

.au Survey 2014

Understanding the Australian Internet User

ausregistry

.auDA

.AU DOMAIN ADMINISTRATION LTD

.au Survey 2014

Understanding the Australian Internet User

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Feedback

To provide feedback or comment on this report, please email info@ausregistry.com.au with the subject heading '.au Survey 2014'.

Results

A complete set of survey tables summarising all survey results are available by contacting info@ausregistry.com.au.

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Introduction

This report is based on the findings of a month long survey aimed at Australian Internet users, primarily those that interact with the .au ccTLD. The survey, a joint initiative of AusRegistry Pty Ltd (AusRegistry) and .au Domain Administration Ltd (auDA), is an abridged version of a major survey conducted in 2013 which was designed to benchmark the .au namespace.

The resulting outcome of the 2013 survey was a published report: *.au Survey 2013 Establishing a baseline for the .au namespace* (http://www.ausregistry.com.au/research/au_survey_2013.pdf).

The success of the 2013 survey, which achieved over 10,000 responses, confirmed the importance of profiling Australian Internet users and providing an avenue for feedback.

Data collected from this survey delivers valuable insight into the current sentiments of Internet users in Australia. This information contributes to the development of key technical and policy implementations and provides important feedback in relation to the performance of both AusRegistry and auDA.

Both the Registry Operator and Regulatory Body are committed to conducting regular surveys in order to form a broad understanding of the Australian Internet user and those that interact with the .au ccTLD. Through comparative analysis shifts in behaviour and user perceptions can be monitored and the impact of change recorded.

AusRegistry and auDA are grateful for the continued support of Australian Internet users assisting with this valuable initiative.

Conducting the survey

The 2014 survey ran from 18 March 2014 until 28 April 2014 attracting a total of 3,118 responses.

The groups of respondents comprised of:

- 2,748 General respondents who sourced the survey from a public website not associated with the domain name industry.
- 370 Industry respondents who sourced the survey from either the AusRegistry or auDA website.

The Australian company Effective Measure, a leading provider of digital audience, brand and advertising measurement, was engaged by AusRegistry and auDA to host the survey on their network of websites and to collect the survey responses.

Effective Measure used 208 websites to collect survey data representing 40 different content categories. These websites combined have approximately 40 million unique browsers and are considered to represent the top 200 sites in Australia.

Style of report

Analysis of the collated survey data identified four main topics of enquiry which form the body of this report:

- Domain name holding by demographics (age/ gender and industry/general).
- Online security mindfulness.
- Online/social media behaviour.
- Respondent zone/Registrar selection reasons and views on the .au zone.

Language: there are a number of abbreviations and industry terms used throughout this report which are defined in the 'Definitions' section. Importantly, the use of the word 'hold' (and its derivatives) are terms that have been used throughout the report to denote the act of licensing a domain name.

Survey findings

The survey results supported key learnings from the 2013 survey as well as identifying shifts in user behaviour, attitudes and domain holding. New insights were also gained and are presented within this report.

The survey findings differed amongst the various populations of respondents. These populations are identified as:

- General respondents and Industry respondents.
- Holders of a domain name and non-holders of a domain name.
- Holders of a .au domain name and non-holders of a .au domain name.
- Those identifying a potential need for a domain name and those without a perceived need.

Notable differences existed between the various populations however there were some similarities across the populations which are elaborated further in the body of the report. These include:

- Australian Internet users are security conscious.
- Two thirds of respondents are more likely to trust a website ending with .au.

- The majority of respondents interact with the .au zone because of its connection to Australia.
- The majority of respondents holding .au domain names find the registration process easy.
- The majority of respondents holding .au domain names believe there is the right amount of regulation in the .au zone.

When comparing the 2014 survey findings to the 2013 survey findings, it was revealed:

- Number of females holding domain names has increased overall.
- Number of General respondents holding domain names has increased.
- Number of respondents holding .au domain names has increased overall.
- Business websites continue to be the main use for a .au domain name.

While the number of responses to the 2013 and 2014 surveys differ, similar percentage splits between the General respondents and the Industry respondents and the male and female respondents were achieved.

The 2013 survey ran for a period of 3 months and returned 10,284 responses; 9,039 General respondents (87.9%) and 1,245 Industry respondents (12.1%). The gender split was 5,298 females (51.5%) to 4,986 males (48.5%).

The 2014 survey ran for approximately 1 month and returned 3,018 responses; 2,748 General respondents (88.1%) and 370 Industry respondents (11.9%). The gender split was 1,569 females (50.3%) to 1,549 males (49.7%).

Recommendations

The survey results provided important insights into the Australian Internet user and their relationship with the .au zone. A number of these insights identified areas that may benefit from future investigation.

Recommendations have been suggested within this report and may be considered by AusRegistry and auDA. These include:

- Continue to survey Australian Internet users.
- Investigate the online security practices of Australian Internet users.
- Investigate the increase in the holding of domain names by female respondents.
- Investigate the increase in the holding of domain names by the General respondents and survey respondents overall.
- Monitor the impact of gTLDs.

Background

In 2013 AusRegistry and auDA conducted an extensive survey to benchmark the .au namespace. The resulting outcome of the survey was a published report: *.au Survey 2013 Establishing a baseline for the .au namespace* (http://www.ausregistry.com.au/research/au_survey_2013.pdf).

The successful initiative which was a first for the .au namespace, saw over 10,000 Australian Internet users provide vital information regarding their online behaviour, experiences associated with .au, and assessment of the Registry's and Regulatory body's performance.

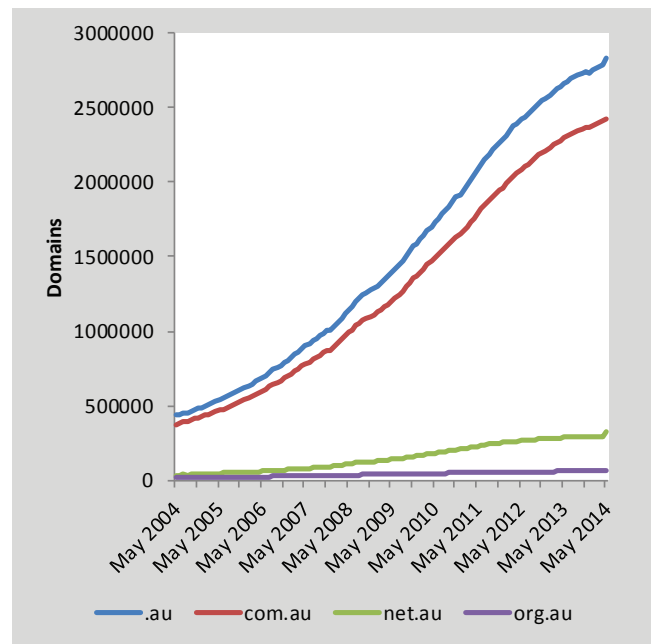
The 2013 survey data contributed to the formation of a baseline for future comparisons — a way to accurately measure shifts in a user's perceptions, experience and knowledge of .au, including the impact of policy and technical changes or global industry events.

The first of the yearly comparisons are found in the body of the 2014 report. Similar to the 2013 survey, the 2014 survey results will influence future policy development, technical implementation and operational requirements, as well as guide prospective research, education and marketing initiatives.

Covered below is a general overview of the .au ccTLD with a focus on the 2013/2014 year. The remainder of the section examines two key areas of enquiry stemming from the 2014 survey findings — online security and the increase in the number of females holding domains. Both topics of enquiry speak to current industry conditions and trends.

.au overview

In the 2013 survey report, the history and evolution of the .au namespace since 1986 was examined in detail with particular reference to the drivers that influenced .au's growth and success. For 2014 these same drivers of policy, pricing, the Registrar channel, marketing and education, remain at the heart of .au's success.



C1: .au ccTLD and select 2LD 10 year domain growth from 1 May 2004 to 1 May 2014

In May 2014 the combined total of .au domains reached 2,828,193.

