



CSC Dot Brand Insights Report

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Executive summary

The number of activated .BRANDs dropped by 1% over the past calendar quarter, but the total number of domain names registered across all of these .BRANDs increased by 3%. This increase in domains under management (DUM) is led by the 5% increase from .BRANDs within the insurance sector.

Seventy five percent of all .BRAND domain names are activated, i.e., resolve to websites or email. That's somewhat consistent with this statistic in which seven out of 10 highest ranking .BRANDs activated at least 82% of their domain names.

We continue to report on more Alexa-related statistics, as Alexa ranking can be used as an informative indicator of the popularity and traffic flow of .BRAND domains.

There has been a distinct uptick in the activity surrounding .BRANDs, ranging from the manufacturing, pharmaceutical, and internet services, to enterprise products and services sectors—sectors that got a big increase in business activity through Q3 2020. The coronavirus pandemic may have devastated many sectors of the global economy, but it's these sectors that have experienced opportunities for growth throughout the same period.

In this report, we cast a spotlight on [OUI.SNCF](#), which has once again surged to the top rankings of the Alexa chart after mobility in Europe began this year. The railway company has undergone a few rounds of major re-branding in the past, and oui.sncf fits closely with the overhaul of its predecessor website, Voyages-sncf.com.

"The customer is king" carried phenomenal weight when the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) decided in favor of Booking.com in the case of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) v. Booking.com B.V. on June 30, 2020. As consumers perceive the term "Booking.com" as a brand that they can rely on for lodging travel reservations online, the term "Booking.com" is not generic.

Brand owners must ask themselves if consumers perceive their brand as non-generic or as brand.com. If it is the former, wouldn't a .BRAND be more representative of the brand rather than brand.com?

Read: [*Your Brand Is Your Online Identity: Reflecting on SCOTUS Decision.*](#)

Number of activated dot brands

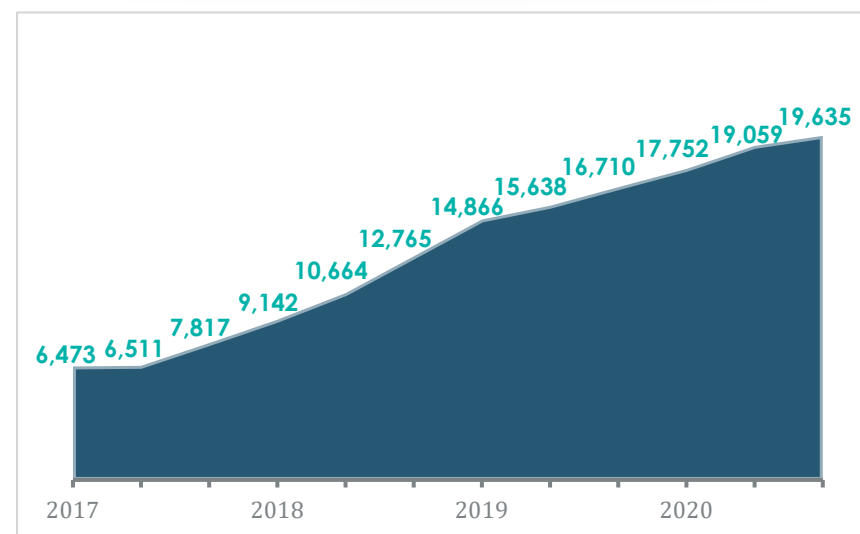
189

Top 10 activated dot brands by DUM

Rank	TLD	#Registrations	Industry
1 Last report: 1	→ .dvag	4,271 +293	Insurance
2 Last report: 2	→ .audi	1,743 -1	Automotive, tires, other vehicles
3 Last report: 3	→ .mma	1,635 -3	Insurance
4 Last report: 4	→ .allfinanz	1,128 +68	Finance and money
5 Last report: 5	→ .seat	731 +45	Automotive, tires, other vehicles
6 Last report: 6	→ .mini	680 -4	Automotive, tires, other vehicles
7 Last report: 7	→ .neustar	668 +9	Internet services
8 Last report: 8	→ .crs	594 +3	Associations and clubs
9 Last report: 9	→ .gmx	473 --	Internet services
10 Last report: 10	→ .aco	325 +1	Construction, engineering, equipment

The number of activated .BRANDs dropped 1% to 189. There are no changes to the ranking in the Top 10 activated .BRANDs by the number of DUM. There is a slight increase in the number of .BRAND DUM.

