

## **Alert** | Intellectual Property & Technology



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### **Brand Safety Alliance Rolls Out GlobalBlock Domain Name Blocking Service**

The Brand Safety Alliance (BSA) has rolled out its new GlobalBlock service. This GT Alert explains what GlobalBlock is and how it works, including the benefits and limitations, so businesses can decide if the service is appropriate for them.

#### **What Is the BSA?**

The BSA is an initiative of GoDaddy Registry, an affiliate of GoDaddy.

#### **What Is GlobalBlock?**

GlobalBlock is a paid service that blocks registration of **currently available** domain names that are **exact matches** of covered trademarks across (currently) 510 different top-level domains (TLDs) including several popular ones like .BIZ, .CO, .INFO, and .IO.

The GlobalBlock+ service also blocks homoglyph (i.e., non-Latin script) variations likely to be confused with covered trademarks, such as “trádemark,” using diacritic or Greek characters.

### What Does GlobalBlock Cost?

Specific prices vary, but most corporate registrars charge around \$5,600 per year for GlobalBlock or \$8,200 per year for GlobalBlock+ per trademark.

The BSA also offers discounted rates for brand owners with an existing subscription to the Domain Protected Marks List (DPML) blocking service, which is now operated by Identity Digital (f/k/a Donuts Inc.).

### What Are the Benefits of GlobalBlock?

- **Minimizes Need to Defensively Register or Recover Covered Domains** – Because GlobalBlock blocks domain registrations exactly matching covered trademarks (and their homographs with GlobalBlock+), business do not need to defensively register available domain names in covered TLDs or recover them through enforcement. Brand owners could also potentially let domain names they have defensively registered lapse because they would be covered by the block (although this is not recommended in case the TLD drops out of GlobalBlock or the company ceases use of GlobalBlock, in which case it would need to race to re-register all of the dropped domain names).
- **Coverage Beyond Registered Trademarks** – GlobalBlock eligibility extends beyond registered trademarks to include unregistered trademarks, corporate names, and celebrity names (collectively referred to as “trademarks” for the purposes of this GT Alert), which are all subject to a free proof of use verification process.
- **Broad Coverage of TLDs** – GlobalBlock currently covers 510 different “TLDs” including new generic TLDs several legacy TLDs such as .BIZ, .CO, .INFO, and .IO, and numerous country-code TLDs. This number may fluctuate depending on the popularity and success of GlobalBlock.
- **Applies to Premium Names** – GlobalBlock includes domains that registries might subjectively designate as “premium” and thereby reserve or charge exorbitant registration fees.

### What Are the Limitations of GlobalBlock?

- **No Impact on Domain Names Already Registered** – GlobalBlock does not block or otherwise impact domain names that are already registered, by the brand owner or a third party. Accordingly, the BSA Brand Protection Calculator only calculates “The amount of domains you **could potentially** block with GlobalBlock [and] GlobalBlock+” (emphasis added). For major brand owners who have engaged in reasonable online enforcement and defensive registration, many domain names for which GlobalBlock coverage is desirable are likely either already defensively registered or being squatted on.
- **Only Covers Exact Matches of Trademarks and Homographs, Not Other Variations** – Furthermore, as discussed above, GlobalBlock only blocks registration of available domain names which are **exact matches** of trademarks (with nothing added) and in the case of GlobalBlock+, homograph variations as well. Neither product blocks registrations of domain names that incorporate a company’s exact trademark plus a generic term or additional characters, typos, or misspellings of a company’s trademarks. So, while GlobalBlock will protect against domain names consisting of your exact trademarks (or homograph variations), neither product will protect against the virtually unlimited possible misspellings of trademarks combined with other words or characters, including commonly abused terms like “www,” “support,” “security,” “login,” and “accounting.”
- **No Coverage for .com** – GlobalBlock does not block trademarks in .com, which is arguably the most valuable (and abused) TLD from a brand promotion and protection perspective.

- **Included TLDs Subject to Change** – Similar to previous blocking services, the TLDs covered by GlobalBlock are subject to change, for example through GlobalBlock contract expiry or registry change in ownership. This means there are no guarantees that current available blocks will persist.
- **May Be Cost Prohibitive for Some** – Similar to previous blocking services, costs may be prohibitive for either small business owners or brand owners with a large portfolio of trademarks. Even at a discounted cost (based on volume) of \$5,000 per year per trademark, the GlobalBlock service may be impractical for portfolios above 10 trademarks, since there are few in-house trademark teams that are able to spend \$50,000 or more **annually** purely on defensive registrations or blocking services.

### Key Takeaways

While GlobalBlock is not a panacea to the many complex domain name enforcement issues facing companies today, and it has significant limitations, for those that can afford it, GlobalBlock may be a useful and cost-effective tool to increase domain name protection for a company's most valuable trademarks.

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