Open .au 2LDs	.au	.com.au	.net.au	.org.au	.asn.au	.id.au
July 2002	282,632	255,783	13,580	9,555	2,865	849
May 2014	2,828,193	2,428,025	320,142	62,495	3,949	13,342
Growth	901%	849%	2,257%	554%	38%	1,472%

T1: .au ccTLD domain growth from July 2002 to May 2014

Reference: AusRegistry, Monthly AusRegistry General Reports <http://www.ausregistry.com.au/domains/domain-reports>

The .au namespace's consistent growth continues to cement its position as a top 10 ccTLD. Excluding Tokelau, a ccTLD that provides free domain names to individuals and businesses, .au is ranked the ninth largest globally from 283 ccTLD extensions.

The 2013 survey report indicated the .au namespace had reached a level of maturity that was consistent amongst other established namespaces including .uk, .de, .ca, .com and .net. The .au namespace's growth rate had slowed in comparison to preceding years — which was driven by a drop in the year-on-year create rate. Past growth was attributed to additional policy and modification of existing policy, the newly competitive landscape, businesses getting online, and domain speculators and investors.

Ranking	ccTLD	Country
1	.tk	Tokelau
2	.de	Germany
3	.uk	United Kingdom
4	.cn	China
5	.ru	Russian Federation
6	.nl	Netherlands
7	.eu	European Union
8	.br	Brazil
9	.ar	Argentina
10	.au	Australia

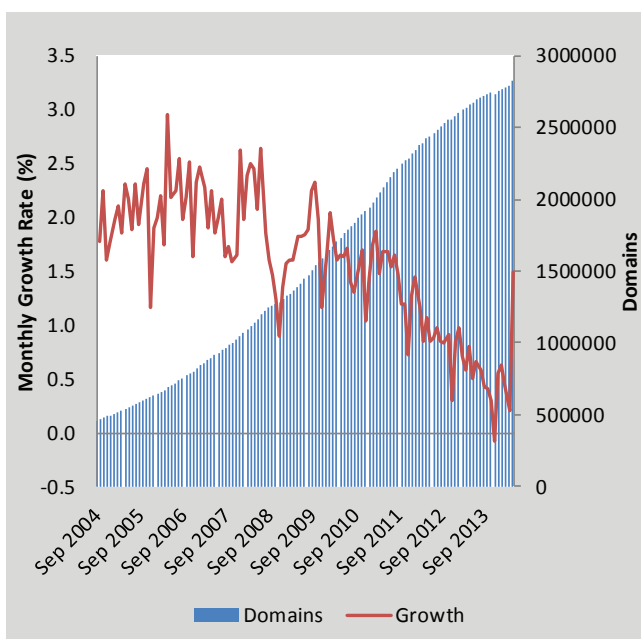
.eu: Although the European Union is not a country itself, .eu is an ICANN approved ccTLD representing Europe.
.tk: Is a free ccTLD that provides free domain names (revenue is derived via monetising expired domain names - the registry takes back expired domain names or those not in use by the registrant with residual traffic being sold to advertising networks).

T2: Top 10 ccTLD Rankings

Reference: *The Domain Name Industry Brief, Volume 11, Issue 1, April 2014* (Source: Zooknic).

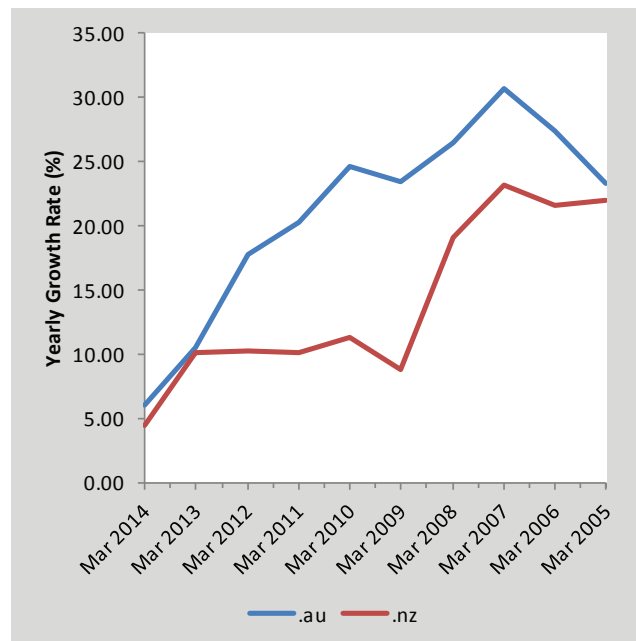
In 2014 the trend has continued. Over a 12 month period from April 2013 to April 2014, the .au growth rate was 5.57%. In comparison the .nz namespace with similar industry structure regarding regulation, years in existence and domain holding per capita, experienced 4.48% growth between March 2013 and March 2014.

The growth of a namespace and the rate at which it grows is also influenced by another primary measure, domain renewals. In the case of .au, a domain name licence must be renewed every 2 years providing the same eligibility criterion is met.



C2: History of the maturing of the .au ccTLD

Renewal rates are an indicator of retention – a steady renewal rate indicates overall customer satisfaction and the signs of a working namespace. Careful analysis is required to understand the impacts and threats to renewal rates.



C3: Year on year growth rates of the .au ccTLD and .nz ccTLD

Reference: http://dnc.org.nz/content/fy_stats.html

Population clock:
Australia <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/1647509ef7e25faaca2568a900154b63?opendocument>
New Zealand http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/population_clock.aspx

In 2014 the year-on-year create rate has steadied after a period of decline (first observed in 2012). Conversely, .au’s previously stable renewal rate has weakened - the result of a number of unforeseen factors to impact .au. These include:

- Large portfolio non-renewals. Google’s Penguin 2.0 algorithm update (Released 22 May 2013) — is likely responsible for a number of portfolio holders dropping a substantial proportion of ‘SEO’ exact match keyword domains.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine’s “natural” or un-paid (“organic”) search results. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine’s users (Source: Wikipedia)

- High volume acquisition of speculative Registrants, initially attracted by aggressive marketing and cheap registrations, not renewing domains due to lack of use or need.
- General deterioration in renewal performance. Renewals groups are categorised by the number of times a domain has been renewed. There has been a slight deterioration in the renewal rates of the first and second time renewal groups. First time renewal group: 2012 (56%), 2014 (54%). Second time renewal group: 2012 (75%), 2014 (71%).

Financial Year	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Renewal Rate	68%	69%	70%	69%	68%	65%	63%

T3: Renewal rate per financial year

Encouragingly the 2014 survey data suggests more people are registering domain names overall with the largest increase coming from the General respondents population. So whilst there has been a decrease in domain name holding by portfolio holders (Registrants holding more than 5,000 .au domain names) there has also been an increase in entities registering .au domain names. Refer to the 'Survey Findings' section for greater detail.

2013/2014

To support increased growth and market awareness in .au, AusRegistry and auDA invest in marketing, education and research. In 2013/2014 AusRegistry ran a number of marketing initiatives, including rebate and subsidy programs to support .au Registrars. Similarly auDA's focus on education extended to the development of an educational website; 'Do you .au?' (www.auda.org.au/doyouau) which features a series of animated videos exploring Australians' relationship with .au, the structure of .au and the benefits of registering .au, as well as an explanation of the WHOIS service.

However the major focus for AusRegistry and auDA for the 2013/2014 period has been the challenge of upholding the operational stability and utility of the .au namespace in light of increased cyber security incidents.

Prompted by an incident involving a .au accredited Registrar losing their business to a malicious hacking attack, auDA has invested extensive resources to develop the Information Security Standard (ISS) for .au Registrars. The ISS, launched in October 2013, is a world first and has received significant praise from the international community. It sets minimum standards that are aimed at safeguarding Registrant data. For further detail refer to 'Online security' below.

In support of this initiative and in response to the increase in reported cyber security incidents, AusRegistry launched the .auLOCKDOWN product — a security protocol allowing .au domain name holders to lock their domains' nameserver delegations and prevent changes other than those by a pre-authorised Registrar with authenticated access keys. For further details refer to 'Online security' below.

