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Social Media Experience Guide

**Social media experience guidelines for
.brand new TLD operators.**

Version 1.1 (May 2017)

neustar®

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Executive Summary

Social media is a well-known commodity, however the addition of a .brand TLD provides additional complexity which must be managed by social teams wishing to leverage the benefits a TLD can provide.

Social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) must be updated to recognize and correctly attribute the differences of a .brand versus a traditional (.com, .net, etc.) domain name.

Social media management tools (Hootsuite, Sprinklr, etc.) introduce variations that are beyond the scope of this document. It is recommended that testing within the tool for each social platform is conducted prior to publishing official content. To address anomalies, see the relevant social platform section in this document for guidance.

Social Platform	Do	Don't
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use prefixes (www. or http://) on all links If using vanity URLs (redirects), test to see if the rich preview displayed is the vanity URL or the destination URL, as it can vary from desktop to mobile to tools such as Hootsuite/Adobe/Sprinklr, etc. This step is not required on mobile. If you are NOT using vanity URLs and want to use the rich preview, ensure your websites are optimized for OpenGraph. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceed if your TLD was added to the internet infrastructure post-18/08/2016. Contact Neustar on how to resolve this issue!
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On desktop, if using vanity URLs (redirects), Twitter Cards should be removed/disabled on destination pages. Tweets can then be created using text/image as required On mobile, vanity URLs can be used (even if Twitter Cards are on destination pages) by removing the rich preview and pasting text and image/video. If want to use the rich preview, ensure your websites are optimized for Twitter's web-design controls, including Twitter Cards. 	
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On desktop, you must use prefixes (www. or http://) on all links For posts, if using vanity URLs (redirects), delete the rich preview and replace with text/image as required Ensure your websites are optimized for OpenGraph. 	
Instagram		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In posts, Instagram doesn't support any hyperlinks. Links can be included in the biography of the account.

Neustar is willing and able to assist with further testing of any of the above. Please contact dotbrands@registry.neustar for assistance/advice on developing a testing plan for your specific needs.

Introduction

While .brand Top Level Domains (TLD) offer organizations significant advantages in terms of differentiation, call to action efficiency and customer recall, social media utilization is an area which must be closely considered prior to launch.

This document is intended to provide a primer for .brand TLD operators to understand the current landscape of social media as it relates to .brand TLDs.

While social media is very well understood by modern marketing departments, social media providers (such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) have made changes to their platforms to accommodate new TLDs. There are some key differences in using a .brand domain name in a social media campaign as compared with a traditional or legacy domain name. This means that when marketers begin using their .brand TLD, some consideration of social media processes may be required.

About TLDs

Some background may be important for marketers to understand the differences between a .brand TLD and other options they may be more familiar with. Below is an overview of the different types of TLDs.

TLD Type	Description
Legacy TLDs	Legacy TLDs are the 22 basic TLDs which were in existence prior to the 2012 new TLD program and include well known TLDs such as .com, .org and .net and .biz, as well as lesser known TLDs such as .aero and .museum. Domain names are available to consumers within a TLD such as neustar.biz or google.com where .biz and .com are the TLDs respectively.
Country Code TLDs	Country code TLDs are TLDs which are assigned to and managed by individual sovereign nations. Prominent examples of country code TLDs are .uk for the United Kingdom, .de for Germany and .au for Australia.
Generic new TLDs	Generic new TLDs are introduced as part of the 2012 program, but are largely similar to legacy TLDs in that individual domain names are offered to consumers in TLDs such as .music or .club. This allows for a greater range of domain name customization such as beyonce.music or nycknitting.club.
Geographic new TLDs	Geographic new TLDs are very similar to generic new TLDs, however they are typically limited to, or at least marketed to, a geographic region. For example it is now possible for a New York based business to have taxis.nyc to better explain to end users their geographic relationship to the end user.
.brand new TLDs	.brand new TLDs are different entirely from the above examples in that only the owning entity can register domain names within that TLD. For instance with .neustar, only Neustar are eligible to register .neustar domain names, thus it can be guaranteed that the domain name www.registry.neustar is approved Neustar content.

Types of Domains/URLs

The type of .brand domain/URL used in social media can change the approach required. There are three distinct types of usage, each of which is explained below.

