

## Internet Domain Names:

### What are they and what do they do and some current problems?

In Vanuatu, very few people outside the technical community know what a domain name is, how it can be obtained or how to use one. With the dynamic expansion of ICT development in Vanuatu, including the Internet as a form of global communications to conduct business and to locate resources, the local internet community today is increasingly aware that domain names help users direct email traffic, locate websites and establish an online identity.

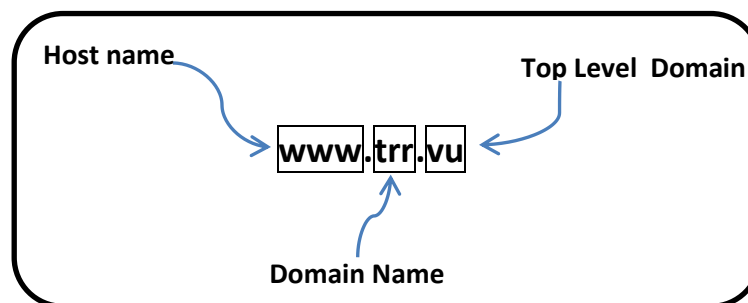
A domain name such as “trr.vu” is, essentially, the address of a person or an organization on the Internet. It can also become your identity where people can find you online. For example, a tourism business would typically register a domain name associated with its company name. Another business might register a domain name by its product name. Domain names can also be registered by individuals and families; often with names that have personal meanings. Although domain names are an important part of the Internet, understanding them, how they work, and how one can obtain and maintain them, can be confusing.

#### So what is a domain name and how does it work?

In order to be accessible to others, every Internet-connected computer must have a *unique* address: which is a string of numbers that is difficult for most people to remember. This string is called the “IP address.” (IP stands for “Internet Protocol”). As with mailing addresses, telephone numbers and vehicle or ship registrations, these addresses require centralised coordination in order to be effectively used by all parties.

For Vanuatu, the IP address and associated domain names coordination manager is Telecom Vanuatu Limited (TVL) who is currently the .vu country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) trustee.

The Domain Name System (DNS) is a very important component of the Internet hierarchy and resources. Without the DNS, the Internet will not be able to work effectively. The DNS ensures a given location is found on the Internet. The DNS translates the IP addresses e.g. 192.0.31.162 into a human readable address called the domain name, e.g. [www.trr.vu](http://www.trr.vu), that is easier for people to remember. Therefore, for instance, when trying to locate the TRR website on the internet, one only has to remember to type [www.trr.vu](http://www.trr.vu) instead of a string of numbers or the IP address. Overall, by associating a familiar string of letters—the domain name—with an IP address, the DNS makes it much easier for Internet users to remember websites and email addresses as shown in the TRR domain name example shown below.



## **Current domain name developments in Vanuatu**

Domain Names have become very critical and commercial these days, and are the life blood of information and business economy in both the developed and the developing countries. For many businesses in Vanuatu, having a domain name and an associated website is key to their daily operations and sustainable growth.

At present, the .vu ccTLD including .vu domain names are managed by TVL. TVL's VUNIC system - <http://www.vunic.vu/> - offers automated registration of domain names in the .vu domain. Website hosting or email service will not be available unless you have specifically arranged for those services in relation to the domain name. TVL assumed the managing role of the .vu ccTLD trustee as part of Vanuatu's telecommunications history dating back to the 1990s when internet service was first introduced into Vanuatu, and at a time when TVL had the monopoly of being the only telecommunications provider. TRR is working with TVL on changes to Vanuatu's DNS administration in an effort to ensure the domain names market service is fair and transparent. TRR is firmly focused on the development and implementation of relevant policies for the development of this market in Vanuatu.

For consumers' information, TVL recently conducted a review and introduced new arrangements for its VUNIC services. TRR became aware that some customers of these services have experienced problems with the introduction of the new arrangements.

In the interest of consumers and the public at large, TRR is advising all business and individual consumers of Telecommunications/ICT sector to be diligent and, should they experience any problems with their domain names, to consult TVL promptly to resolve any problems. . As published by TVL in the Vanuatu Daily Post of Monday 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2013, TVL has advised its domain customers that those who have not renewed the use of their domain names will need to consult TVL to do so. A grace period for this renewal activity was extended to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2013. Ensure that you renew the use of your domain name with TVL before the expiry date. Contact TVL VUNIC hostmaster on [hostmaster@vunic.vu](mailto:hostmaster@vunic.vu) or call 081111 if you have any queries.