University Domain Name Policy

BACKGROUND

Internet addresses, including domain names, are an important part of electronic communications practices. The structure and use of domain names by University entities and officially associated organizations reflect their relationship with the University.

PURPOSE

Washington State University has a legal interest in the use of its name and associated trademarks, including those contained or portrayed in domain names. This policy is intended to ensure that domain names available through the WSU domain name service promote WSU, its programs, and activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Only specific servers directly authorized by central information technology departments (WSU Information Technology Services (ITS) in Pullman, and ITS in Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver), hereafter referred to collectively as Central ITS, are allowed to operate on the WSU network as Domain Name Servers (DNS). Central ITS reserves the right to disconnect DNS that do not strictly comply with all policies.

2. Only primary domain names of wsu.edu or .org must be registered within the authoritative DNS at WSU. All other primary domain names such as .com, .net, .biz, etc., are not registered in the WSU domain name server.

3. University Marketing and Communications is responsible for approving domain name requests where the primary domain name is wsu.edu.

4. In general, domain names that support activities tied to WSU's educational mission must be of the form wsu.edu. Other domain names must qualify for inclusion as a .org as outlined in #6, #7, and #9 below. Those that fail to qualify must not reside in the WSU domain name server.

5. Domain names of the form xxxxx.wsu.edu (or xxxxx.xxxx.wsu.edu) must be used by all official University websites, including those of colleges, departments, and other units of the University, as well as faculty or staff performing University functions for use on the Internet. Domain names should accurately describe the activities or programs to which they refer.

6. Any WSU domain name pointed to a third-party service provider must be approved by Central ITS before use and follow appropriate University branding, security, and data use/retention policies, as well as applicable laws and policies to include Appropriate Use (Executive Policy #4) and the ethics laws of the State of Washington, and must not result in liabilities to the University.
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7. WSU domain names must be selected with the following guidelines in mind in order to minimize the potential for both current and future naming conflicts:
   a. WSU websites, applications, and services must be subdomains (xxxx.unit.wsu.edu) or subdirectories (unit.wsu.edu/xxxx) off of the parent unit domain.
   b. If a parent unit domain is unavailable or inappropriate, WSU websites, applications, or services must use one of the following general use namespaces as appropriate or submit a request for an exception to the Web Advisory Committee.
      i. xxxx.event.wsu.edu
      ii. xxxx.center.wsu.edu (must be a recognized WSU center)
      iii. xxxx.conference.wsu.edu
      iv. xxxx.workshop.wsu.edu
      v. xxxx.program.wsu.edu
      vi. xxxx.research.wsu.edu
      vii. xxxx.hub.wsu.edu
      viii. xxxx.resources.wsu.edu
      ix. labs.wsu.edu/xxxx

8. Third-level domain names xxxx.wsu.edu are reserved and must be approved before use.
   a. Third-level domains may be used for:
      i. University-wide websites, applications, and services that are not directly identified with a department or unit.
      ii. Websites, applications, and services that represent multiple organizations either within or outside the University.
         1. If the organizations represented fall under a single identifiable parent unit at WSU (college, department, etc.) the parent unit is to be included as the third-level domain.
   b. Third-level domains must not be used for:
      i. Vanity URLs that redirect to an existing site.
         1. EXCEPTION: Shortened URLs in the form of go.wsu.edu/xxxx may be requested through University Marketing and Communications for use in marketing and promotional efforts.
      ii. Individual student clubs or student groups.
      iii. Individual faculty or staff websites.
b. Third-level domains must not be used for (cont.):
   iv. Events, workshops, conferences, or temporary applications.
      1. EXCEPTION: University-wide events may be considered for third-level domains
         provided there is a strong expectation that the event is to continue at least
         annually. University-wide events seeking to use a third-level domain must follow
         the criteria outlined in 8.a.
   v. Development/staging areas for websites, applications, or services.

c. Requests for third-level domains are submitted to University Marketing and
   Communications and must include:
   i. Justification statement for using a third-level domain that clearly states:
      1. Why a fourth-level domain is inappropriate or unavailable.
      2. Why none of the provided general use domains are appropriate.
   ii. Statement on naming conflicts.
      1. The person submitting the request for a third-level domain is to include a
         statement that clearly outlines why the request is appropriate and warrants an
         exception.

d. Requests for third-level domains are evaluated based on the following criteria:
   i. Is the stated justification accurate and falls under one of the approved uses for a
      third-level domain?
   ii. Is the requested domain sufficiently specific to avoid future naming conflicts?
   iii. Does the requested domain accurately describe the website, application, or service to
         the target audiences?
   iv. NOTE: If an exception is requested, the supplied justification must demonstrate a
       significant and justifiable reason for needing the exception.

9. The Web Advisory Committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending approval or
   disapproval to University Marketing and Communications for domain name requests where
   the primary domain name is .org. The committee also serves in an advisory capacity to
   University Marketing and Communications, as needed. The committee includes
   representation of students, faculty, and staff across WSU.

