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Domain name for the Chinese market

A China-facing domain needs to be memorable, meaningful to Chinese users, and fast to resolve from inside China.

Using Chinese national name servers (NS/DNS) can eliminate “domain not found” errors caused by slow overseas DNS lookups.



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Focus: domain naming + DNS performance

Audience: overseas businesses

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Background to the Chinese domain name

Here are a few terms to help you when reading this paper.

Domain name basics

There are two main parts to a domain name you need to consider when making a purchase:

- **TLD (Top-Level Domain):** the part of the domain name that comes after the “dot”, e.g. `.com` , `.net` .
- **Domain:** the part that comes before the TLD, e.g. `mydomain` in `mydomain.com` .

The **domain name** is the domain + TLD, e.g. `mydomain.com` .

NS vs DNS

- **Name server (NS):** a server available to the internet hosting the Domain Name Service (DNS).
- **Domain Name Service (DNS):** the database containing your DNS records, e.g. the IP address of your website.

Often, NS and DNS are used interchangeably. In China, many local name servers operate across multiple locations, maintaining copies of DNS databases for domains purchased in China. This helps keep response times low for over a billion internet users across a large country.

When marketing and selling to the Chinese market, you need your domain name to respond quickly and be easily accessible.

Practical takeaway: Using Chinese national name servers for your DNS records provides the fastest response times in China and helps eliminate “Domain Name not found” errors caused by slow overseas DNS lookups.

Learn more: How Name Servers (NS) and DNS operate in China

Ideas for your Chinese domain name

Using an existing company / brand name

If your company, brand, or product name already has traction in China, the decision is straightforward: build your domain around the name already known in China.

Using a keyword

If you do not have an established company/brand name in the Chinese market, you can use keywords based on your industry or services. Start with your current keywords (e.g., from Google), then assess whether those terms are meaningful and usable in the Chinese market.



Quick checklist

Use these checks when selecting a domain name for China.

- Is the name short, easy to remember, and easy to spell?
- Will Chinese users recognise the brand/keyword (or its Pinyin form)?
- Have you checked the Pinyin for secondary meanings?
- Have you checked the name is available on key Chinese platforms (WeChat, Alibaba/Tmall, etc.)?
- Will you use Chinese national name servers (NS/DNS) to reduce “domain not found” errors?
- Are you choosing an appropriate TLD (`.com` / `.co` etc.) rather than a subdomain?

Reminder: DNS performance matters. If your DNS lookup is slow from China, users may see “website not found” even when your server is online.

Need help?

If you'd like help selecting a China-friendly domain and setting up Chinese name services, contact support@accesstochina.com

Using a brand/company name or keyword in Pinyin

Pinyin is written using Latin characters and is the main input method Chinese users rely on to type Chinese on mobile devices, tablets, and PCs.

- Example: “Panda” in Chinese is 熊猫; in Pinyin: `Xiongmāo`.
- Pinyin words are commonly used in domain names. For example, “Baidu” means “a hundred times” or “countless times”.

Translating your company, brand, product, or other name into Pinyin may yield a meaningful domain name. If you do this, have the Pinyin reviewed to ensure there are no undesirable secondary meanings.

Note: Avoid using Chinese characters as the primary domain label (e.g., 熊猫.com). While technically possible, it restricts access to people who can type Chinese characters, and it is rarely used as the primary business domain.

Add the country code to the domain

Because a domain should be as short and memorable as possible, consider adding the country code to your domain label. This can help you use a shorter name and clearly signal “China” to the market.

- Example: `123.co` → `123cn.co`
- Use a similar format to Pinyin: short, easy to remember, easy to spell (often 3–5 Latin characters per word).

Chinese third-party services

Chinese B2B platforms (e.g., Alibaba), B2C platforms (e.g., Tmall), and social media (e.g., WeChat) typically require an account name during setup, which is then used for search and discovery.

We recommend using the same domain naming format for the Chinese market across all Chinese systems. Check whether your planned domain/account name is already in use.

Important: Most third-party services do not allow changing the account name once it is set up. You may need to delete the account and start again (including any set-up fees).

Short names are recommended

If possible, keep the domain short and recognisable to Chinese businesses and people. Many simple English words (e.g., audio, video) are widely understood and have entered common use.

Subdomain of an existing domain

Using a subdomain on your existing domain is an option, for example:

- `newkeyword.mydomain.com`

You cannot use Chinese Name Servers unless your domain has been purchased from a Chinese supplier. If you cannot use Chinese NS, see your server/location options in Asia to improve performance for China.

TLD (Top-level domain) choice

Using a different TLD for your China market is generally preferable to using a subdomain.

Popular TLDs (as of 01 January 2025) include `.com` , `.co` , `.shop` , `.xyz` , `.cloud` , `.design` , `.wiki` , and `.icu` .

There are also China-related TLDs such as `.cn` , `.com.cn` , and `.中国` . As of June 2019, these are only available to Chinese companies and citizens.

Related reading: [Chinese local domain names \(TLDs\)](#)

Next step: [Improving website performance in China](#)

 [Test your website from China](#)

 [Download "Domain name for the Chinese market" paper \(PDF\)](#)

Access to China — Domain name for the Chinese market.

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