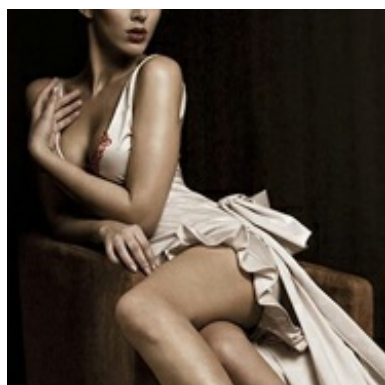


INTERNET

Brands begin to register .luxury domain names

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Dot Luxury promotional image

By SARAH JONES

The generic top-level domain name .luxury is now available for sale to the general public, giving brands the opportunity to further define their status online.



According to Dot Luxury, Chanel, Gucci, Cartier, Valentino, Van Cleef & Arpels and Bulgari already purchased .luxury domains during a 60-day period where only trademarked brands could register. This claims to be the first luxury-specific top-level domain, and aims to provide a more central luxury space online.

"Today luxury exists on the Internet in a very fragmented way," said Monica Kirchner, CEO of **Dot Luxury**. "Consumers go to many different places to find information and news about fashion, watches, travel, wine, food, real estate, etc. Trying to find focus in the ".com" world is very difficult.

".Luxury aims to overcome that, providing an online platform that by its very name says what it is all about," she said. "Over time we expect that luxury brands and consumers will find .Luxury to be a trusted space that best caters to their respective needs and desires."

Premium domain

Top-level domains are the end portion of a URL, for instance .com. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the non-profit responsible for the international domain name system, launched an application system in January 2012 to allow for more generic top-level domain names, or gTLDs.

In the Sunrise period of registration for .luxury, where only entities holding trademarks were allowed to register, more than 500 brands secured their .luxury domains.



Dot Luxury Web site

Domain registration for .luxury URLs is currently in the Landrush period, where non-trademarked entities can apply for domains at a premium price. For instance, on GoDaddy pre-registration for a year begins at \$799.99 per year, compared with \$12.99 for a .com domain.

During pre-registration, if a domain has multiple registrants, it will go to auction.

Starting May 19, .luxury will go into general availability, where domains will be on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The company behind .luxury has created policies that prohibit counterfeiting and cybersquatting to protect brands.

This new domain system will help consumers looking for luxury brands find them online and create a luxury community in the digital space.

"Luxury is a brand new namespace, it offers a unique opportunity to differentiate and own a memorable and relevant domain name that can be used to directly enhance communication about a product, service, campaign, program or category, for example Mascara.luxury or VIPsuites.luxury," Ms. Kirchner said.

"A .Luxury web address also enables brands that offer products to different segments of the market and target their messaging to the right audience," she said. "For example, an automaker may choose to use .com for its mid-line vehicles, but choose to market its high end offerings with a .luxury address.

"In short, .luxury addresses help support and reinforce the value proposition associated with the marketing of various luxury products."

Secure connection

This added layer of protection online could help brands fight imposters.

Italian fashion house Gucci has filed a lawsuit against a number of counterfeit Web sites and online merchants to help protect the brand's image, although the legal battles are not likely to stop counterfeiters.

The label recently went after web domains and individual merchants on online trading community iOffer in a suit in the Florida Southern District Court. Although this case is not likely to stop counterfeiters, it could prevent them from targeting Gucci in the future ([see story](#)).

Any opportunity for a luxury brand to prove its ownership of an official digital space should be taken.

Luxury marketers should use the Verified Pages feature on Facebook to keep their brand reputation intact in the social media community.

Facebook's Verified Pages are a feature similar to that on Twitter so that brands can confirm their identity. Though luxury marketers have been slower to adopt social media in their strategy, the Facebook profile verification tool can help them signal to consumers that their page does, in fact, represent the brand ([see story](#)).

As more unique top level domains are adopted, consumers will begin to look for luxury brands on this new domain.

"Luxury consumers are highly tech savvy and both brands and consumers are looking for a trusted place where one can transact authentically," Ms. Kirchner said.

"Luxury has adopted strict policies against counterfeit goods, cybersquatting and more," she said. "Additionally, our consumer research says that on average, nine out of 10 luxury consumers search for information online before making a luxury purchase.

"Interestingly, that same research indicates that the majority of these consumers would expect to find luxury brands using a .luxury address--therefore, the opportunity is really here to connect the dots, building out a trusted and respected platform that serves as a foundation for the luxury community as it accelerates into the digital age."

Final Take

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