Growth in DUM across all dot brands over time



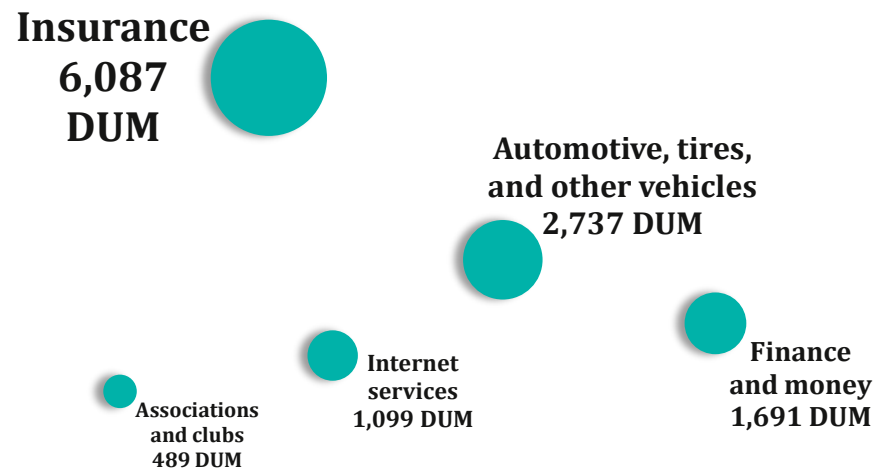
Activated dot brands

.BRANDs that have registered five or more domain names in their respective .BRAND top-level domain (TLD).

DUM

The number of domain names under management.

Top 5 active industry sectors by DUM



Among the Top 5 active industry sectors by the number of DUM, insurance continues to lead by almost 123% to its closest sector, automotive, tires, and other vehicles. Insurance has really pulled away from automotive, tires, and other vehicles which only increased by less than 1%. The number of DUM in the leading sector of insurance has increased by 5% compared to our last report, while the number of DUM in the sectors finance and money, internet services, and associations and clubs increased by 3%, 1%, and 1% respectively.

Use case

A home most suitable for your brand

Saxo Bank is a Danish fintech and regtech specialist in online trading and investment. With over two decades of growth and success attributed to sophisticated technology and industry expertise, Saxo's vision is to democratize trading and investment, essentially providing traders and investors with the same professional tools and market access as fund managers and large financial institutions.

The main objective for the Bank in moving their online presence entirely to .SAXO was to align all of their legacy Saxo Bank sites to have a unified online presence. But, there were side benefits as well.

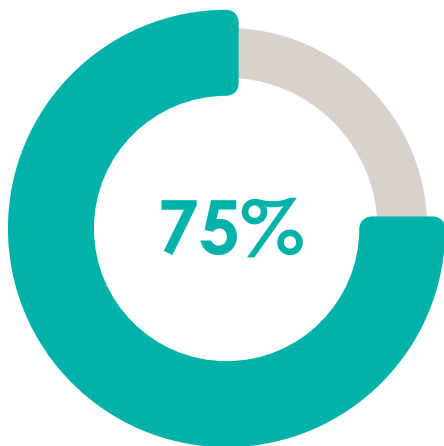
Due to differences in global banking regulations, Saxo Bank's operating sites were named differently. Its main domain name was SAXOBANK.COM and country-specific websites may or may not have "bank" in them. By changing the domain structure to home.saxo/(language)-(country-code), the Bank unified their domain structure across all of its public facing websites. Saxo Bank migrated 39 standalone websites and 20 mobile websites into HOME.SAXO, and had the teams in each country operate their own subdirectories.

With a unified online presence, Saxo Bank could focus its search engine optimization (SEO) efforts. Not only has .SAXO enabled the Bank to outperform historic SEO results, customers from everywhere in the world engage directly with the Bank entirely and only on .SAXO.

Resolving dot brand domain names

75%

unchanged since last report



The percentage of .BRAND domain names that resolve to meaningful content inclusive of redirects remained little changed since our last report. Has the active use of .BRAND domains achieved a steady state? If the percentage of resolving .BRAND domain names remain the same for three consecutive reports, i.e., for a year, we can state that this is so. For now, this means that 25% of .BRAND domain names are not associated with websites or email. This is less than the estimate of 47% of new generic top-level domain (gTLD) names that are parked, according to ntlstats.com.