Online security

The 2014 survey results indicate that Australian Internet users on the whole are security conscious individuals. Many respondents favour .au websites based on trust in the .au domain. While most people are not fully aware of the technicalities of online threats, over two-thirds of survey respondents indicated they are aware of the types of websites they interact with and whether these are reputable and can be considered to be secure.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics explored household use of information technology and found that overall 83% of Australians (15.36M people) accessed the Internet in the 2012/2013 financial year (84% of men and 83% of females). Of the 15.36M people who accessed the Internet 76% (11.62M people) used the Internet to purchase or order goods or services while 72% used the Internet for paying bills or banking online — activities that Internet users inherently understand to involve potential security risks. Of the 3.74M people who did not order items online 14% (523,000 people) were put off by security concerns about providing credit card details online or privacy concerns about providing personal details online.

Reference: ABS Catalogue 8146.0 — Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, 2012–13.

The following quote from the Australian Institute of Criminology further explores statistics around online security in Australia:

"...in 2013 the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (2013) conducted a survey of community attitudes to privacy that sought to measure Australians' changing awareness and opinions about privacy, as well as their expectations in relation to the handling of their personal information. In respect of personal information, Australians believed that the biggest privacy risks concerned online services—including social media sites. Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) felt that the risk of identity fraud and theft was the biggest, followed by data security (16%) and the risks to financial data in general (11%).

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner asked adult Australians if they had ever been the victim of identity fraud or theft or whether they know someone who has. One in eight (13%) said that they had been a victim themselves (up from 9% in 2007) and one in five (21%) said it had happened to someone they knew (up from 17% in 2007). In the 2013 survey, a third (33%) of the population had either been the victim of identity fraud or theft or knew someone who had been victimised in this way” (<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/461-480/tandi474.html>).

Online security is an important consideration for many Australians who use the Internet — from a financial standpoint with regard to retail purchases, bill payments and online banking, as well as from a privacy standpoint by way of having multiple online accounts/memberships containing personal information. The security mindfulness of Australian Internet users is justified and is on the increase, just as the threats and actual security attacks and breaches are also increasing.

Online security is threatened from many sources but in particular via domain hacking and phishing scams amongst other cybercrime techniques. Fighting these threats is becoming more important as cyber criminals become increasingly sophisticated in their activities.

Registrar Information Security Standard

Following a serious security incident involving an accredited Registrar in 2011, which caused major disruption to Registrants and the industry in general, auDA formed a working group of industry participants to develop a mandatory security standard for Registrars. The industry was consulted to gather feedback and recommendations on how to better address security incidents.

The end result of these consultations was the development of a world-first Registrar Information Security Standard (ISS). Managed by auDA the .au Registrar ISS is a set of mandatory protocols which aims to help .au Registrars manage and improve the security of their businesses as well as protect the stability and integrity of the .au domain. The mandatory protocols in the ISS ensure accredited .au Registrars have taken appropriate action to identify and mitigate the security risks faced by their business.

.auLOCKDOWN

In addition to the ISS, AusRegistry has developed a security measure called .auLOCKDOWN which allows .au domain name owners to lock their domain's nameserver delegations and prevent changes other than by pre-authorised Registrars with authenticated access keys.

While a rare occurrence, cyber attackers can attempt to hijack websites by infiltrating Registrar servers or by fraudulently posing as an authorised employee.

Registrars already have measures in place to counter this type of threat; however another level of protection is warranted for high profile targets.

The .auLOCKDOWN measure has been developed to add an additional layer of authorisation at the Registry level — that protects domain names in the unlikely event of a Registrar security incident or website hack that leads to unauthorised access to confidential data and systems. Additional online security resources from trusted authorities are detailed below:

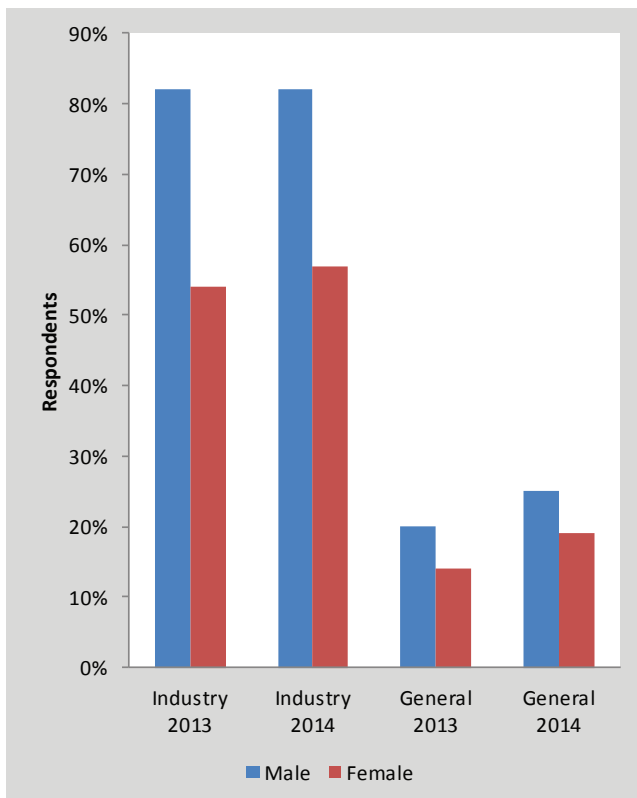
- **auDA Consumer Alerts:** .au domain name consumer alerts from the regulatory body for the .au domain space (<http://www.auda.org.au/about-auda/our-services/consumer-alerts>).
- **Stay Smart Online:** Australian federal government initiative (<http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au>).
- **SCAMwatch:** Operated by the federal government's Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (<http://www.scamwatch.gov.au/content/index.phtml/tag/Scamwatch>).
- **CERT Australia:** The national computer emergency response team (<https://www.cert.gov.au>).
- **iTaNGO:** Infoxchange Australia initiative funded by the Victorian government (<http://www.itango.infoxchange.net.au/resources-library/security>).
- **Infoxchange Australia:** not-for-profit ICT organisation (<http://www.infoxchange.net.au/news/increasing-awareness-about-cyber-security>).

Females holding domain names

A shift in the number of females holding domain names was reported in the 2014 survey results. Overall domain holding rates for females has increased from 16% in 2013 to 22% in 2014. The increase has been noted across both the Industry respondents (53% to 57%) and General respondents (13% to 19%). These increases may well indicate that growth is continuing in these populations and has further potential.

In the 2013 report the survey data indicated 32% of male respondents held domain names, which was twice that of females at 16%. This disparity was spread across both the Industry respondents and General respondents populations. ABS statistics in part supported this trend with 11.5% of employed males being owner-managers of unincorporated enterprises (micro-businesses) compared to 5% of females. However it was also noted that over time the gender split in Internet access has decreased indicating the Internet is becoming less gendered.

Reference: *ABS Catalogue 6359.0 — Forms of Employments, Australia, 2012* and *ABS Catalogue 8146.0 — Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, 2010–211*.



C4: Domain name holdings for industry and general 2013 versus 2014 (male/female)

In April 2014 the ABS reported that 71.1% of men aged 15 years or older were in the labour force (either working or looking for work) compared to 58.6% of females. Of employed men, 83% work fulltime (5.186M of 6.273M). For females this statistic is 54% working fulltime (2.855M of 5.288M).

Reference: *ABS Catalogue 6202.0 — Labour Force, Australia, April 2014.*

Among those with employed status, men have traditionally been more likely to have their own business — 21.6% of men in November 2013 were independent contractors or other business operators compared to 11.7% of females.

Reference: *ABS Catalogue 6359.0 — Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2013.*

In the last few years these small business operations have accounted for a smaller percentage of jobs decreasing from 18.7% of the jobs in 2009 to 17.3% in November 2013. In contrast the number of females working as independent contractors or other business operators has increased from 630,000 in November 2009 to 647,000 in November 2013 — an increase of 17,000. The equivalent statistics for men was 1.373M in November 2009 down to 1.352M in November 2013 — a decrease of 21,000.

An industry where this is particularly noticeable is the retail industry, where 60% of unincorporated enterprises were run by females in November 2012 compared to 51% in November 2008. Part-time businesses (where websites are likely to be critical) have increased from 16% of unincorporated enterprises to 21% between November 2008 and November 2009.

