

A New Internet Extension For Eco-Conscious Companies



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Attention eco-conscious entrepreneurs: There's a new Internet extension for you and a way to underscore your environmental bona fides.

Available to any business, government, nonprofit or individual focused on sustainability, the extension, called .eco. is supervised by [Big Room](#), which also runs [Ecolabel Index](#), a directory of labels and certifications denoting eco-friendly practices.



A nonprofit by the name of the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers \(ICANN\)](#), coordinates the Internet's global naming system. But different organizations operate the various Internet top-level domains, as they're called, overseeing name registration and the definition of who is eligible to use that extension. That's where Big Room comes in. (Aside from the tried-and-true .com and .org, recently many more choices have sprung up, like .pro). Then domain retailers sell registrations to end-users.

The .eco development process took close to 10 years, with several organizations vying to become the domain's keeper. With long-standing backgrounds in sustainable work, according to co-founder Trevor Bowden, he and fellow founder Jacob Malthouse figured they had a good shot.

Still, “To have value it needed to be trusted by the environmental community,” he says. So they commenced a process of reaching out to everyone from environmental groups to industry associations to determine how .eco should be built: how it could be used to further the goals of the environmental community and what policies were needed to reflect those interests. At the same time, they started scouting for support from mission-aligned investors to help pay for the application costs of \$185,000, plus all that other leg work. They also got endorsements from B Lab, WWF and Greenpeace, among others. They finally submitted an application in 2014.

Applicants who want to register for the .eco extension need to fill out a profile in which, among other points, they discuss their environmental priorities and actions, to make sure their sustainable-related activities are legit. So far, according to Bowden, they have sold more than 1,000 domains since .eco went into effect on April 25.

Registration costs \$65-\$100 annually and is available from more than 60 global domain retailers.

Why go through the trouble? “It’s a great way for businesses to distinguish themselves in the marketplace and online as truly caring about the environment,” says Bowden. Companies can include their .eco in anything from business cards to their email ID, thereby underscoring their environmental commitment and bona fides.

Organizations are using it in different ways--for example, as a new landing page in some cases, in others, changing their extension to .eco from an older one.



(Photo credit: ROLAND WEIHRAUCH/AFP/Getty Images)

Take Koala. The one-year old, Sydney-based company sells cleaning products made from such 100% biodegradable ingredients as Australian essential oils and changed its domain from www.koala-co.com to koala.eco.

“The .eco domain demonstrates our support for positive change for the planet,” says co-founder Jessica Bragdon.

“It’s more than a few letters at the end of the web address. It’s an identifier of a community priority.”