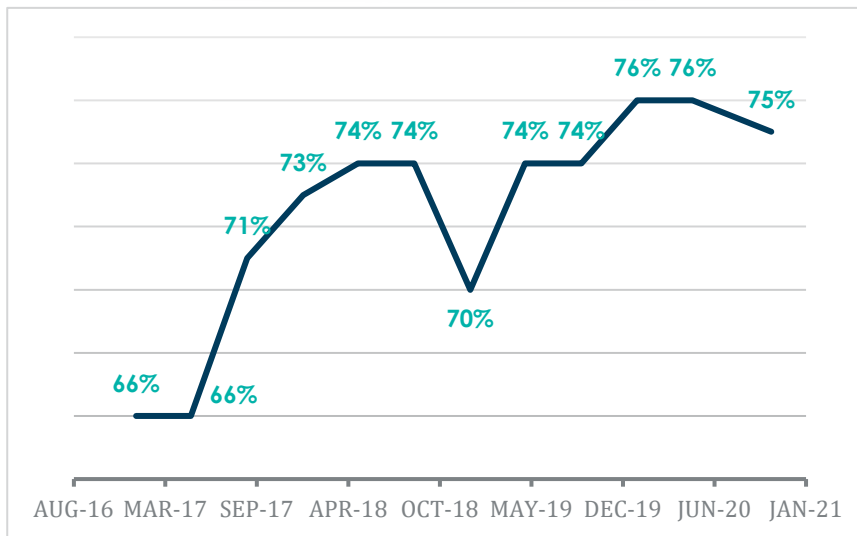
Top 10 dot brands by resolving domains

Rank	TLD	#Resolving	%Resolving	Industry
1	.dvag	4,236	99%	Insurance
2	.mma	1,625	99%	Insurance
3	.audi	1,614	93%	Automotive, tires, other vehicles
4	.allfinanz	1,124	99%	Finance and money
5	.neustar	552	82%	Automotive, tires, other vehicles
6	.seat	527	72%	Internet services
7	.crs	417	70%	Associations and clubs
8	.gmx	396	83%	Internet services
9	.lamborghini	197	84%	Construction, engineering, equipment
10	.aco	167	51%	Automotive, tires, other vehicles

Resolving domains

.BRAND domain names that resolve to meaningful content, including those that redirect to existing websites using 301 and 302 redirects. For an accurate representation of the level of activation in .BRAND domains, we have omitted NIC.TLD and testing domains.

Trend in the number of resolving domains



.BRAND adoption is expected to rev up through the year as the industry receives further news of the Round 2 .BRAND application framework from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The slight dip is due to some shift in resources of .BRANDs over to their main businesses, which have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The number of resolving domains stays somewhat consistent; 75% of the total .BRAND domain names resolve to active content. Percentages were derived from data one month after the end of each calendar quarter.

Top 10 dot brands by total number of domains ranked in Alexa

Rank	TLD	Total domains in Alexa	Highest ranked domain name in Alexa	Industry
1	.canon	19	in.canon	Manufacturing
2	.google	16	about.google	Internet services
3	.abbott	13	jobs.abbott	Health and pharmaceuticals
4	.sbi	10	yonobusiness.sbi	Finance and money
5	.sap	7	only.sap	Enterprise products
6	.aws	7	chime.aws	Enterprise products
7	.bnpparibas	4	mabanque.bnpparibas	Finance and money
8	.yandex	4	eda.yandex	Internet services
9	.sharp	3	jp.sharp	Manufacturing
10	.weber	3	ru.weber	Engineering

Active domains with an Alexa ranking (high-traffic sites)

123

Dot brand domain	Current Alexa ranking	Registration date
about.google	415	Aug 6, 2018
yonobusiness.sbi	2,034	Oct 5, 2018
forms.gle	2,280	Feb 12, 2019
oui.sncf	2,500	May 26, 2017
mabanque.bnpparibas	3,111	Jan 19, 2015
banco.bradesco	4,020	Sep 28, 2015
express.dhl	4,316	Jul 14, 2017
home.kpmg	4,755	Dec 13, 2017
sbiyono.sbi	6,090	Aug 19, 2017
chime.aws	6,689	Oct 31, 2016
jp.sharp	7,312	May 21, 2018

The Alexa Top 1M is a listing of the million most popular sites on the web based on traffic, and has been commonly used by the domain industry for many years. E.g., Google.com ranks #1 and YouTube.com ranks #2.