Reference: *ABS Catalogue 6105.0 — Australian Labour Market Statistics, July 2013.*

Interestingly, from the 2014 survey, of the 493 females whose online presence included an eBay or Amazon store, 445 (90%) said they do not run a business and 381 (77%) said they do not hold a domain name. It is possible that many females with an eBay or Amazon store don't consider themselves business owners but rather hobbyists. Of the small number of business owners in this group more are likely to have a domain name.

In March 2012 the Australian Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) conducted research open only to female business owners — finding that the number of females who run their own business has doubled since 2007. The online component of these businesses is not known. However the research shows that 42% of the respondents started their business with less than \$5,000.

The National Research on Women Business Owners & Female Entrepreneurs poll was a voluntary online survey conducted by the AWCCI between 26 September and 19 December 2011. The survey was open to females who own and operate their own business across Australia. There were 104 questions. 2,952 respondents are recorded as having participated.

<http://www.awcci.org.au/news/media-releases/12-media-release/70-national-research-findings-women-are-shaping-the-new-economy.html>

One of the recommendations of the 2013 survey report was to investigate how the barriers to more females holding domain names may be overcome. Whilst 2014 results show an increase in domain holding, more work is required to encourage females to move their businesses to their own online presence and have less reliance on the likes of eBay and Facebook.

auDA's recent promotion of the 2014 ANZIA awards (ANZIAS, the Australia and New Zealand Internet Awards) calls for more females to get their businesses online and embrace the benefits and success it can afford.

The ANZIAS are an annual event celebrating the achievements of organisations, businesses and individuals that have made significant contributions to the development and user of the Internet in Australia and New Zealand.

www.internetawards.org.au

Methodology

3

The 2014 survey ran from 18 March 2014 to 28 April 2014. In order to meet the objective of delivering an abridged version of the 2013 survey, the original question set was reviewed and an abbreviated version produced. Changes and enhancements were made to the number of questions, phrasing of questions, structure of the survey, comment fields and lines of enquiry.

The questions developed aimed to profile Australian Internet users with respect to domain holding, demographics, online behaviour including security mindfulness and social media integration, and general views of the .au zone.

Set up

The services of Effective Measure, the audience profiling company engaged for the 2013 survey, were maintained to ensure the same level of participant responsiveness was achieved. Survey responses were returned from 208 of Effective Measure's websites (General respondents) and the AusRegistry and auDA websites (Industry respondents). Survey tags were also installed on each website to facilitate the distribution of the survey and data collection.

Who responded?

Survey delivery was in the form of a 'slide-up' that appeared on both the General respondents and Industry respondents' websites. Visitors to a tagged website were prompted to complete the survey. Those opting not to participate were not served the survey on subsequent visits to the same website.

Effective Measure collected only completed surveys. Survey respondents were drawn from two populations:

- General respondents: who sourced the survey from the public website not associated with the domain name industry.
- Industry respondents: who sourced the survey from an Industry based website (either the auDA or AusRegistry website).

General respondents

The 2,748 General respondents were made up of Internet users who visited one of the 208 Effective Measure tagged websites. These websites were primarily Australian (.au) with a small number of international websites (.com, .nz, .za and .pk).

The websites were chosen based on traffic, variety and appeal to various age groups/genders. They covered a broad mix of content categories including: automotive; business and finance; directories, guides and weather; employment; games; entertainment (general); information technology; lifestyle (general); magazines; blogs and forums; entertainment (music); lifestyle (female); online retail and classified; real estate, sport; telecommunications; travel; entertainment (TV); entertainment (movie); educational resources; entertainment (celebrity); multimedia (photo and video); lifestyle (health, beauty and fashion); lifestyle (home); entertainment (video); lifestyle (baby care); marketing; news (English); portals; search engine; social network; lifestyle (food); lifestyle (male); soccer; science; lifestyle (cooking); dating and personals; and electronics and technology.

Comment: The list of 208 Effective Measure websites returning survey responses is available as part of the completed set of survey tables that summarise all survey results. To request a copy of the survey tables please contact: info@ausregistry.com.au

Industry respondents

The 370 Industry respondents were made up of Internet users who visited either the AusRegistry (www.ausregistry.com.au) or auDA (www.auda.org.au) websites. These visitors are considered to have a relationship with the .au zone.

.au accredited Registrars were not invited to participate in the 2014 survey.

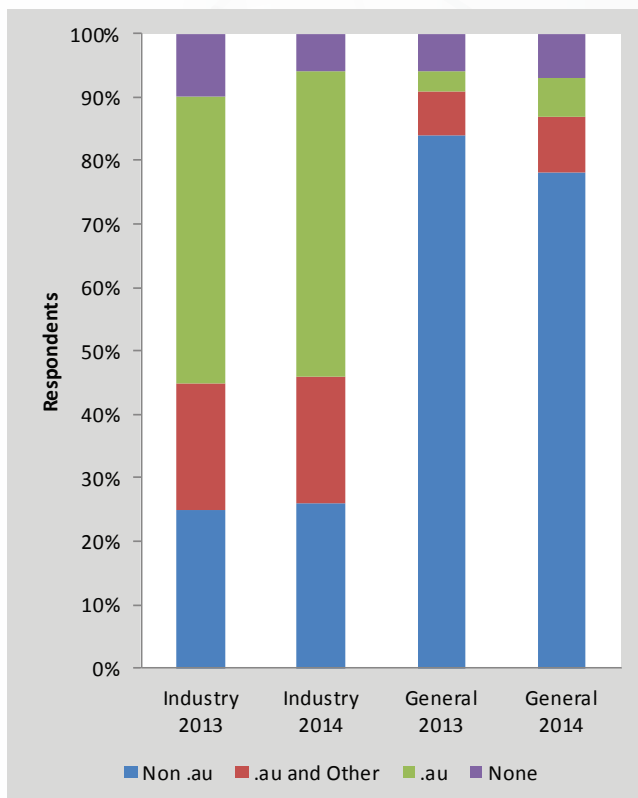
Differences between populations

As was the case with the 2013 survey findings, the 2014 domain name holding rates were qualitatively different between General respondents and Industry respondents. The overall sample is biased towards the general Australian population regarding domain name holding.

Inferences about the overall holding rate in Australia should only be reached with reference to the survey source.

Investigation showed further differences between the two populations and where required charts and tables are included to illustrate these differences. It is recommended to view judiciously figures formed from combining the results of both populations as these cannot be taken to indicate the general Australian population.

The following chart provides a breakdown of the total survey respondents from both the 2013 and 2014 surveys with respect to the holding of domain names. Separate results are displayed for General respondents and Industry respondents.



C5: Domain name holdings for .au, non .au, .au plus other and none 2013 versus 2014

Survey Findings

4

Demographics such as education, occupation, income, location, gender and age were examined. Selected of these for detailed examination in regard to domain name holding rate were gender and age in particular along with industry involvement breakdown. Online security mindfulness also received attention including zone trust.

Additionally the identification of three distinct groups occurred — those choosing to either specifically hold a .au domain name, not hold a .au domain name or not have any domain name. Each group's online/social media integration and .au zone and Registrar selection reasons has been investigated along with a determination of the .au domain name holding group's view on governance and ease of registration.

Domain name holding by demographics

Gender and age

Male and female participation in the survey was almost equal with only slightly more females responding. The age groups were less representative of the Australian population age split, being biased to working age demographics.

The survey results revealed that males are more likely to hold a domain name compared with females with a 35% total holding rate for males versus a 22% total domain name holding rate for females.

This overall ratio of 1.6:1 for male versus female domain name holding did vary between the age groups, with the Under 18 group having a ratio of 1.9:1 and the 65 and over age group having a ratio of 1.1:1.

The age groups 35–44, 45–54 and 55–64 are the three leading age groups for holding of domain names, with a third (33–34%) of the survey respondents in each of these age groups holding a domain name.

