



Social Media Experience Guide

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

Version 1.0 (December 2016)

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.) as well as social media management tools (Hootsuite, Sprinklr, etc.) all must be updated to recognize and correctly attribute the differences of a .brand versus a traditional (.com, .net, etc.) domain name.

Social Platform	Do	Don't
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post content via mobile application rather than via desktop (where possible). • Use prefixes (www. or http://) on all links • 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"> • Ensure your websites are optimized for Twitter's web-design controls. 	
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use prefixes (www. or http://) on all links • Ensure your websites are optimized for OpenGraph. 	
Instagram		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't post links in text fields as Instagram does not support any kind of hyperlinks for any TLD

It is strongly recommended that the following sections detailing the rationale for the above recommendations are considered prior to undertaking any social media activity as well as consideration of the specific processes or complexities related to your specific social media requirements.

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.

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.makeway.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 user and show the .neustar TLD.

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:

- Method of posting content,
- Domain name prefix, and
- Age of the TLD.

Each of these considerations is further detailed below.

Method of posting content

While Facebook recognizes new TLDs correctly in terms of creating functioning hyperlinks, all methods of posting content are not equal.

The mobile applications on both iOS and Android are currently both further advanced in their level of support for new TLDs than the web browser/desktop interface. See below for further information.

Mobile Application Posts

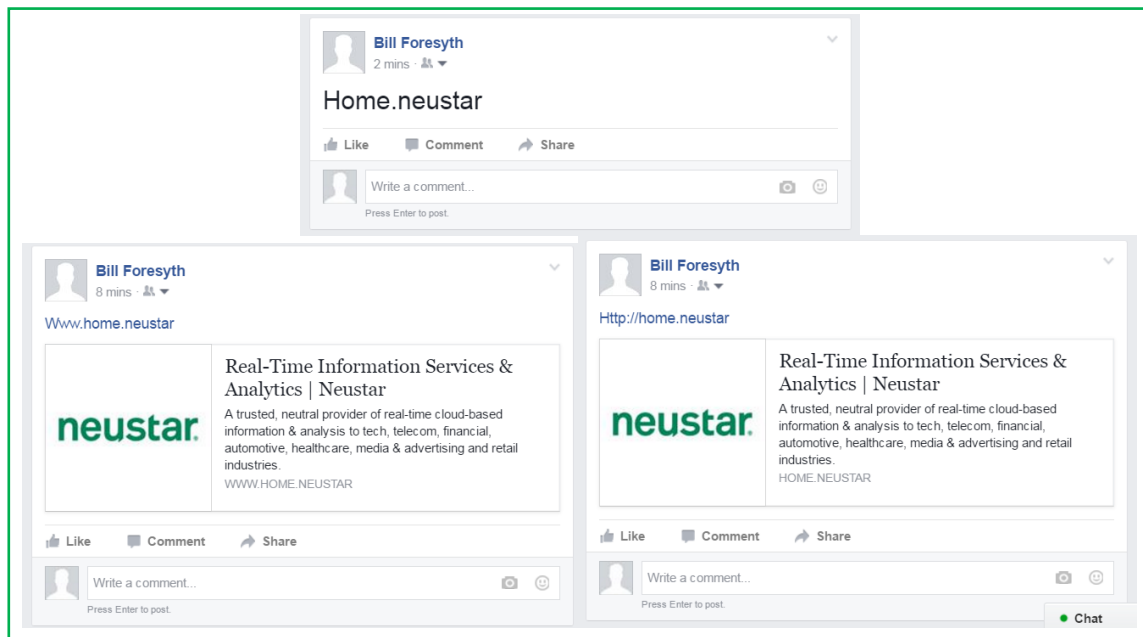


Figure 1, Posts created via mobile application

Desktop/Web Browser Posts



Figure 2, Posts created via desktop web browser

As can be seen from Figure 1 above, posts made via the mobile application create a better user experience by way of the rich link preview, whereas the rich link preview is not provided via the desktop method (Figure 2).

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 3 below, domain names entered without a prefix fail to be recognized and are therefore not created as a hyperlink.

In contrast in Figures 4 and 5 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 3, Facebook post with domain name



Figure 4, Facebook post with domain name with “www.” prefix



Figure 5, 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. All posts to Facebook occur from a mobile app for all content including a new TLD link (or rich preview) to guarantee the best outcome. 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.
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.
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 (read further at <https://dev.twitter.com/basics>), then a hyperlink is created however no rich preview is shown (see Figure 6 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 7 below.



Figure 6, Tweet with domain name link without rich preview



Figure 7, Link with tweet rich preview.

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 8 below.

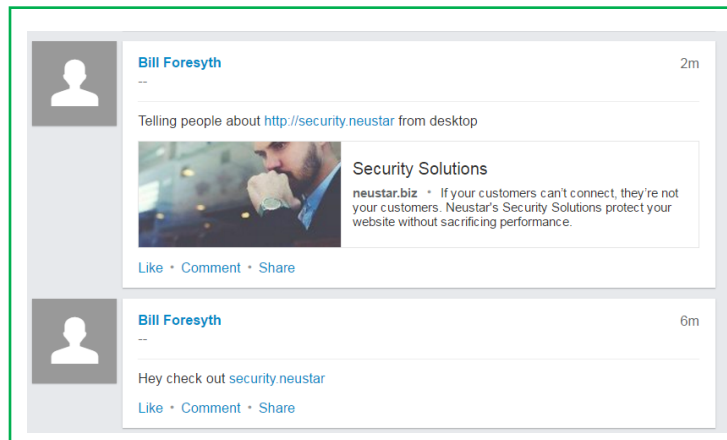


Figure 8, Two LinkedIn updates showing a prefix vs no prefix

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>.

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.

Given that Instagram is almost entirely focused on images, this is unlikely to be of significant impact to social media campaigns.

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).

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.