TLD Type	Description
Vanity URLs	Vanity URLs (sometimes referred to as redirects) are usually shorter, more memorable addresses used to direct end-users to deep content. E.g. promo.brand redirects to brand.com/en/product/promo. Vanity URLs may require minor workarounds for some social media posts. See specific platform sections for more information.
Microsites	Microsites are stand-alone websites typically used for short-term promotions or non-core activity. They can be treated as a standard website.
Full Transition domains	If a .brand TLD is used for a full transition (e.g. move brand.com to home.brand), then the homepage can be treated as a standard website.

Opportunities for .brand TLDs

While this document will not go into the opportunities available to .brand TLD operators with their .brand specifically, it is recommended that you visit www.makeaway.world for further information on what .brand operators are doing, or alternatively please contact Neustar directly to discuss how you can leverage your .brand to its full potential.

Impact of new TLDs on social media

The speed of new TLD rollout has proved challenging for each platform to remain consistent with their user experience and thus each TLD may experience differences per platform depending on various factors.

Neustar has conducted significant testing to understand the factors which go into this experience, as well as working closely with social media platforms to better the experience as new TLDs continue to roll out and adoption increases.

Please review the subsequent sections in this document for more detail on the major social media platforms and if you require further assistance please contact dotbrands@registry.neustar for assistance/advice on developing a testing plan for your specific needs.

Note: While a wide range of testing has been conducted on social via multiple user accounts and a varying degree of TLDs, examples in this document (where possible) will be from a fictitious.

Facebook

As with most social media platforms, Facebook is largely supportive of new TLDs however there are three major considerations when utilizing the social platform:

- Rich preview with redirects,
- Domain name prefix (www or http://), and
- Age of the TLD.

Each of these considerations is further detailed below.

Facebook Rich Preview with Vanity URLs (redirects)

While Facebook provides rich previews automatically, creating posts using redirects can result in the destination URL being shown in the post if precautions are not taken.

Testing should be conducted on each platform (desktop, mobile, or tools such as Hootsuite, Sprinklr, etc.) to determine what is shown.

Below are some examples of the differences.

