



[Trade Commissioner Service](#) > [Country and sector information](#) > [China](#)

> Domain name registration in China

Domain name registration in China

A Chinese domain name is a distinct online identifier representing the registrant's value and orientation in China. A foreign company that has set up its business network in China, e.g. a branch company, representative office, distribution channel etc., or is planning to expand its business into China soon, may deem a Chinese domain name containing the company's brand name or relevant keywords an important way to enhance its corporate image and succeed in the market.

While China has experienced tremendous growth in the number of credible private sector firms and many Canadian firms have done business successfully with them, the number of scams associated with domain names in China is increasing.

The [Canadian Trade Commissioner Service in China](#) is aware of a number of Canadian companies that have received suspicious domain registration enquiries from Chinese enterprises.

On this page

- [Official paths to registering a domain name](#)
- [Types of scams](#)
- [How to dispute ownership of a domain name](#)
- [Further suggestions](#)

Official paths to registering a domain name

The China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) is the official Chinese government body with this responsibility. The CNNIC is a non-profit organization with English and Chinese language capability authorized by the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) to operate and administer China's domain name registry for China's country code Top Level Domain known as ".cn". Based in Beijing, all .cn domain name registrations are centralized through the [CNNIC](#).

How to register a ".cn" domain name:

- More than 60 registrars are accredited by the CNNIC to undertake the registration of ".cn" Chinese domain names. Applicants can choose any one of those local registrars to carry out the registration in the People's Republic of China.
- Some foreign applicants, e.g. Canadian companies, may find it more convenient to turn to the accredited overseas registrars authorized to register .cn domain names outside of China. In these instances, companies should contact CNNIC's overseas registrars or overseas partner [NeuStar](#).
- After the submission of the domain name registration form, approval is fairly straightforward, as long as the domain name has not been registered and the related company exists (the .cn domain names are not for personal users).
- An important point to note is that brand name or trademark registration in China is independent from domain name registration and is administered by the Trademark Office of China (CTMO) (in Chinese only). Both registrations are on a first-to-file system.

Applications from non-Chinese nationals must be made through an accredited agent.

- Registration for ".cn" domain names is based on the "first-to-file" principle. Some multinational corporations operating in China, e.g. Samsung, Motorola, etc. have registered a number of ".cn" domain names (even in the hundreds) that contain the keywords of their brand names or trademarks in order to secure their distinct identity and avoid them being registered by others.

Types of scams

Chinese companies who claim that they are authorized registrars of CNNIC or other official bodies have been known to approach foreign companies, asserting that a third party has applied for a certain domain name whose keywords are identical to that of the foreign company.

- The Chinese party indicates that they want to, seemingly out of goodwill alone, remind the foreign company of the possible negative consequences of their brand name being registered by others in China. The Chinese company then suggests that the foreign company apply through them for a Chinese domain name— for a fee, of course. Some of these unsolicited e-mails have requested documentation from the foreign company to substantiate their name and trademark, which ultimately could then be used by the Chinese company to their own ends.
- Another version of the scam involves a Chinese company, again claiming to be authorised by an official body, approaching a random foreign company warning it that its Chinese domain name will expire soon, then asking for renewal fees.

- Yet another fraud scenario sees an unassociated company having registered a ".cn" domain name that is very similar to a legitimate company's, with the associated website copied directly from the legitimate business, negatively impacting the real company's commercial interests.

How to dispute ownership of a domain name

If an organisation deems that its legal rights and interests have been breached as a result of a particular domain name being registered by another party, it should consult the CNNIC and/or its recognized arbitration organizations, namely CIETAC and HKIAC. You may be responsible for collecting supporting evidence to prove violation of copyright and providing enough documentation to quote your actual loss suffered from a violation.

Further Suggestions

- Entrust only accredited registrars as listed by CNNIC for ".cn" domain name registry. Consult CNNIC directly when you are not sure or sceptical with respect to pricing, terms of agreement, provision of documents and so on.
- If you don't have any registered Chinese domain names, simply ignore such requests, or report them to the CNNIC. Several non-accredited registrars have already been identified as conducting illegal activities and have been posted on the CNNIC website.
- If you do have a registered ".cn" domain name, the only entitled renewal payment collector is the same registrar with whom the

registration was originally made. The expiration date as well as the entitled payment collector can be verified with the CNNIC.

The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service in China has prepared this report based on primary and secondary sources of information. Readers should take note that the Government of Canada does not guarantee the accuracy of any of the information contained in this report, nor does it necessarily endorse the organizations listed herein. Readers should independently verify the accuracy and reliability of the information.

Date Modified:

2021-03-26