of the impact of social nets, such as facebook, which already now are an immense reference platform for consumers.

Each domain name is unique in its wording as well as in its impact, importance, and value. To some extent, a domain name is just a form label which reflects the content, the business *per se*. The answer to the question about the (in)significance of domain names for e-commerce depends not only upon the businesses and customers, but as well upon the domain name itself.

## **Conclusion**

E-commerce is a hallmark of our post-modern society and successful business conduct depends strongly on its appropriate use. The arena for e-commerce is the Internet, composed of large domain TLDs, with many small sub-domains carrying domain names. Each domain name has two parts separated by a dot, the pre-dot is a more or less a free creation and the post-dot is a pre-set reference to a TLD and thus an indicator of the pertinent regime. A competitive advantage in Internet business can be achieved only if critical elements and requirements are met and it can be legitimately suggested that the wording of a domain name is instrumental for e-commerce. Domain names seem to be capable to play a vital interactive role and can shape the business and the business can shape them.

There are small differences in the perception of the impact of domain names on e-commerce from the perspectives of businesses. The analysis of collected and compared data as well as the mere observation demonstrates the common tenor of businesses which endorses the significance of domain names for e-commerce. Naturally, this applies only to correct business with correct domains labeled by correct domain names.

There are large differences in perceiving the impact of domain names on e-commerce from the perspective of customers. There are variations based on the considered industries, nationality and social group of customers. Generalizing is misleading and the fact that 99% of domain names do not have a recognized high monetary value does not mean that they are worthless addresses without significance for e-commerce. Domain names are assets *sui generis*, they are definitely part of the intellectual property portfolio of a business and can even be the most precious element of an enterprise. Some domain names have reached the status of a billboard or even a trademark. A number of domain names have been registered as trademarks and many domain names mirror trademarks. This suggests that domain name wording is critical not only for e-commerce and imaging of businesses but also for the intellectual property portfolio of the business itself. A domain name is a tool to build up and shape promising business, but it is extremely rare that just the wording of a domain name *per se* would insure a long standing competitive advantage.

Thus more research should be done, more scientific data brought into this rather intuitive area. Businesses and customers need to learn better the concept of domain names and their potential to be well informed and to take advantage of today's e-commerce. The 21st century society and its global market are unimaginable without e-commerce and, more than ever, a successful e-commerce is hardly imaginable without an appropriate domain name strategy.

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## (NE)DŮLEŽITOST DOMÉNOVÝCH JMEN PRO E-COMMERCE

Společnost 21. století s globálním trhem jsou silně poznamenány informačními a komunikačními technologiemi a jejich využitím. Internetový prostor se stal arénou pro nový způsob podnikání – konkrétně e-commerce. Není pochyb o tom, že e-domiciliace má technický význam. Nicméně vliv doménového jména na e-Commerce a jeho úspěšnost zůstává sporným. Tento článek předkládá interdisciplinární studii a reflexní analýzu ohledně charakteristických rysů a vzájemného ovlivňování mezi doménovými jmény a e-commerce z národního i globálního, podnikatelského i zákaznického pohledu. Toto vede k dílčím závěrům stejně jako další diskusi a podnětům pro další výzkum. V každém případě důležitost doménových jmen pro e-Commerce se stává čím dál zjevnější.

## DIE (UN)BEDEUTUNG DER DOMAIN NAMEN FÜR DEN INTERNETHANDEL

Die Gesellschaft des 21. Jahrhunderts mit ihrem globalen Markt ist stark durch die Informations- und Kommunikationstechnik gezeichnet. Der Internet-Raum ist eine Arena für eine neue Art der Geschäftsführung, nämlich den Internethandel, geworden. Es gibt keinen Zweifel daran, dass die e-Domiciliation eine technische Bedeutung hat. Jedoch bleibt die Auswirkung des Domain-Namen für den E-Commerce und seinen Erfolg fraglich. Dieser Artikel legt eine interdisziplinäre Studie und eine reflektierende Analyse über die charakteristischen Zeichen und die reziproke Auswirkung zwischen Domain-Namen und Internethandel aus der sowohl nationalen als auch globalen Geschäfts- und Kundenperspektive vor. Dieses führt zu einigen Schlussfolgerungen sowie auch zu weiteren Diskussions- und Vorschlagslinien für zusätzliche Forschungen. In jedem Fall scheint die Anerkennung der Bedeutung von Domain-Namen für den Internethandel immer mehr an Bedeutung zu gewinnen.

## (NIE)WAŻNOŚĆ NAZWY DOMENY DLA HANDLU ELEKTRONICZNEGO

Spółeczeństwo XXI funkcjonujące na globalnym rynku znajduje się pod dużym wpływem technologii informacyjno-komunikacyjnych oraz ich wykorzystywania. Przestrzeń wirtualna stała się areną nowego sposobu prowadzenia działalności - a mianowicie e-commerce, czyli handlu elektronicznego. Nie ma wątpliwości, że e-rezydencja ma znaczenie techniczne. Jednak wpływ nazwy domeny na handel elektroniczny i jego sukces pozostaje kwestią sporną. W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono badania interdyscyplinarne oraz analizę refleksyjną dotyczącą cech charakterystycznych oraz wzajemnego oddziaływania pomiędzy nazwami domen a e-commerce z punktu widzenia krajowego i globalnego, jak również z punktu widzenia przedsiębiorcy i klienta. To jest podstawą do sformułowania cząstkowych wniosków oraz podjęcia dalszej dyskusji i kontynuowania dalszych badań. Ważność nazw domen staje się w każdym razie dla handlu elektronicznego coraz bardziej odczuwalna.