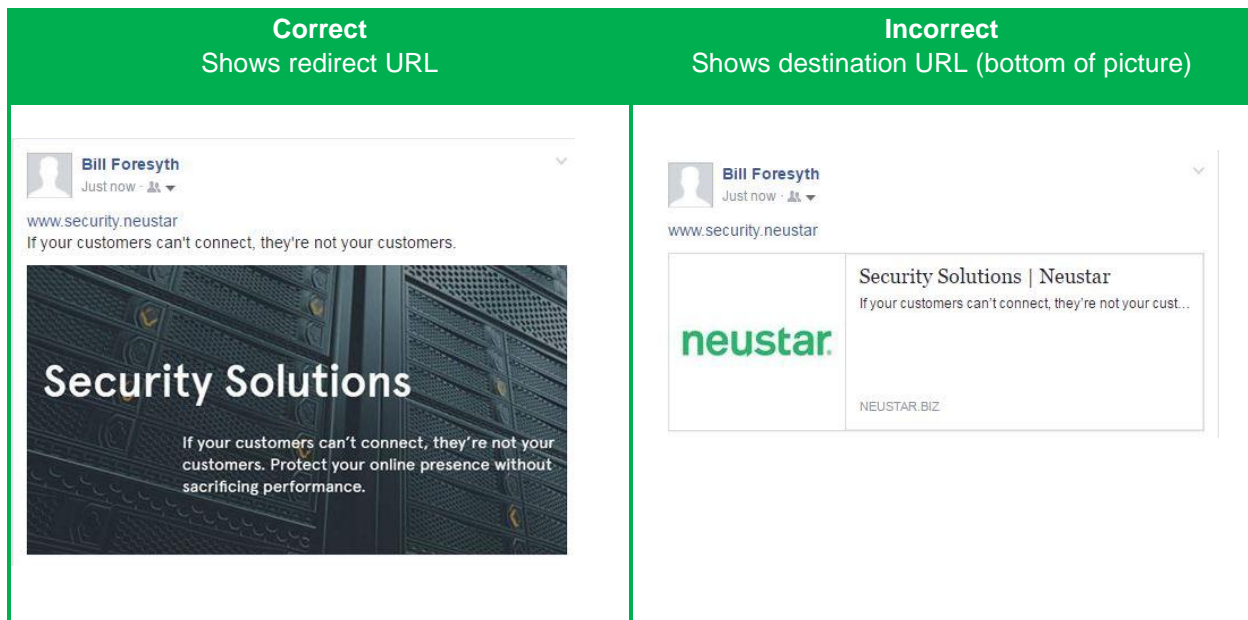


Figure 1, Facebook vanity URLs without and with rich preview, on desktop

Correcting Posts to Show Vanity URLs – Not Destination URLs

In both mobile and desktop versions of Facebook, if a rich preview is shown which displays the destination URL instead of the redirect, steps can (and should) be taken to replace the rich preview so the vanity URL is displayed.

If you need to correct a rich preview on Facebook desktop version

1. Enter the desired redirect domain name (inclusive of the www. prefix). Check to see if the rich preview is displaying the destination domain name rather than the intended redirect domain name.

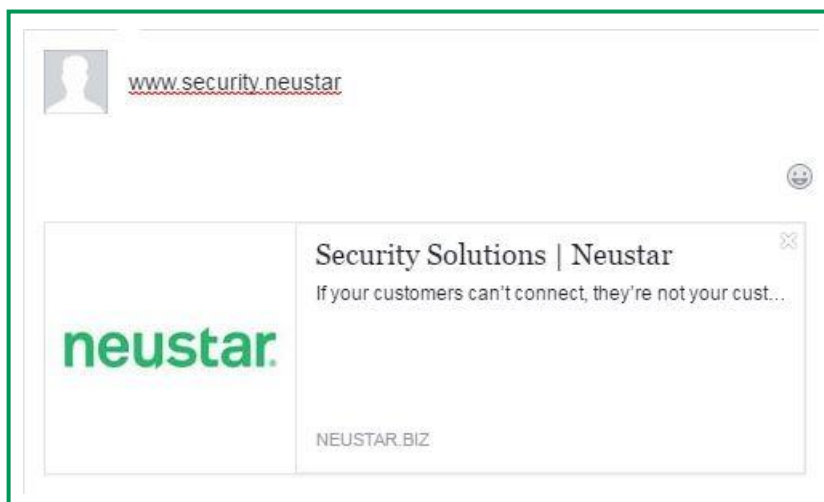


Figure 2, Facebook desktop post with rich preview

2. If so, remove the automatically generated rich preview before the post is made live (hover over image, then press the X in the top right corner)
3. If desired, add text and an image/video to the post manually via the "Photo/Video" functionality

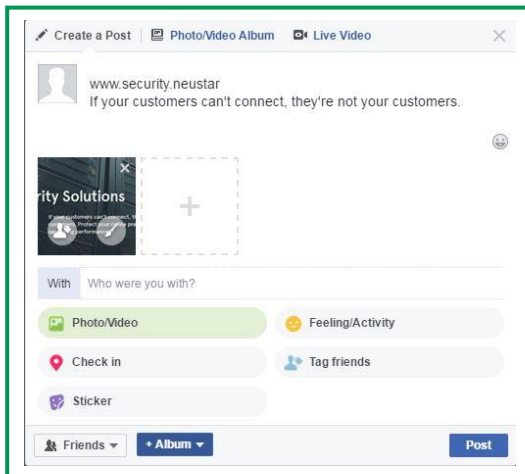


Figure 3, Facebook desktop post with text and photo added

4. Click Post.



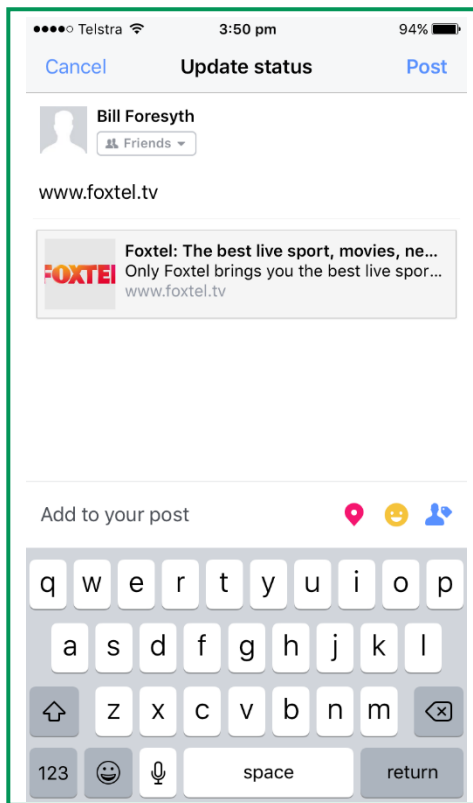
Figure 4, Facebook desktop post published