2013 comparison

A significant finding is that the number of females holding domain names has increased. The 2013 survey ratio of males versus females for domain name holding was 2:1 and this held throughout most of the age groups. Looking at a ratio of 1.6:1 for 2014, a pronounced change is that the gender disparity in domain name holding is shrinking.

ABS statistics have previously shown that over time the gender split in Internet access has decreased, indicating that the Internet is becoming less gendered. The rise in female domain name holding and corresponding shrink in disparity between males and females is in line with this.

Of note, there is still a disparity close to the 2013 magnitude in the Under 18 age group. This is possibly due to a business website still being indicated as the main use for holding a domain name, so a larger disparity in the Under 18 age group which is generally not engaged in business activities can be expected.

Holding rates have increased overall on 2013 values for every age group. Looking at gender split age groups, all female age groups have increased significantly — hence an improvement in the ratio between male and female for domain name holding, as discussed already. All male age groups' holding rates increased with the exception of the 35–44 and 18–24 age groups, which both dropped only slightly from the 2013 rate. Overall males had a

Respondent age group	Female domain name holdings				Male domain name holdings				Combined domain name holdings			
	Yes	No	Total	Rate	Yes	No	Total	Rate	Yes	No	Total	Rate
Under 18	18	107	125	14%	14	38	52	27%	32	145	177	18%
18–24	23	194	217	11%	25	109	134	19%	48	303	351	14%
25–34	72	308	380	19%	89	194	283	31%	161	502	663	24%
35–44	98	263	361	27%	124	194	318	39%	222	457	679	33%
45–54	76	202	278	27%	138	218	356	39%	214	420	634	34%
55–64	38	114	152	25%	99	151	250	40%	137	265	402	34%
65 & over	13	39	52	25%	41	103	144	28%	54	142	196	28%
Unknown	0	4	4	0%	5	7	12	42%	5	11	16	31%
Total	338	1231	1569	22%	535	1014	1549	35%	873	2245	3118	28%

T4: Domain name holding by age and gender

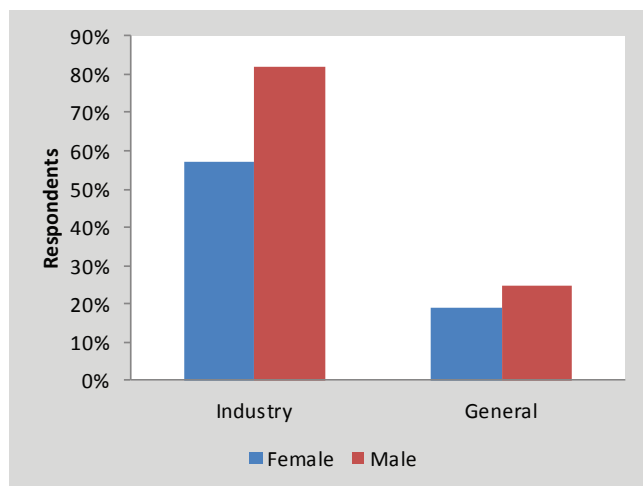
holding rate increase from 2013 (35% for 2014 versus 32% for 2013) while females had an even greater increase (22% for 2014 versus 16% for 2013). This resulted in a total holding rate of 28% for 2014 compared to a rate of 24% in 2013.

Holding rate is moving from about one-quarter in 2013 heading towards one-third (now in 2014 it is approximately half-way between one-quarter and one-third). The age groups with the highest holding rate are at one-third already, having experienced positive increases in holding rate compared to their 2013 holding rate values.

The biggest increase in domain name holding rate has been observed in the Under 18 age group, having jumped by 125% (more than double) from an 8% holding rate in 2013 to an 18% rate in 2014. As discussed above this is primarily due to males rather than females; however both male and female holding rates have jumped for this age group. This result indicates overall future holding rates should continue to increase as this young age group is already moving towards holding rates of older age groups. Therefore when the users in the young age group progress into older age groups, those older age groups can be expected to have further increased domain name holding rates than they currently do.

Industry versus general holding rates

An overall domain name holding rate of over one-quarter among survey respondents was recorded.



C6: Domain name holding rate for industry and general (male/female)

Focussing on just those respondents with domain name holdings and giving consideration to their industry or general involvement, the domain name holding rate for Industry respondents was significantly more common at around three times that of General respondents. Also including a gender split, the ratio between Industry respondents and General respondents was also largely maintained across both genders.

2013 comparison

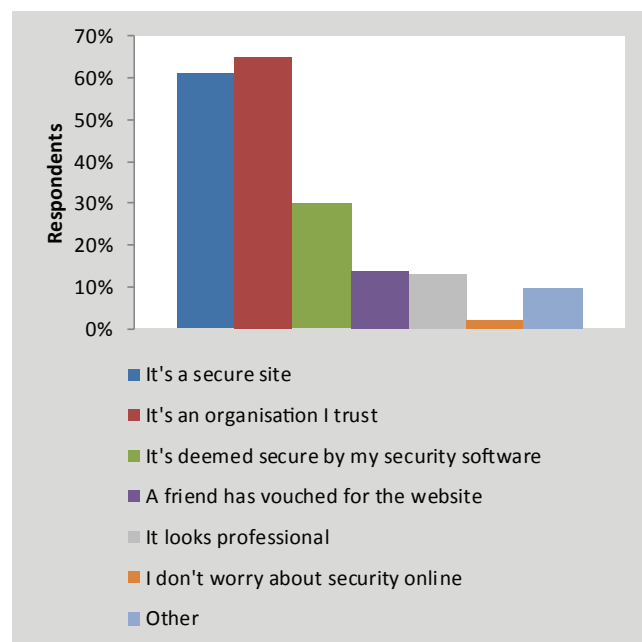
Comparing to 2013 it appears that the male gender Industry respondents sector was arguably mature in 2013 — as the domain holding rate achieved 83% then and has now settled at 82%. The female gender Industry respondents sector has increased slightly at 57% for 2014 versus 53% for 2013, possibly in line with overall female increases in the survey results.

The General respondents sector has increased for males from 20% in 2013 to 25% in 2014 and for females from 13% in 2013 to 19% in 2014. The female increase has been more significant than the male, but it is the overall increase for the General respondents in comparison to the Industry respondents that indicates a broader uptake of domain names, with a slow decrease of concentration primarily by the Industry respondents sector. These measurable increases in the General respondents as well as the female respondents indicates that growth is continuing in these sectors and has further potential.

Online security mindfulness

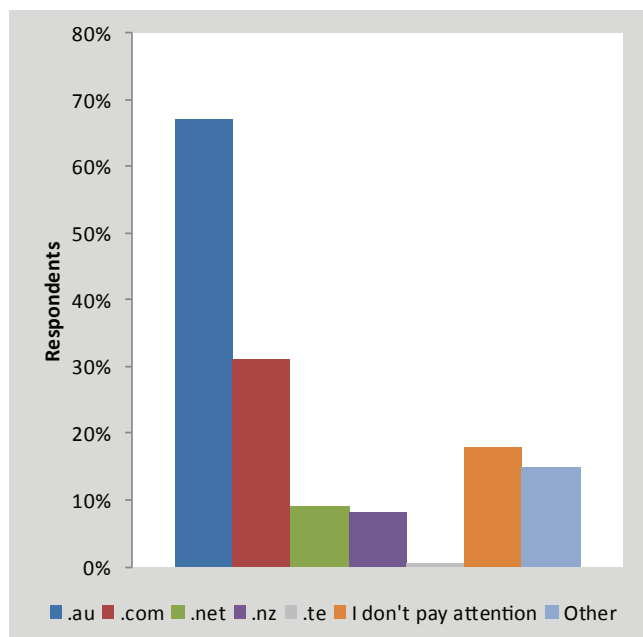
For the 2014 survey, security mindfulness has been given particular consideration. A clear indication is that Australian Internet users are security conscious with only 2% saying they do not worry about online security.

Of all respondents 61% focussed on a site being secure and 64% focussed on an organisation being one they trust. This equates to almost two-thirds of respondents. Almost a third also indicated security mindfulness by way of their security software deeming a site to be secure. An even smaller percentage indicated a professional looking site or a friend vouching for a site as being a method of assessing online security.



