



## Domain name for the Chinese market

### Background to the Chinese domain name

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

As you may be aware, there are two main parts to a domain name you need to consider when making a purchase: -

- TLD (Top Level Domain) is the part of the domain name that comes after the "DOT", e.g. **.com**, **.net**, **etc.**
- Domain is that which 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 Names Service (DNS)
- Domain Name Service (DNS) – Database containing your DNS records, e.g., IP address of your website.

Often, NS and DNS are used interchangeably. In China, many local NSs operate across multiple locations, maintaining copies of the DNS databases for all domains purchased in China. This helps considerably by keeping 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.

Using the national Chinese name servers for your domain name DNS records will provide the fastest response times in China for locating your domain and eliminate the "Domain Name not found" error. For more detailed information, please see the; 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, product, etc., name already has traction in China, then 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. The starting point would be the keywords, like the name of the market selector. Review your current keywords in Google. Check whether any of these terms are meaningful in the Chinese market.

- **Using a brand/company name or keyword in Pinyin**

Pinyin, the most straightforward explication, is written in Chinese with Latin (English) characters, e.g.

“Panda” in Chinese is 熊猫, in Pinyin: Xiogmao

Chinese people use Pinyin to type on mobile devices, tablets, and PCs.

Today, Pinyin words are often used in domain names. Baidu, the Chinese search engine, means “a hundred times” or “countless times”.

Translating your company, brand, product, or other name into Pinyin may yield a meaningful domain name.

You can use Chinese characters in your domain name, e.g., 熊猫, but it is not recommended because it restricts access to your domain to people who can type Chinese characters. While you have been able to use Chinese characters in domain names for many years, I have yet to see this used in China as the primary domain for a business.

Please have the Pinyin word(s) reviewed to ensure they do not have secondary meanings in Chinese. (Google had this problem when translated into Chinese. The direct translation is “rice farmer.” They overcame this problem by changing Google's pronunciation for the Chinese market; therefore, the translation of Google into Chinese changed.)

- **Add the county code to the domain**

Given that the goal for a domain is to be as short and memorable as possible, consider adding the country code to the domain name.

I have seen this being used more often in China.

This also allows you to use shorter domains, given that the practice is not used extensively at the time of writing, e.g.

### **123.co to 123cn.co**

123cn.co example was available at the time of writing – 02 January 2025

For the Chinese market, use the same format as Pinyin: Pinyin words are 3 to 5 Latin characters long. Simple to remember, simple to spell.

- **Chinese third-party services**

Both B2B systems (e.g., Alibaba) and B2C systems (e.g., Tmall) and Chinese social media (e.g., WeChat) all require an account name during setup, which is usually used as a search criterion. We recommend using the same domain for the Chinese market across all Chinese systems.

To that end, we recommend checking these systems to see whether your planned domain name is already in use.

Please note: Most third-party services do not allow changing the account name once it is set up. You must delete the account and start again, including any set-up fees.

- **Short names for the domain are recommended**

If possible, please keep the name short or recognisable to Chinese businesses and people. Many English words, such as audio and video, are finding their way into the Chinese language.

English is the first language spoken overseas in China and is taught at all levels of schooling. Simple English words taught early in school should be considered.

- **Subdomain of existing domain**

Using a subdomain on your existing domain is an option, e.g.,  
newkeyword.mydomain.com

You cannot use Chinese Name Servers unless your domain has been purchased from a Chinese supplier.

Please see the server options below for the Asia option, which will improve your DNS performance in China.

- **TLD (Top-level domain) name**

Using a different TLD for your Chinese market is preferable to a subdomain.

The other popular TLDs are China (01 January 2025): com, co, shop, xyz, cloud, design, **wiki**, and **icu**.

There is also **cn**, **com.cn**, **中国**. As of 2022, these TLDs are only available to Chinese companies and people. This is the same as in many countries, e.g., **the UK**, available to British companies and people. Please see: [Chinese local domain names](#).

For more information on how Name Servers (NS) and DNS operate in China: [Chinese name servers](#)