

Blog Export: Exile From the Herd, <http://www.privateworld.com/>

Thursday, May 31, 2007

How to use your domain name with blogger

Title says it all, easyDNS member Many Ayromlou wrote a clear step-by-step mini-howto today explaining the procedure to get your domain name registered through us working with your blogger.com
blog:<http://www.nerdlogger.com/2007/05/how-to-use-custom-dns-name-with-blogger.html>
My only comment is Step 6 shouldn't be a few hours' wait, not unless you've already typed your domain name into your browser before you do this and now your local ISP's nameservers have cached your old IP.
But thanks to Many, I'm sure a lot of bloggers interested on using their own domain name with blogger.com will reference this.

Posted by easyDNS: Tips and Tricks in via easyDNS blog at 20:52

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Attack of the TechnoPinkos

I have been toying with an adage in mind for a few months, I think I may have invented it. It's one of those "there are three kinds of people" type quips, goes something like this:

There are three types of people, libertarians, conservatives and socialists.

Libertarians think they know how to live their own lives.

Conservatives think they know how to run everybody else's lives.

Socialists think they know how we all should live.

This morning I was forwarded a link to the Business2.0 article on domainer Kevin Ham about a half-dozen times and one sent the reddit comment thread on it (titled "This guy is a piece of s**t") and I had to chuckle and replied "I see Techno-Pinkos are out in full force".

Some of the comments are just classically clueless:

"He's just a parasite. Someone gaming the system for their own financial ends without providing a useful service to anyone, and making it worse for many."

and

"If you don't see anything wrong in the concept of "speculator", I don't think I can possibly explain it to you. It's wrong and hurtful for so many people that it should be obvious to anyone."

Newsflash: Speculation is any time you choose one path, good or service over another in the hopes that you will do better with it over time than you will the alternatives. Deciding to go to college and becoming an accountant instead of dropping out of high school and becoming a garbageman is speculating that over time, you will have a more secure, financially rewarding career as an accountant than as a garbageman (which may not be true)

The techno-pinkos hate it when they see the speculation of others pay off and compound their irrationality by denying that they ever partake in speculation themselves. Pretty well most productive endeavours in life, including ALL investments are a form of speculation, get it over it.

Readers of my blog, especially the domainers may be surprised to find out I have no problems with Kevin Ham's deal with the Cameroon government to wildcard .CM, and in a wider sense, no problem with domainers buying up thousands of domain names. Yes, I believe the aftermarket valuations are overheated. No, I do not believe "there ought to be a law or something" that forces domain registrants to use their own names in a manner that the technopinkos hanging out on the reddit, digg and /. comment boards find suitable.

Bringing my 3-types of people into the analogy, here is how they think things should be "run" in the naming space:

Conservatives want to see government regulation on content and to see other websites they don't like banned. They completely miss the point when it comes to reform (like the misguided FOISA bill which did nothing to protect the personal data of domain registrants and penalized them for taking measures to protect their own privacy)

Socialists as a rule of thumb, don't get rich on the internet or anywhere else, (unless they are socialist politicians) because to them, profits are evil. As such, they hate it when they see somebody else earning a profit or god forbid, getting rich. They think prosperity and wealth creation is a zero sum game and anybody who isn't living paycheck to paycheck is a capitalist pig grabbing more than his "fair share". They eschew marketing in all its forms as "spam", they often won't even mention a product or service they use by name because they think that's "spammy" (see the Digg comments on Domainwarning, below). They lead strange lives of constant outrage, holding jobs, earning salaries from companies who market themselves in ways they would probably consider "spammy".

Libertarians think socialists and conservatives spend so much time and effort on other people's business they don't have

any energy left to take responsibility for their own lives. And that's where libertarians start. This is more than "looking out for number 1", this is chalking up your lot in life to yourself, not blaming others for your own shortcomings or taking credit for other people's successes. Very few libertarians enter politics. Very few libertarians think they have the right to tell others how they should live their lives. Libertarians don't waste excessive amounts of time complaining about how the rules should be. Libertarians pick up the hands they are dealt in life and figure out the best way to play them. Many of them are successful in business and many of them are financially independent.

Both socialists and conservatives hate libertarians. Socialists think they're capitalist pigs and Conservatives think they're liberal degenerates.

Over the years I have been baffled by the leftists in the tech sector. Because in my naivety, I figure techies are of above average intelligence. If you're smarter than the average lemming, then I figure your approach to life's trials and other things that are none of your business would come from a higher thought process than socialist mob rule.

Examples:

"Oil companies make obscene profits!"

Socialists take to the streets chanting and carrying placards calling for "More taxes on oil companies" or "Price Controls".