C7: Security mindfulness

At 67%, exactly two-thirds of all respondents are more likely to trust a website that ends with .au, with .com only attracting around a third. Of interest, an intentionally false domain (.te) registered negligible trust overall — those that did allocate trust were mainly those having low or no security consciousness.



C8: Zone trust

Amongst the security conscious group only, three-quarters nominated trusting a website that ends with .au. Additionally for those of this particular group who use zone as a trust factor, 93% trust the .au zone. Outside of the highly conscious security group, of those who use zone as a factor to build trust, 81% trust the .au zone.

These results indicate the .au zone is trusted by most people overall and particularly those that are security mindful.

2013 comparison

In 2013 zone as a trust factor was explored. For the 2013 respondents who indicated they discriminate their credit card usage based on zone, the .au zone was indicated as most trusted with 70% nominating it as trusted for credit card transactions. This was significantly ahead of the next highest trusted zone, .com, at 43%.

While 2014 results were not focussed on credit card transaction trust exclusively, rather overall security trust, it should be noted that the differential between the .au and .com zones in terms of overall security trust in general has expanded as the .com zone has lower overall security trust now while the .au zone has essentially maintained its trust.

Online/social media behaviour

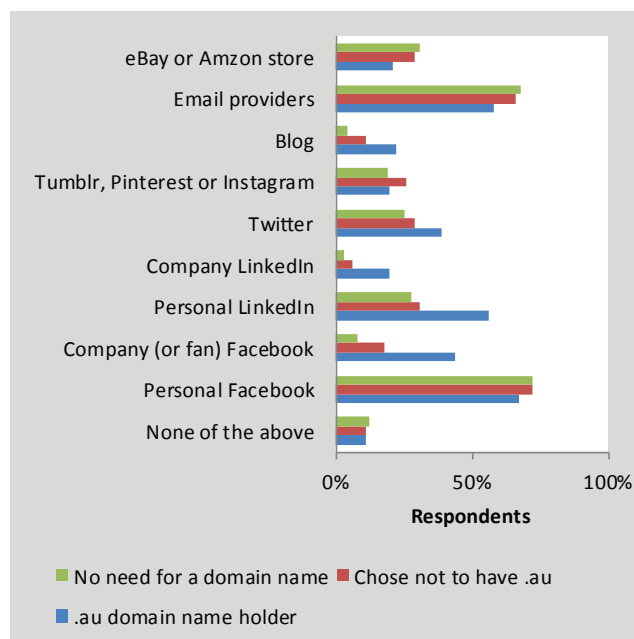
Three distinct behaviour groups have been examined by the survey with regard to online/social media behaviour variations. Those choosing to either specifically hold a .au domain name, not hold a .au domain name, or not have any domain name.

The clearest finding was that using social media for business purposes is highly correlated with holding domain names and even more so a .au domain name.

Examining individual social media examples, personal Facebook accounts and email count for high participation. This is also reasonably evenly shared between the three groups with just slightly higher favouring by the 'no need for a domain' group in comparison to the 'au domain name holder' group.

However a clearer distinction between the groups occurs when considering company Facebook accounts. Of the 'au domain name holder' group, 44% use a company Facebook account versus just 8% of the 'no need for a domain name' group and 18% of the 'chose not to have .au' group. This indicates that business use of Facebook accounts is strongly correlated with holding a .au domain name, while personal use is fairly even across all groups.

Differences between the groups for blogging, Twitter and LinkedIn integration correlate similarly to company Facebook account integration. It appears that while some general social media use is correlated with company Facebook account integration and holding domain names, email and personal Facebook account integration is more even amongst all the groups and is also the highest integration overall.



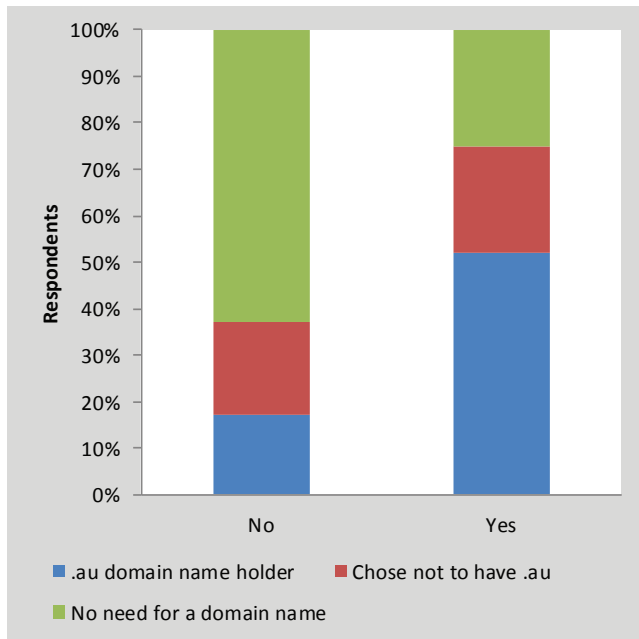
C9: Online/social media behaviour

Business use of social media is strongly correlated with holding a .au domain name.

Those respondents that confirmed business use of social media were by majority (51%) comprised from the 'au domain name holder' group while being by minority (25%) comprised from the 'no need for a domain name' group. The 'chose not to have .au' group comprised the remaining 24%.

Therefore twice as many from the 'au domain name holder' group used social media for business use compared to those from the 'no need for a domain name' group.

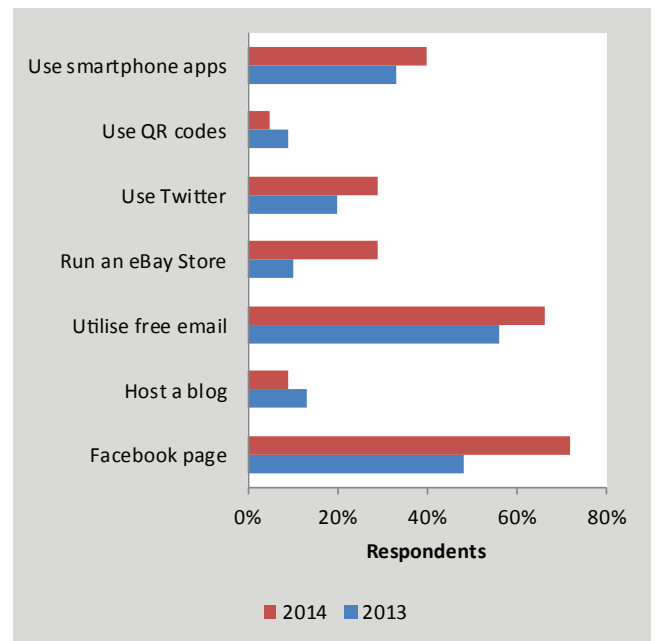
In even greater contrast between behaviour groups, those respondents that indicated no social media integration for business use were a majority at 63% from the 'no need for a domain name' group and a minority at 14% from the 'au domain name holder' group. Clearly few of the 'au domain name holder' group did not use social media for business use. Domain name holders in general used social media integration for business use.



C10: Business use social media integration

2013 comparison

The 2013 survey results indicated that the 'au domain name holder' group had the highest online/social media integration behaviour in comparison to the other two behaviour groups. The 2014 results suggest that the 'no need for a domain name' group now has higher online/social media integration. This is a change, with online/social media integration having become more commonplace for those without a domain name than previously. Greater integration for 2014 is primarily via Facebook, followed by email, Twitter and smartphone apps to a lesser extent.