If you need to correct a rich preview on Facebook mobile version

Recent testing has shown Facebook mobile displaying the redirect URL rather than the destination URL, but your own testing should be conducted.

1. Enter the desired redirect domain name (inclusive of the www. prefix). Check to see if the rich preview is displaying the destination domain name rather than the intended redirect domain name.
2. If so, remove the automatically generated rich preview before the post is made

Figure 5, Facebook mobile post with rich preview



3. To remove the automatically generated rich preview before the post is made live, tap on the rich preview. Choose the option “remove link”.

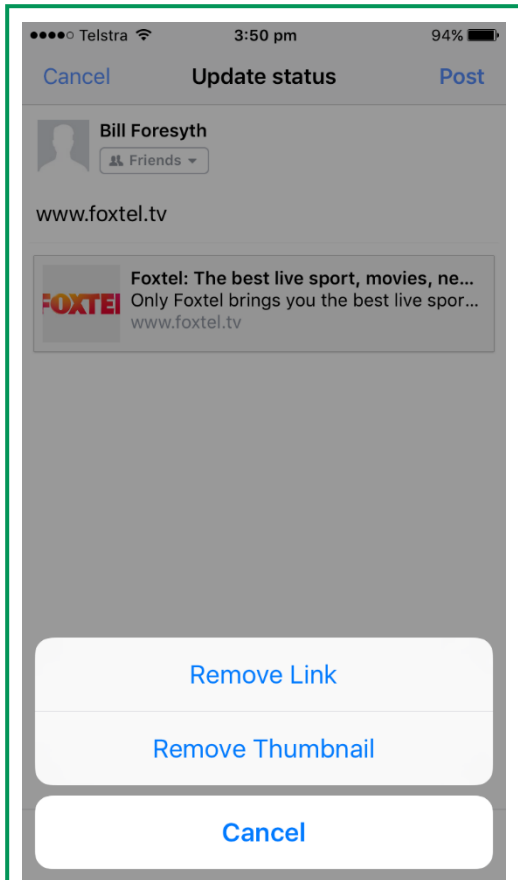


Figure 6, Facebook mobile post – remove rich preview

4. If desired, add text and an image/video to the post manually via the "Photo/Video" functionality.
5. Click Post.

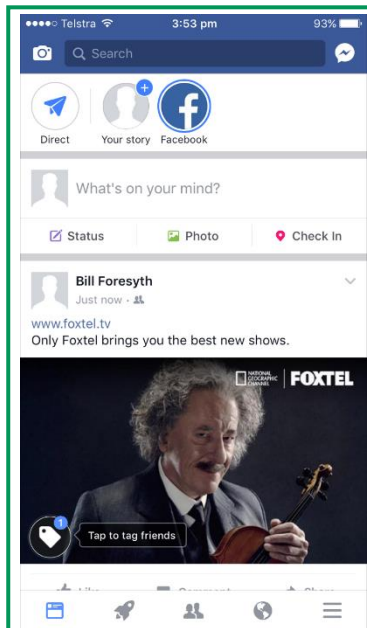


Figure 7, Facebook mobile post completed

Prefixes

It is important to include a prefix when adding a link to a new TLD domain name on Facebook to ensure that Facebook understands that the text entered is to be created as a hyperlink.

As can be seen in Figure 8 below, domain names entered without a prefix fail to be recognized and are therefore not created as a hyperlink.

In contrast in Figures 9 and 10 below, hyperlinks are created when a prefix is provided to allow Facebook to recognize the entered string as a domain name. Eligible prefixes are either “www.” or “http://”.

This applies to both mobile and desktop operating systems.