Alexa dot brand domain story

OUI.SNCF

Alexa ranking: 7,798

Most significant source of traffic: direct type-in

The Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français (French National Railway Company: SNCF) is France's national state-owned railway company. Founded in 1938, it operates the country's national rail traffic along with Monaco, including the TGV, on France's high-speed rail network. Before the coronavirus pandemic, SNCF operated about 14,000 trains that crossed 32,000 km of high-speed and electrified lines.

Oui.sncf is a subsidiary of SNCF selling train passes and point-to-point tickets for rail travel around Europe. In December 2017, it was rebranded and migrated from Voyages-sncf.com to Oui.sncf. Home to the largest French electronic commerce website in terms of volume of tickets sold, the migration was a great success evidenced by the ascension of oui.sncf on the Alexa Top 1 Million chart.

Besides enabling travelers to purchase train tickets, oui.sncf lets travelers reserve their desired seats at no extra charge, register for alerts when their desired train route is available for sale, lock in prices to certain train tickets, be alerted to lower fares when they are available, and so on. These website features encourage travelers to register profiles with the site and access the site multiple times per transaction.



Do you need advice on your dot brand?

Request a CSC .BRAND strategic analysis.

In focus

Your .Brand is Your Online Identity: Reflecting on SCOTUS Decision

When SCOTUS decided in favor of Booking.com in the case of the USPTO v. Booking.com B.V. on June 30, 2020¹, intellectual property lawyers everywhere applauded the decision.

The USPTO had refused trademark registrations from Booking.com, concluding that “Booking.com” was a generic name. Booking.com sought judicial review, and the U.S. District Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court all determined that “Booking.com”—unlike the term “booking” alone—is not generic, because consumers perceive the term “Booking.com” as a brand they can rely on for lodging travel reservations online.

Important takeaway: the customer is king

David Bernstein of Debevoise & Plimpton told IPWatchdog that “the Court confirmed that the consumer is king when it comes to brand names, and if consumers perceive a term to be a brand name and not merely a generic or descriptive reference, then that name is entitled to trademark protection².”

What impact does this landmark judicial case have on trademarks?

Moving forward, we may see more generic-word domain names being trademarked. Fara Sunderji of Dorsey & Whitney, speculated that each of these may need to be accompanied by a supporting survey indicating that the public perceives the generic-word domain name as the brand itself, such as in the case of “Booking.com.”



Can brands that are generic-word domain names be dot brands?

The short answer is no. Trademarks that contain domain name system (DNS) identifiers such as .com are not accepted into the Trademark Clearinghouse³ (TMCH) and having a TMCH-validated trademark is a prerequisite of a .BRAND.

Moreover, the 2012 application round for new gTLDs disallowed⁴ closed new gTLDs with generic strings (closed generics) and, whether new gTLDs with generic strings will be allowed as open or closed remains one of the undecided issues under review by the GNSO's New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group for the new gTLD application round 2.

Even if there were no policy restrictions preventing Booking.com B.V. operating .BOOKING as a closed .BRAND, it shouldn't. Reason being, the public will be challenged to associate .BOOKING with the online travel reservation website since it is established that the public regards Booking.com as the brand. It would be irrational for Booking.com B.V. to operate .BOOKING as its .BRAND—so it doesn't unless there is a shift in its brand policy. Booking.com B.V. currently operates .BOOKING as an open generic top-level domain.

Your dot brand is your online identity

.BRAND owners must ask: what is our brand? Are you perceived by the public to be brand, or brand.com? In other words, is brand.com or brand.net simply an address where the public can locate you? If so, you should consider moving house to an address that is more representative of your brand (i.e., .brand, simply because it is your brand).

This transformation unifies your online presence into your .BRAND. You will be able to focus your SEO efforts on your .BRAND and customers from

everywhere in the world will engage directly with you only on your .BRAND sites.

As .BRAND owners of .Saxo, .Cern, and .Kpmg would attest, migrating your entire online presence over to your .BRAND is neither simple nor straightforward. A good migration will ultimately lead to an improved SEO performance of your site prior to migration, but the migration itself is unsettling, painstaking, technical, granular, and requires scrutiny of current websites, use of legacy active domain names, best practices, test results, and help from SEO experts.

The toughest aspects of a full migration are not the technical side of things but the strategy, planning, and communication that have to happen before migration. Before deciding to migrate, the project manager needs to obtain buy-in from the senior stakeholders of the organization.

This means the project managers or project teams should survey consumers or the public to consider some of the following:

- Calculate quantitative benefits expected from the migration
- Draft a strategy with business case and project plans
- Inform and get buy-in from the C-suite, board, then employees
- Devote resources to the plans
- Communicate upcoming changes with employees and affiliates
- Communicate changes with external stakeholders, investors, partners, vendors, customers, and consumers

The message? That your online presence is your .BRAND and no other.