Libertarians buy up oil company stocks and maybe use the dividends to buy a hybrid or put up solar panels to heat their swimming pool.

"Evil domainer owns 1000 domains he's not even using!"

Socialists post "he's a piece of sh*t" comments to reddit and advocate nonsensical rules like "use it or lose it" (what and who decides what proper "use" is?)

Libertarians shrug. Good for him. Maybe he'll buy some domains. Maybe he'll sell some domains to the domainer.

One of the comments to my now semi-infamous Domain Aftermarket overheated post was "the guy probably has sour grapes". I stand by everything I said in that article, but to the person who said that, you were not entirely off-base. I have expressed regrets over the years that I came very close to being an early pioneering domainer but didn't because I failed to make the last crucial mental connection in my mind to grasp what was happening. I blogged about this on my old blog and I can't find the post now.

Alas, I was grabbing expired domains in 2000 as a hobby and never made the connection that there was money to be made. Had I done so, I would have seriously dived in and maybe ate Frank Schilling's lunch. But alas, I didn't, I missed the point so now Frank sits on a billion dollar domain portfolio and lives in the Caymans and I'm stuck in Toronto owning and running easyDNS.

Life sucks? I don't think so. I still pinch myself every day to make sure I'm not dreaming (especially since I haven't slept since my daughter was born) Rather than slag Kevin Ham, Frank Schilling, Rick Schwartz or David Chernoff, et al for figuring out that which I failed to figure out, I salute them.

Last year after listening to Joe Polish and Tim Poulson's Barracuda Marketing seminar, I put together a one page website at DomainWarning.com "10 Things you must know before registering a domain name with anybody. Eventually, it made the front page of Digg and the comments were marked by indignation (oooooh what an awful pun). People "accused" the page of being "nothing more than easyDNS marketing" Uh, well duh. Yeah, that's exactly what the page is. Somehow that's a "bad thing"? Apparently telling the truth about widely used tricks in the domain industry is, especially if anybody is going to profit from it, as per the Digg comments:

"1 thing you MUST know about the linked site is, it's an advertisement.

Whatever you do, DO NOT CLICK THE LAST LINK ON THE PAGE. The site owner will get affiliate credits if you do.

F***ing cheap a** wh*re, that uses Digg to get some quick cash."

or

"After reading that entire page, why should I trust the link at the very bottom? How do I know the entire page wasn't built to bring business to easydns.com ?

Question everything.."

Well now you know for sure: the entire page was built to bring business to easyDNS. The entire page explains why you should do business with easyDNS. I don't understand how these people think it's supposed to work. Maybe we're just

Blog Export: Exile From the Herd, <http://www.privateworld.com/>

supposed to take out a Superbowl ad with scantily clad models being hosed down like circus animals a la Digg sponsor, Godaddy, and I guess that's ok.

There was the odd supportive comment:

"I don't know what you're flipping out about. The article is good, offers a lot of good tips on how to avoid being screwed with your domain name, and at the end they provide one small discrete link to a good DNS service. This is a good example of honest advertising."

But the technopinkos beg to differ. Whether domainwarning was put up by an affiliate marketer who would make money off clicks or referrals, or by easyDNS as a marketing vehicle, they called it "spam" and it was somehow "worse" because it made the front page of Digg which I find even more ludicrous. We didn't digg it. Their own community put it on the front page. Market forces in action == bad, spam, evil.

The one thing the socialists and conservatives do have in common is how upset they are by the things other people are doing. The technopinkos seem to have more spare time on their hands, watching the comment thread on reddit, seems to be one extremely upset technopinko responding to every thread, belaboring his point, he's been at it all day while us libertarian types have been off doing stuff.

But these are just two examples. Go to any high profile tech board, read a story about somebody, anybody doing well in business, click into the comment forums and odds are you'll find the threads slanting heavily to the left as the technopinkos run livid.

More stuff to do my lunch just arrived...

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Living off the net at 15:24

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

When The Music Stops

There is a saying among Native Indians "He who doesn't consider what is distant, will find sorrow near at hand". I suspect we are entering an age where, to paraphrase Douglas Casey, the inevitable is finally becoming imminent. Today's post is about a couple of trainwrecks, one that just happened which everybody could have and should have seen coming, the other is still on the rails...for now.

In the case of e-gold the hammer has already fallen, with indictments on money laundering charges being handed down and many large exchange providers having their accounts frozen.

The founder of 1MDC, (a pseudo-DGC in that it is itself backed by e-gold) once posted to a dgc mailing list that he felt his client base was safe because "if e-gold ever failed, he would simply move his users' balances to another digital gold currency", an attitude which has been proven by events, not to work when the music stops and those without chairs find that their contingency plans were contingent on having one. Now, all 1MDC users find themselves out of luck with 1MDC's e-gold accounts being seized in the indictments and there will be no flight to another DGC for their users.