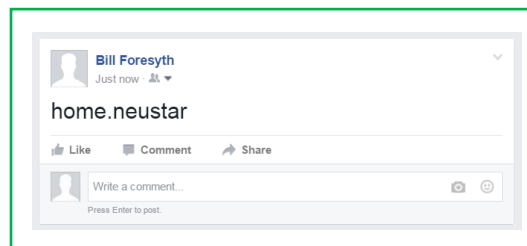


Figure 8, Facebook post with domain name



Figure 9, Facebook post with domain name with “www.” prefix



Figure 10, Facebook post with domain name with “http://” prefix

Age of the TLD

Age of the TLD in this instance relates to the date on which the TLD was added to the global internet infrastructure (the root zone). It is this global internet infrastructure which Facebook uses to understand if entered text is a domain name.

TLDs added to the root zone or “delegated” prior to the 18th August 2016 are currently supported via Facebook, while those after will need need to wait until Facebook updates their functionality.

It should be noted that Facebook updates the list which guides this internal checking for TLD validity regularly, however contacting a Facebook account manager may hasten this process should your TLD be currently unsupported. Neustar is also in regular contact with Facebook on these issues and are happy to be involved should it be required.

To see the age of your TLD in terms of the global internet infrastructure, please refer to <https://newgtlds.icann.org/en/program-status/delegated-strings> or contact your Neustar representative.

Facebook Conclusions

While support is expected to improve quickly, there are four specific recommendations related to Facebook:

1. If using vanity URLs as redirects and your site is set up with OpenGraph, check whether you need to remove the rich preview and replace it with text and image/video.
2. All content should be posted with a prefix of “www.” or “http://” to ensure that Facebook recognizes that the string typed is a domain name requiring hyperlinking. Support in the mobile application (both iOS and Android) is currently further advanced in terms of new TLD support than the desktop/web browser interface.
3. Specific attention should be focused on understanding if your .brand TLD is supported at a high level by Facebook in terms of age.
4. While it applies regardless of the type of domain name used, it is recommended that your websites are compliant with Facebook’s OpenGraph to get the best results from any Facebook campaign activity related to your .brand TLD. Facebook will look at the OpenGraph tags to discern if a rich preview is relevant for the link being provided. More information on OpenGraph is available at: <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/sharing/opengraph>.

Note: Should interaction with Facebook currently be scheduled or performed via a third party tool, it is recommended that this method is checked in-house prior to live usage to ensure the best possible outcome.

Twitter

Twitter is fully supportive of new TLDs, however correct social media support should be incorporated into all web design to ensure rich media support.

When tweeting new TLD domain names which have not been optimized using Twitter's specific web-design controls such as Twitter Cards (read further at <https://dev.twitter.com/basics>), then a hyperlink is created however no rich preview is shown (see Figure 11 below for example).

In contrast, Twitter creates an attractive rich preview when the end destination of a domain name in a tweet is compliant with Twitter web design best practice as per Figure 12 below.



Figure 11, Tweet with domain name link without rich preview



Figure 12, Link with tweet rich preview.

Vanity URLs (re-directs) on Twitter (desktop)

On desktop, if Twitter Cards are set up on the destination domain, the rich preview cannot be removed. To create tweets on desktop with vanity URLs, the Twitter cards must be disabled on the destination site.



Figure 13, Twitter desktop with rich preview (unable to remove)

Vanity URLs on Twitter (mobile)

On mobile, vanity URLs can still be used, even if Twitter Cards are set up on the destination domain.

1. Enter the desired redirect domain name. Note: Twitter will automatically generate a rich preview showing the destination domain name rather than the intended redirect domain name.
2. To remove the automatically generated rich preview before the tweet is made live, click on the black “x” in the top right corner of the rich preview.

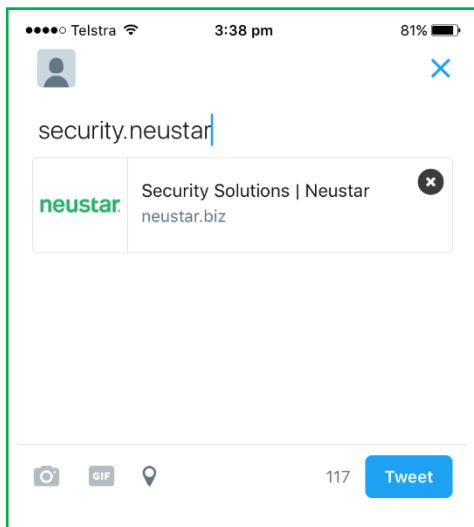


Figure 14, Twitter mobile with rich preview

3. Enter text and image/video as desired.



Figure 15, Twitter mobile with text and image

4. Hit "tweet".

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is mostly supportive of new TLDs, however care should be given to the format of domain names within the platform, specifically the prefix used before a domain name.