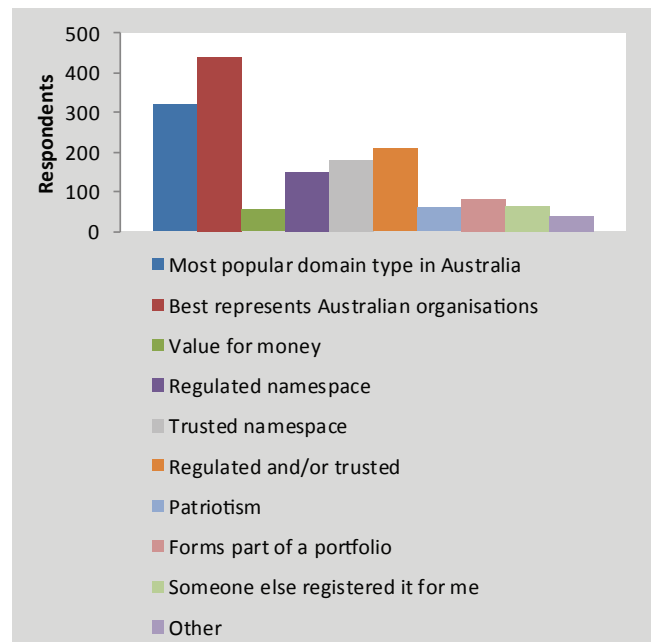


C11: Social media integration 2013 versus 2014

When it comes to social media integration for business use, this however continues to have a strong correlation to .au domain name holding. In doing so it confirms the 2013 finding that the 'au domain name holder' group chooses to hold a .au domain name generally for business purposes.

Zone/registrar selection reasons and views on the .au zone

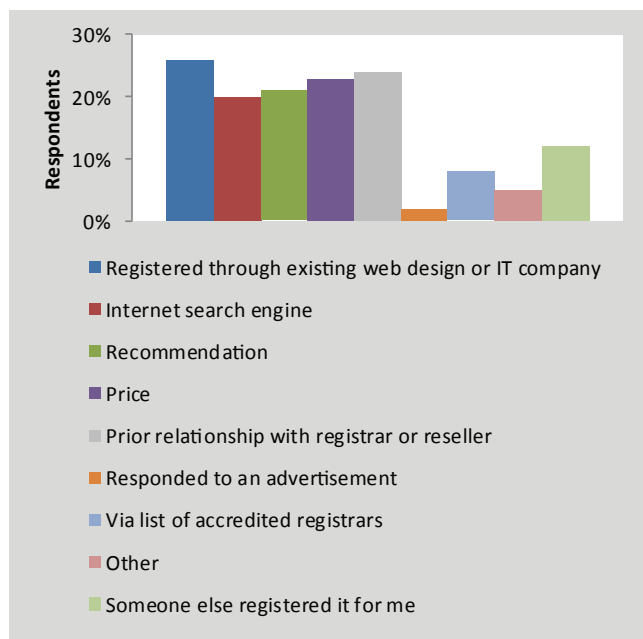
The .au zone was the most popular among respondents holding a domain with .com being the only real competing zone.



C12: Reason for .au zone selection

Zone selection

For those respondents holding a .au domain name, when questioned on why the .au zone was chosen, the most popular reason for selecting it was because it represents Australian organisations, followed by it being the most popular domain type in Australia. All other reasons ranked much lower however the .au zone being regulated and/or trusted was the third most important reason for selecting it.



C13: Reason for Registrar selection

Registrar selection

For those respondents holding a .au domain name, choice of Registrar for their .au domain name was primarily due to registration through an existing web design or IT company service provider. This was followed by having a prior relationship with the Registrar or reseller. Price followed as a close third reason.

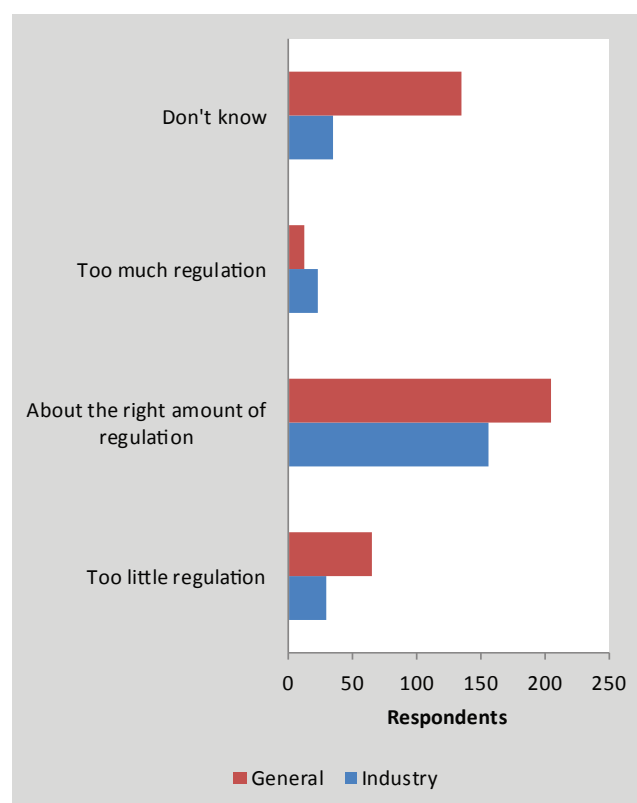
The 'responded to an advertisement' reason was nominated least as a selection reason, however it should be noted the 'Internet search engine' reason ranked reasonably high – almost equal to the 'due to a recommendation' reason. Furthermore, people are often not aware that they have responded to an advertisement and may not acknowledge a Google search result as an ad. Therefore the 'responded to an ad reason' result is likely lower than actual.

The high ranking reasons carried the theme of prior and existing relationships, demonstrating loyalty and that if people are already partnered with an IT service/brand, then more of their business is attainable.

Respondent views on .au zone governance and ease of registration of a .au domain name

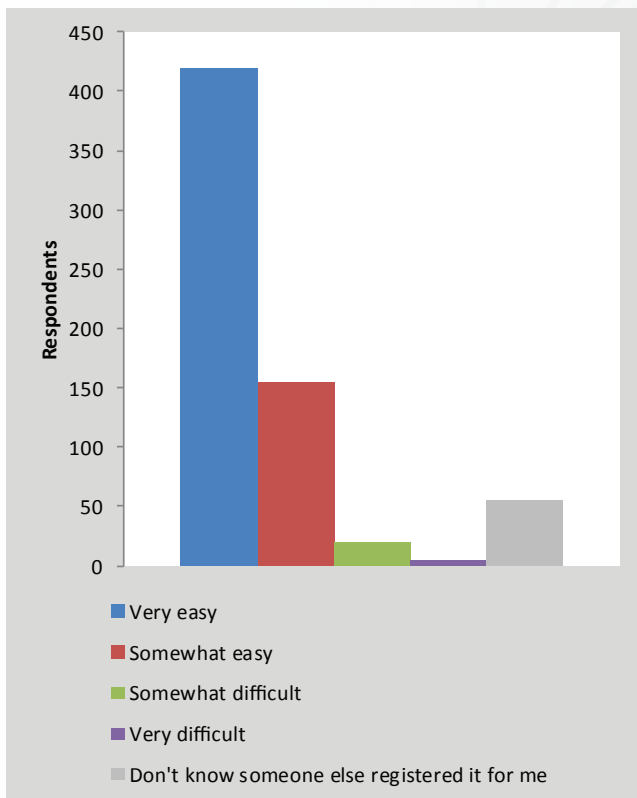
As discussed above, the .au zone being regulated and/or trusted ranked as the third most important reason for selecting it as a zone to hold a domain name. On asking respondents to focus on this area specifically the majority of respondents felt the level of regulation to be appropriate.

Too much regulation was the least indicated view of governance. A further break down between General respondents and Industry respondents shows that General respondents are significantly less likely to hold an opinion on governance.



C14: .au zone regulation

The overwhelming majority of .au domain name holders perceived the registration process as being very easy. A negligible number elected registration to be difficult. The least indicated view for ease of registration was 'very difficult' along with 'somewhat difficult'. Survey results show that both governance and ease of registration are considered to be appropriate by the vast majority of respondents.



C15: Ease of registration

2013 comparison

Registrar selection was not covered in the 2013 survey however zone selection and domain name holder views on perception of governance along with ease of registration were.

In comparison to 2013 results for these aspects, it can be observed that ease of registration is perceived as even easier than last year which is a positive outcome. Feedback regarding governance in 2013 suggested that approximately half of respondents perceived regulation as appropriate. This has also improved with the majority indicating regulation was about right. Also significantly fewer felt that there was too much regulation during the 2014 survey in comparison to 2013 results.

