

Find the **Question** of the Day.

**TORONTO STAR**  
www.thestar.com

**TORONTO STAR**  
www.thestar.com

## Domain names again become big business

**29 have sold for more than \$1 million U.S.  
Sex still a big seller, but hell.com has devil of a time**

Oct. 28, 2006. 01:00 AM

SURYA BHATTACHARYA  
BUSINESS REPORTER

As Internet giants Google and Yahoo battle over content, the value of easy-to-remember domain names is on the rise again.

More than 250 domain names were being auctioned through a Web company, Moniker Online Services, at the World Association of Domain Name Developers TRAFFIC conference in Florida yesterday.

Moniker.com, a brand and marketing unit of Seevast Corp., buys and sells domain names and runs a service for people who want to register their own domain names.

While some speculated hell.com could fetch between \$3 million and \$5 million (U.S.), experts said the name did not hold wide market value.

"If I look at hell.com, it looks like zero business dollar to me," said Keith Pieper, an analyst with California-based Zetetic.com, which appraises domain names. "But to someone else, with a good business sense, the fact that it is a short name, and with some sort of existing traffic going to it, there's a lot of value to it."

Initial and unofficial results before the auction closed last night showed cameras.com selling for \$1.5 million to directnic.com, a New Orleans company.

Flowers.mobi fetched \$200,000. Mobi is a new top-level domain specifically focused on mobile phones.

Other names that sold early in the auction include, bisexuals.com for \$60,000 and housekeepers.com for \$30,000.

Hell.com stirred up little interest but sex showed its marketing power. Of the 29 domain names known to have fetched more than \$1 million (U.S.) in the public domain market, sex.com led the pack in 2006, selling for \$12 million.

Domain names sold in the private market go for much more. Yet, of the 26,311 sales in Zetetic's database, only 0.6 per cent sold for more than \$100,000.

Hot during the '90s dot-com boom, business domain names are once again on the rise, thanks to pay-per-click advertising that is driving the market and fuelling growth.

"Before, domain name buyers were buying on speculation and inherent value, not cash-flow value," said Pieper.

Other names up for auction include Iran.com, Monalisa.com, and DSL.com, which could net more than \$5 million.

Pay-per-click advertising on search engine sites, along with direct navigation — where users type in domain names directly without going through a search engine — have been key factors in raising domain name values, according to

### Investment Links

[Today's markets](#)

[Stock quotes](#)

[Mutual fund quotes](#)

[Portfolio manager](#)

[Bill Carrigan](#)

[James Daw](#)

[David Olive](#)

[Ellen Roseman](#)

[Graphic: Top 12 Domain Names \(PDF\)](#)

### Stock List

Follow up to 15 stocks with Stocklist, thestar.com's free tracking tool.

[Click to launch](#)

### Tag and Save

[Tag and save](#) this article to your Del.icio.us favourites.

[What is Del.icio.us?](#)

POWERED BY  del.icio.us

Elliot Noss, president and chief executive officer of Tucows Inc.

"As Google did a better job of monetizing traffic, more and more money flowed into direct navigation, therefore more time and attention was put into domain-name portfolios," he said.

Toronto-based Tucows Inc., with more than 5.5 million names registered, is one of the largest wholesale domain name registrars in the world. The company also provides domain registration to ISPs.

With better access to capital, the adoption of more formal methods of analysis and companies looking at domain names in a more data-driven way, this market has matured.

"At the same time, the data tools are themselves always increasing," said Noss. "People got smarter about what information they are looking at and about what might be important sources of information."

As long as Google and Yahoo continue investing and improving their technology — growing the market for Internet advertising — domain names will remain a big business, he added.

[Get great home delivery subscription deals here!](#)

---

[FAQs](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Webmaster](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [My Subscription](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Webmaking Blog](#)

---

[Home](#) | [GTA](#) | [Business](#) | [Waymoresports](#) | [A&E](#) | [Life](#)

---

**Legal Notice:** Copyright Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. All rights reserved. Distribution, transmission or republication of any material from [www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com) is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. For information please contact us using our [webmaster form](#). [www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com) online since 1996.