Prefix

It is important to include a prefix when adding a link to a new TLD domain name on LinkedIn to ensure that LinkedIn creates a rich preview. Unlike with Facebook, LinkedIn does not require a prefix to create a hyperlink, however rich previews are created for domain names which have prefixes appended, see figure 17 below.

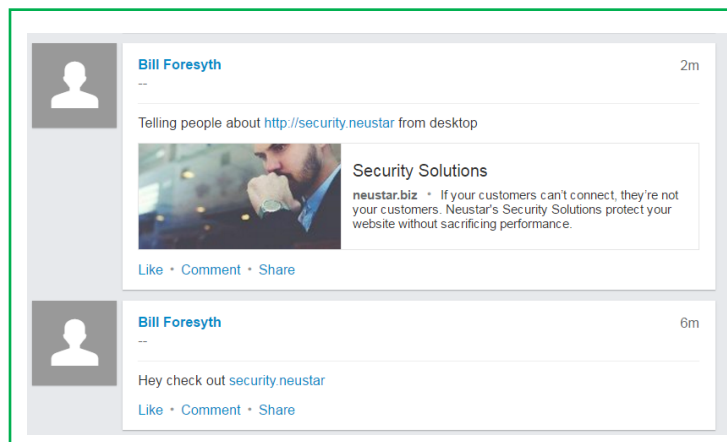


Figure 17, Two LinkedIn updates showing a prefix vs no prefix

Note: LinkedIn does create rich previews in some circumstances without a prefix, however it will create them in all circumstances if the prefix is added assuming the webpage is formatted correctly and complies with the OpenGraph standards. More information on OpenGraph is available at: <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/sharing/opengraph>.

Vanity URLs on LinkedIn (desktop)

On desktop, vanity URLs can still be used, even if Open Graph is set up on the destination domain.

1. Enter the desired redirect domain, including the prefix (www or http). The rich preview will be displayed.
2. To remove the rich preview, click the “x” in the top right corner of the image.

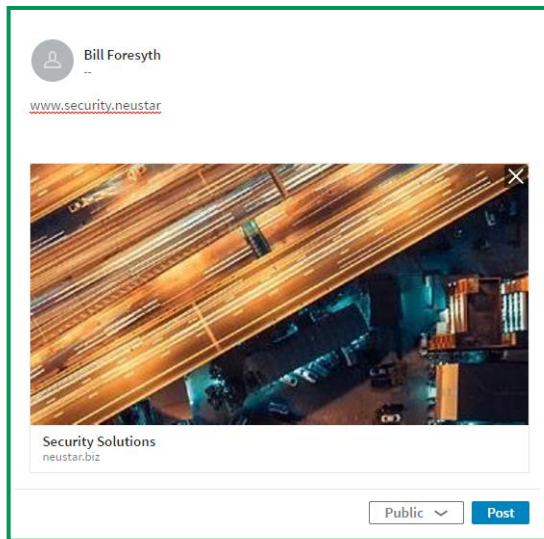


Figure 18, LinkedIn desktop with rich preview

3. Enter additional text and add image/video as desired.
4. Click Post.

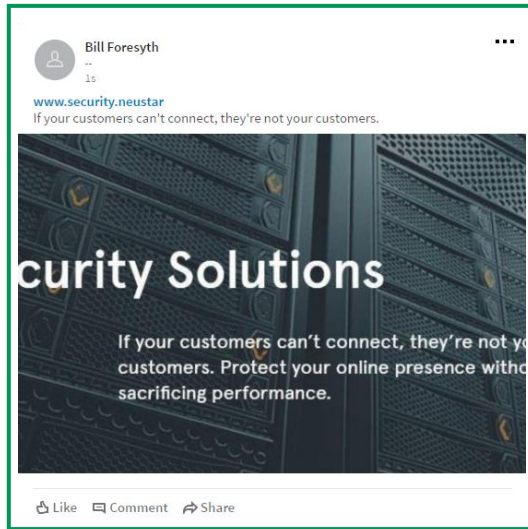


Figure 19, LinkedIn desktop with text and image

Vanity URLs on LinkedIn (mobile)

On mobile, vanity URLs can still be used, even if Open Graph is set up on the destination domain.