Domain names of the form .org must meet the following criteria:
• Directly serve the mission of WSU.
• Not a for profit entity.
• Follow all federal, state, local, and University laws or policies.
• Represent a legitimate organization with a bona fide relationship to WSU (e.g., ASWSU-
   sanctioned club, etc.).
• Do not qualify under the criteria for wsu.edu as stated in #5 above.
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10. All domain names outside of the wsu.edu name space must comply with this policy. Owners of domain names outside of the wsu.edu name space must either seek an exception to this policy, request a new sub-domain name within the wsu.edu name space (e.g., wsudepartment.com might change to department.wsu.edu), or remove their services from wsu.edu. WSU entities using approved third-party service providers must use domain names of the form xxxx.wsu.edu (or xxxx.xxxx.wsu.edu), if custom domain names are supported by the service provider. See University Network Policies (Executive Policy #16) for more information on how to contract with third-party service providers. NOTE: Central ITS is responsible for this process.

11. Domain forwarding as provided by an external service provider is not specifically excluded. Those utilizing this methodology are cautioned to ensure that any on-campus resources that are accessed comply with all applicable laws and policies to include Appropriate Use (Executive Policy #4) and the ethics laws of the State of Washington, and do not result in liabilities to the University.

12. Any domain name registered in the WSU DNS that is not accessed by network query for two months may be terminated.

13. WSU reserves the right to rescind any listing within its authoritative DNS. Network service may be removed from the machine(s) that host the domain name(s) in question pending review. See University Network Policies (Executive Policy #16).

PROCEDURES

1. To request a new wsu.edu domain name –
   a. For third-level domains (i.e. xxxx.wsu.edu), submit a request to University Marketing and Communications at web.wsu.edu.
   b. For fourth-level domains, contact the appropriate ITS manager.

2. To appeal a denied wsu.edu domain name – The requestor must submit additional written information or clarification in support of the request to University Marketing and Communications and request a review by the Web Advisory Committee.

3. To request a new .org domain name – Submit a written request to the appropriate University Marketing and Communications manager. They send the request to the Web Advisory Committee. The Committee informs University Marketing and Communications of their recommendation within 30 days of the date of the request.
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DEFINITIONS

Domain forwarding – Domain forwarding occurs when a registered domain name such as example.org is entered into a DNS that is external to the actual location of the website associated with the domain name. The external DNS forwards web requests to the computer system actually hosting the website. For example, if example.org was a registered domain name and was associated with a particular DNS for forwarding purposes, then a user trying to view example.org would have their request "forwarded" to a second computer where the actual website exists. The domain forwarding DNS acts as the go-between to redirect traffic to a computer system that does not have its own DNS.

Domain name – The common, word-based identifier for a specific computer system. Examples would be wsu.edu, microsoft.com, or redcross.org.

Domain levels (top, second, third, and fourth) – The right-most portion (.edu, .com, or .org) is called the primary domain name or top-level domain name. Other primary domain names include .biz, .info, .mil, .gov, etc. The portion to the left of the primary domain name is called a second-level domain name. In the example above, wsu, microsoft, and redcross are second-level domain names. Second-level domain names are registered with various governing associations. Moving further to the left results in third- and fourth-level domain names (also referred to as sub-domain names). Examples of sub-domain names are stat.wsu.edu, ansci.wsu.edu, vancouver.wsu.edu, or spokane.wsu.edu. The registered owner of the second-level domain name that it is associated with controls sub-domain names.

Web Advisory Committee – The appropriate University Marketing and Communications manager chairs the committee, with selected representatives from WSU departments and units including the Attorney General's Office, if warranted.

Domain Name Server (DNS) – A computer system running a Domain Name Service. Often, such computers are dedicated to DNS activities and are simply referred to as DNS or just the DNS. Many registered holders of second-level domain names operate and maintain their own DNS. WSU operates authoritative DNS for the wsu.edu domain, as well as for selected .org domains in accordance with this policy. Entries into the DNS are used to match up common alphabetic domain names such as stat.wsu.edu or example.org with the unique numeric identifier, which allows outside computers to connect and establish web activity.

Domain Name Service – A special computer application that translates domain names into a unique numeric identifier, which is used for computer-to-computer communications. Because domain names are alphabetic, they're easier to remember. The Internet however, is really based on worldwide, unique numeric identifiers (IP Addresses). Every time you use a domain name, a DNS must translate the name into the corresponding IP address. For example, the domain name www.example.com might translate to 192.0.34.166.
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Vanity URL - A vanity URL is a short URL that redirects visitors to a website or web application.

ITS Manager – The person responsible for DNS directly authorized by ITS departments (WSU ITS in Pullman, and ITS in Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver).

Name space – Name space, or domain name space, is an inverted tree containing a set of nodes, such as com, edu, org, net, gov, mil, arpa, etc. Each node represents a domain. Everything below a node falls into that domain. WSU belongs to the edu node/domain. Similarly, anyone at WSU that uses wsu.edu as part of its host name falls into the WSU domain/node and is part of WSU's domain name space.