Having also recently finished reading about the failure of Long Term Capital Management, I find common theme I've been encountering lately is the idea that the totality of potential failure conditions are known in advance and can thus be planned for and nullified. LTCM had early signs that their underlying assumptions may not be applicable everywhere or even valid in their original forms, yet they continued to ratchet up their leverage and diversify into more exotic trades and spreads. When things started to wrong they simply refused to acknowledge it because the things that were going wrong simply didn't fit into their models, ergo, a kind of groupwide denial set in that it couldn't be real. It wasn't until it was too late, far too late that they had to go to the fed, hat in hand, to organize a bailout.

Of course retrospect is now obvious: the time to start mitigating against an e-gold disaster was a long time ago and I hinted as much in my When Will E-gold Get Accountable? post several years ago, which earned me a lot of flames on the DGC mailing lists but got me quoted in Business Week magazine. While easyDNS is still the only ICANN accredited registrar that accepts digital gold currencies as payment, we made it a practice to redeem our e-gold as fast as it came in. I may like digital gold as a medium of exchange, but when it comes to storing value I feel better off with the physical ingots spread around a few bank vaults.

It wasn't especially prescient of me to see trouble on the horizon for e-gold. Nor does it seem so for my favorite sparring topic in the blogosphere lately, the ridiculously overheated valuations in the domain aftermarket.

Marc Faber's market commentary this month is entitled "Is The US Economy already in Recession" makes a good case for calling the economic situation in the US recessionary.

"In fact what is interesting is that home prices have been declining at a time of even faster monetary growth. But whereas accelerating money supply has lately failed to boost home prices, faster money supply growth has continued to have some 'favorable' consequences for other asset markets".

I have long suspected the domain aftermarket has been a beneficiary of this phenomenon. Faber himself could have been referring to it when he wrote

"We are truly in the midst of a buying frenzy or buying panic during which investors collectively believe that they can play the asset inflation game until it stops and then all get out profitably at the same time."

In fact he wasn't referring to the domain aftermarket but he did go on to note that "it would seem that the global asset inflation is slowly narrowing with fewer and fewer assets still surging".

The secondary market in domains will seemingly be among the last asset class standing when the music stops but where domainers and I diverge is their belief that domain valuations will not be overly affected by a sharp asset repricing across other markets.

This to me sounds more like wishful thinking than sound economic reasoning. If one posits as a starting point for

example, a sudden sharp 30% to 50% decline in the USD, any armchair economist could tell you why gold would go UP as a result. Or taking a different vector, let's say interest rates surge heavily, a logical case could be made for why the housing market would crater even deeper. These things are explainable within known economic frameworks.

Bearing in mind my core, base thesis that There is no such thing as the 'New Economy' I can't think of an economic scenario where domain name valuations would sustain or appreciate through a secular bear market in equities, a recession, stagflation or any other financial storm.

Overall ad spending will fall, not rise, cutting the legs out from under PPC, the one pillar holding up valuations that actually means anything. Nobody is going to care about "potential" future earnings of a domain name or how great a brand it could maybe someday be built into. All that is going to matter is what a domain name or website is generating in cashflow right now, and how much that cashflow will fall further through the course of the recession. Multiples will come down.

We aren't there yet. Right now we're in some Orwellian coma where inflation is underreported, GDP growth would be less than zero if it wasn't for those farcial hedonic adjustments and the unemployment rate holds steady at that magical 4.4% its been at for years (somehow those regular and frequent headlines about mass layoffs across every sector of the economy never budges that unalarming and digestable number)...and then we have the DOW at fantasy-land alltime highs, as are domain name valuations.

George Ure is always fond of saying "Better a couple years too early than a couple minutes too late", I've already sold most of my non-performing domain names, the ones that are "brandable", catchy, and full of that wonderful "potential" stuff. The ones I didn't have concrete development plans are being thinned out. I'm keeping the ones that generate cashflow and started developing the ones that don't (yet). In one exception, I have bought a name for a tidy sum, but did so for exceptional reasons (I liked it a lot, I wanted it, thought it was undervalued relative to the current parabolic valuations and it fit a development idea I've had for awhile).

Faber again puts it aptly

"If selling panics provide favorable entry points in asset markets, I suppose that buying frenzies should offer excellent exit opportunities. I would, therefore, use the current strength in equity markets around the world, which has left them in extremely overbought position, as an opportunity to sell and certainly not increase positions."

I feel the same way about the domain aftermarket, but hey, don't mind me I'm just some nutjob contrarian.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Tech Wreck 2.0 at 10:59