1. Enter the desired redirect domain, including the prefix (www or http). The rich preview will be displayed.
2. To remove the rich preview, click the “x” in the top right corner of the image.

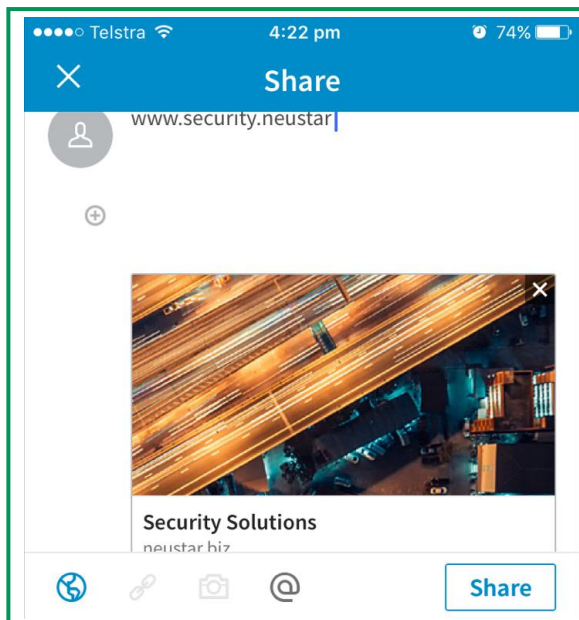


Figure 20 LinkedIn mobile with rich preview

3. Add text plus image/video as desired.

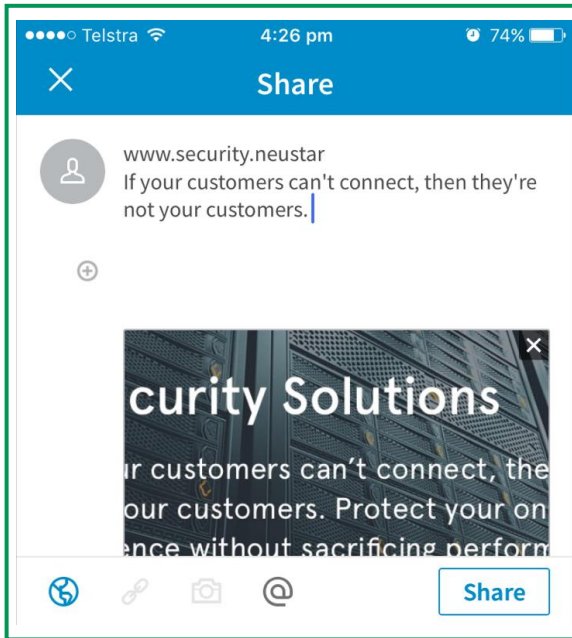


Figure 21, LinkedIn mobile with text and image (not yet posted)