Conclusions

5

The conclusions presented in this report are based on the key findings from the 2014 .au Survey. They are not representative of all survey data. The conclusions accompany the recommendations found in the 'Recommendations' section.

.au

.au continues to maintain its popularity for Australian domain holders. Seventy six percent of survey respondents who hold domain names hold .au. This represents a 2% increase since 2013.

The top two reasons survey respondents gave for holding .au were: most popular domain type in Australia and best represents Australian organisations.

Security

Australian Internet users are security conscious. Sixty one percent of respondents focussed on a site being secure and 64% focussed on an organisation being one they trust. This equates to almost two-thirds of all respondents.

Furthermore, with respect to zone choice, two-thirds of all respondents are more likely to trust a website that ends with .au.

Domain name holding

Australian domain name holding is increasing. For survey respondents this translated to a total holding rate of 28% for 2014 compared to a rate of 24% in 2013. Moreover the number of females holding domain names increased overall from 16% for 2013 to 22% for 2014.

In 2013, 84% of General respondents did not hold domain names. This figure reduced to 78% in 2014.

.au governance

Regulation and ease of registration continue to be appropriate. Regulation and/or trust ranked as the third most important reason for selecting .au as a zone to hold a domain name. Furthermore, survey results show that both governance and ease of registration are considered to be appropriate by the vast majority of respondents.

In comparison to the 2013 survey results, ease of registration is perceived as even easier than last year. Similarly, with respects to governance, this has also improved with the majority of .au domain holders indicating regulation was about right.

Business, social media and .au

Australian business prefers .au. Eighty one percent of survey respondents holding .au use the domain name as a business website — this number increased from 78% in 2013.

Additionally, business use of social media is strongly correlated with holding a .au domain name. Twice as many respondents holding .au (51%) used social media for business use compared to those from the 'no need for a domain name' group (25%).

Recommendations

6

Recommendations have been made in relation to the key findings outlined in this report. Future research initiatives based on these recommendations will be considered by both AusRegistry and auDA.

Continue to survey Australian Internet users

The benefits of surveying Australian Internet users are varied. Surveys provide a current snapshot of the online environment and a rich understanding of those who interact with the .au ccTLD. Gauging user sentiment allows for informed policy development and the execution of focused initiatives in marketing and education.

Over time the accumulated survey data illustrates changes in the attitudes and needs of the Internet user and highlights areas that require attention and/or development.

Investigate the online security practices of Australian Internet users

The findings from the 2014 survey indicate that many Australian Internet users practice security mindfulness; conscious of the type of website they interact with and where to provide personal information. Whilst this is a positive finding, there are still users unaware of the perils of cybercrime. Understanding the best way to educate users, to reinforce the security message, is an important consideration.

Investigate the increase in the holding of domain name by female respondents

In 2013 survey findings indicated a low uptake of domain name holding amongst female survey respondents. In 2014 the female holding rate has increased by 6% overall. The 'Background' section looks at the current trends that may be supporting this increase however monitoring the shift over time will provide important data for marketing and education purposes.

Investigate the increase in the holding of domain names by the General respondents and survey respondents overall

Since 2013 survey respondents holding domain names has increased overall. Indeed, respondents from each population, with the exception of males in the Industry respondents population whose holding rate has steadied, hold more domains. It is recommended that further research is conducted so the increases in domain holding are better understood.

Monitor the impact of new gTLDs

In 2013 the .au survey report featured information relating to ICANN's new gTLD Program and the future release of over 1,000 TLDs into the marketplace. Since that time, over 200 new gTLDs have been launched with another 1,000 set for future release. At the time of writing it is not possible to assess the impact these namespaces have had on the Internet landscape or the .au ccTLD. Therefore it is recommended the gTLD releases are monitored throughout 2014 and given more attention in the .au survey in 2015.

Abbreviations

A

2LD

Second Level Domain

auDA

.au Domain Administration Ltd

ccTLD

Country Code Top Level Domain

DNS

Domain Name System

gTLD

Generic Top Level Domain

IANA

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority

ICANN

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

IDN

Internationalised Domain Name

TLD

Top Level Domain

Definitions

D

.au Domain Administration Ltd

auDA

The policy authority and industry self-regulatory body for the .au domain space.

AusRegistry Pty Ltd

AusRegistry

The Registry Operator for the open 2LDs (com.au, net.au, org.au, asn.au, and id.au); the community geographic 2LDs (act.au, nsw.au, nt.au, qld.au, sa.au, tas.au, vic.au and wa.au); and two closed 2LDs (edu.au and gov.au).

Country code top level domain

ccTLD

A TLD that is used to represent a country or external territory. Some examples of ccTLDs are 'uk' for the United Kingdom, and 'au' for Australia.

Domain name / Domain

An identification string that defines a realm of administrative autonomy, authority, or control on the Internet. Domain names are formed by the rules and procedures of the DNS. Any name registered in the DNS is a domain name.

Domain Name System

DNS

A hierarchical distributed naming system for computers, services, or any resource connected to the Internet or a private network. It associates various information with domain names assigned to each of the participating entities. Most prominently, it translates easily memorised domain names to the numerical Internet Protocol (IP) addresses needed for the purpose of locating computer services and devices worldwide.

General Respondents

General users and suppliers of services via the Internet, who are based in Australia sourced from public websites.

Generic top level domain

gTLD

Most TLDs with three or more characters are referred to as generic TLDs, or gTLDs. They can be subdivided into two types; 'sponsored' TLDs (sTLDs) or 'unsponsored' TLDs (uTLDs).

For the most part a uTLD operates under policies established by the global Internet community directly through ICANN, while an sTLD is a specialised TLD that has a sponsor representing the narrower community that is most affected by the TLD.

Hold / Holding / Held (a domain name)

Hold and its derivatives are terms that have been used throughout this report to denote the act of licencing a domain name.

As per auDA's *Domain Name Eligibility and Allocation Policy Rules for the Open 2LDs (2012-04)* there are no proprietary rights in the domain name system (DNS). A registrant does not "own" a domain name. Instead, the registrant "holds" a licence to use a domain name, for a specified period of time and under certain terms and conditions.

<http://www.auda.org.au/policies/auda-2012-04>

Industry Respondents

Industry users and suppliers of services via the Internet, who interact with the .au ccTLD sourced from auDA, AusRegistry, and participating Registrar websites.

Internationalised domain name

IDN

A domain name that includes characters from scripts other than the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet (a-z).

An IDN can contain Latin letters with diacritical marks, or may consist of characters from non-Latin scripts.

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority

IANA

A department of ICANN, which oversees global Internet Protocol (IP) address allocation, autonomous system number allocation, root zone management in the DNS, media types, and other IP-related symbols and numbers.

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

ICANN

The global DNS administrator, formed in 1998, is a non-profit public-benefit corporation with global participants dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers.

Registrant

An entity or individual that holds a domain name licence.

Registrar

An entity that registers domain names for Registrants and in the case of the .au ccTLD, is accredited by auDA.

Root zone

The top-level DNS zone in a hierarchical namespace using the DNS for computers. Most commonly it refers to the root of the largest global network, the Internet.

Secondary market

The market of mutually agreed transfers of previously registered domain names and 'second-hand' domain names, as well as the parties involved in these transactions.

Second Level Domain

2LD

The alphanumeric string before the dot and the TLD.

AusRegistry is the Registry Operator for the open 2LDs (asn.au, com.au, id.au, net.au and org.au); the community geographic 2LDs (act.au, nsw.au, nt.au, qld.au, sa.au, tas.au, vic.au and wa.au); and two closed 2LDs (edu.au and gov.au).

Survey tags

Tags added to all content pages of a website and loaded each time a page is loaded in a browser.

Top Level Domain

TLD

The name at the top of the DNS naming hierarchy. It appears in domain names as the string of letters following the last (right-most) 'dot', such as 'net' in 'www.example.net'.

Zone

A portion of the namespace in the DNS for which administrative responsibility has been delegated.

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