

## **Safeguarding Your Domain Name**

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Rising cyber security threats have been posing challenges to not just corporation websites, but also their brands and trademarks. Visitors to the affected sites were redirected to fraudulent websites, which caused substantial loss in business, reputation and brand loyalty to the victimised companies. In many cases, cyber-criminals find it easier to hack into the Internet domain name, a pointer to the website, rather than modifying the website itself. It is high time for corporates to deploy additional measures for protecting their Internet domain names, their most valuable asset online.

In addition to unauthorised seizure of domain names by cyber criminals, an activity commonly called “domain hijacking”, employees who mistakenly made incorrect modifications or deletions of domain names would also bring down the company website, resulting in service disruption and brand damage. It is suggested that users should consult their domain name registrars for value-added services to prevent domain name information from being inadvertently modified or deleted. For example, two-factor authentication makes it harder for hackers to gain access to the websites that users log in to administer domain name settings. Registry lock service disallows online modification of domain name settings altogether. Modification functions can be enabled for a short interval only after a thorough and rigorous offline verification process to authenticate the identity of the requester.

A popular tactic that brand infringers or cybersquatters like to use is to register domain names which are identical or similar to the protected brand names or trademarks of well-known corporations. Users should consult their domain name registrars for monitoring services that can alert users of registrations of domain names resembling their brand names or trademarks in order to minimize the chance of brand names being imitated or used maliciously. Such services typically come with a first report that lists existing .hk domain names which resemble subscriber’s brand names or marks, followed by daily or weekly updates on new domain name registrations which meet the same criteria. In addition to the exact brand names or trademarks, .hk domain names with common misspellings of the protected words, as well as those combining prefix/ suffix “wildcards” can also be traced instantly, which allows users to take necessary prompt actions.

Domain name registrars may offer different services or solutions to protect your brands from “domain hijacking” or infringement on the internet. To avoid losses,

users should enquire their domain name registrar and learn more about the services that safeguard the intellectual property rights of brand and trademark owners.