4. Click “share”.

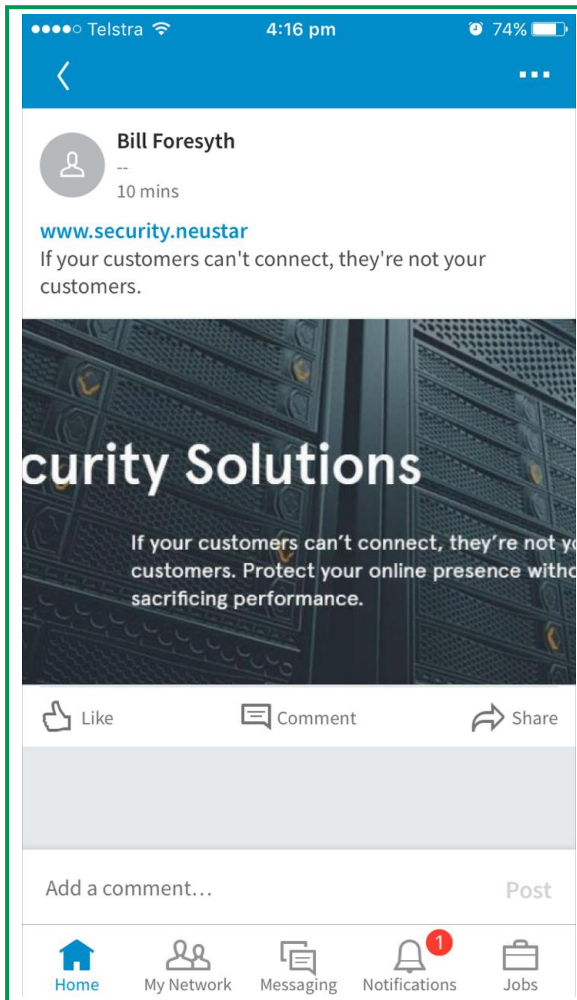


Figure 22, LinkedIn mobile with text and image (posted)

Instagram

Instagram is the rare social network which is currently non-supportive of any TLDs as links across the service regardless of TLD do not get converted into links.

In this regard, Instagram treats .brand TLDs such as .neustar the same way it treats legacy TLDs such as .com. Therefore Instagram requires no change to processes, but it should be noted that if .brand domain names are being added to content to increase branding impact, no hyperlink or rich preview will exist.

It is recommended that the URL listed in the biography of the account be updated to reflect the new desired vanity URL or .brand TLD site.

Social Media – Management Tools

There are a large number of third-party tools utilized by corporate organizations to simplify interactions across a range of social media tools, allowing easy aggregation of messaging, scheduling of responses, automation to queries, etc.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Hootsuite,
- Spinklr,
- SproutSocial,
- Buffer,
- SocialFlow
- and many others.

In the same way that social media platforms themselves must be supportive of new TLDs, these third-party tools must also be supportive of new TLDs.

There are broadly two types of third-party tools:

- Social media platform aggregators/schedulers, and
- Analytics tools.

Note that some tools may perform both functions, however each function is explored in greater detail below.

Social media platform aggregators/schedulers

Tools which amalgamate connections to multiple social media platforms have significant appeal for marketers as it allows simplified control across the entire channel, however this adds another level of complexity since these tools must also support new TLDs.

Neustar has conducted testing specifically against one of the most popular tools in this space, Hootsuite, and found that it provided no impediment to new TLD functioning and in some circumstances removed difficulties with posting to Facebook from a desktop environment (see Facebook section above for further detail on desktop vs mobile application issue).

If using vanity URLs (redirects), it is recommended that the tool be tested for each social platform prior to publishing any official content.

There are many other third-party tools which may be used however, and it is recommended that any organization conduct in-house testing with .brand assets prior to launch of a .brand marketing campaign to ensure that functionality is as expected as the additional complexity added may introduce unexpected outcomes.

Neustar is willing and able to assist with further testing of any of the above. Please contact dotbrands@registry.neustar for assistance/advice on developing a testing plan for your specific needs.

Analytics tools

While the major social media platforms have now provided their own analytics tools, there remains a niche set of third-party tools and in some cases in-house developed tools to combine data analytics from social media platforms. These platforms must also be tested to ensure that they correctly parse new TLDs and provide correct output.

As with the aggregation tools above, Neustar is willing and able to assist with further testing of any of the above. Please contact dotbrands@registry.neustar for assistance/advice on developing a testing plan for your specific needs.

Further Considerations

While the topics covered earlier in this document will be sufficient for the majority of social media campaigns, additional consideration should be given to other social media channels, platforms and tools which may impact a campaign such as:

- Adobe Acrobat,
- Amazon,
- Baidu,
- Bit.ly,
- Blogger,
- Craigslist,
- EBay,
- Google Now,
- Hootsuite,
- Hotmail,
- Outlook,
- Outlook.com,
- Periscope,
- Pinterest,
- PowerPoint,
- Sina Weibo,
- Siri,
- Skype,
- Sprinklr,
- Tumblr,
- Vimeo,
- Word,
- WordPress,
- YouTube.

Neustar is willing and able to assist with further testing of any of the above. Please contact dotbrands@registry.neustar for assistance/advice on developing a testing plan for your specific needs.