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Insights to a dot brand migration

To gain insights into the migration of a .BRAND, the Brand Registry Group (BRG)—a not-for-profit organization that comprises of representatives from various .BRAND organizations championing the use of .BRAND top-level domains both within and outside of the ICANN community—interviewed KPMG as part of a webinar series “BRG 20/20 Dot Brand Vision.”

Domenic Torani of KPMG shared how KPMG tackled the challenges of migrating their digital landscape to home.kpmg and the impact of this transformation one year later:

- The upcoming changes were communicated with everyone in the organization, from C-Suite to all internal teams, and they were given time to adapt to the changes.
- It was important to understand the technologies behind every aspect impacted by the move.
- Moving from .com to .kpmg required granular scrutiny of all to do with the SEO of kpmg.com, beyond best practices.
- Consulting an SEO expert was vital in attaining a successive transition.



Building a dot brand strategy: CSC's three-phase approach

Whether you have a .BRAND strategy in mind or not, CSC recommends that .BRAND owners consider a phased approach to minimize risks, keep to the strengths of an agile methodology, and provide opportunities to shape your strategy as you move along these phases.



Phase 1: Socialization

As the marketing rule of seven states, “a prospect needs to hear the advertiser’s message at least seven times before they’ll take action to buy that product or service.”

A good communication plan aims to get everyone onboard with your .BRAND strategy. You’ll always want to start by building up familiarity of your .BRAND with the C-suite and board, followed by employees, and the public.

Socialize your .BRAND by using a .BRAND domain name for the secure and private meeting connection for the board or your executives.

Engage staff in an internal online contest hosted on a .BRAND domain name that Human Resources plans. Let them dial into a virtual private network (VPN) on a connection that ends in your .BRAND.



Phase 2: Experimentation

Track how .BRAND domain names are working and converting for you.

Use .BRAND domain names in new campaigns such as newproduct.brand or use them in social media campaigns with very short and memorable .BRAND domain names such as t.brand.



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Have email subscribers sign up to receive electronic direct mailers for specific promotions from your newsletter@mail.brand. Do A/B testing with different .BRAND email addresses to gauge which email addresses consumers trust (determined by a higher open rate).



Phase 3: Implementation

Depending on your strategy, implementation may be a full migration of all webpages over to your .BRAND, or your .BRAND may coexist with your legacy domain names by having direct customer engagement on your .BRAND or by showcasing your corporate values on your .BRAND.

By now, you could migrate investor-facing content to a website known as annualreports.brand, or even create client-facing applications and aggregate dependencies on secure .BRAND sites. There are many ways to begin integrating a .BRAND, and your strategy will help you stay on the right track.

Conclusion

If you have activated and started using a .BRAND to redirect some of your legacy online property, or if you've created .BRAND domain names for social media outreach, new campaigns, and websites, you may be surprised at how naturally the public takes to your .BRAND.

Your .BRAND is a unique branding opportunity like no other. Share your stories with us at dotbrand@cscglobal.com.

References

¹[No. 19-46](#). United States Patent and Trademark Office et al. v. Booking.com B.V.

²[No. 19-46](#). United States Patent and Trademark Office et al. v. Booking.com B.V.

³[Wikipedia](#): The Trademark Clearinghouse is a database of validated and registered trademarks established by ICANN to help trademark holders prevent infringing behavior in the DNS.

⁴[CircleID article](#), "ICANN: Do Not Allow Closed New gTLDs With Generic Strings" by George Sadowsky

About CSC

CSC is the trusted provider of choice for the Forbes Global 2000 and the 100 Best Global Brands® in enterprise domain names, domain name system (DNS), digital certificate management, as well as digital brand and fraud protection. As global companies make significant investments in their security posture, CSC can help them understand known security blind spots that exist and help them secure their digital assets. By leveraging CSC's proprietary solutions, companies can get secure to protect against cyber threats to their online assets, helping them avoid devastating revenue loss, brand reputation damage, or significant financial penalties because of policies like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). CSC also provides online brand protection—the combination of online brand monitoring and enforcement activities—taking a holistic approach to digital asset protection, along with fraud protection services to combat phishing. Headquartered in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, since 1899, CSC has offices throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Asia-Pacific region. CSC is a global company capable of doing business wherever our clients are—and we accomplish that by employing experts in every business we serve.

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