



.brands Industry Report

Everything you need to know about .brands

APRIL 2021

What is a .brand?



A .brand is a top-level domain (TLD) like .com or .co, but with your brand name to the right of the dot. It's your own custom-branded digital ecosystem, where you have total control over the entire namespace.

Over 500 of the world's largest brands applied for their own piece of internet real estate. It's time to end the search, and start connecting.

www.makeway.world

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Foreword



Hello and welcome to the first
.brands Industry Report of 2021.

We hope that you, our valued readers, are keeping safe in these challenging COVID-19 times which are causing such devastating effects across the world.

However, as we embrace 2021 in this new reality, we do push on and are proud to bring you this edition of this .brands Industry Report.

2020 was a mixed year for .brands and as we've reported throughout the year, some amazing use cases were launched globally and shared on our makeway.world website. Global leaders such as Google, Apple and many others are continuing the amazing use of their .brand assets and in doing so, continuing to pave the way for others to follow.

However, in overall statistics, 2020 was a small reduction in growth from previously seen rates which we can surmise as being partly due to the significant distractions facing our businesses during the pandemic.

As in previous years, a new and exciting story about .brand usage has formed over 2020 and in this edition, we interview Crews Gore from FOX Corporation as he outlines the amazing impact that .fox has had for their organization after significant parts of their business were acquired by Disney. This is a must read for any .brands industry participant as .fox has become the 'go-to' domain extension across the entire FOX organization, both for external marketing and as the foundation of their internal IT and DNS activities.

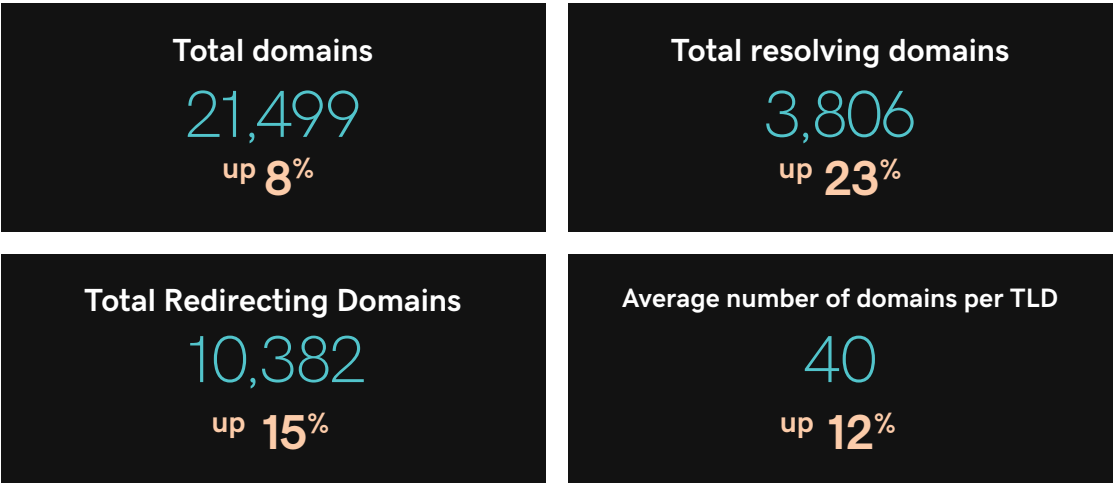
We also dive into the realities of the next round of new TLD applications after the ICANN Board was sent the final recommendations from the community recently and give you our insights on where the program is currently and what you need to do to be prepared. For any future applicants, or those keen to understand when your competitors may have the opportunity to apply for their .brand, this is also a must read.

Until we meet again, hopefully very soon...please stay healthy and look after your loved ones.

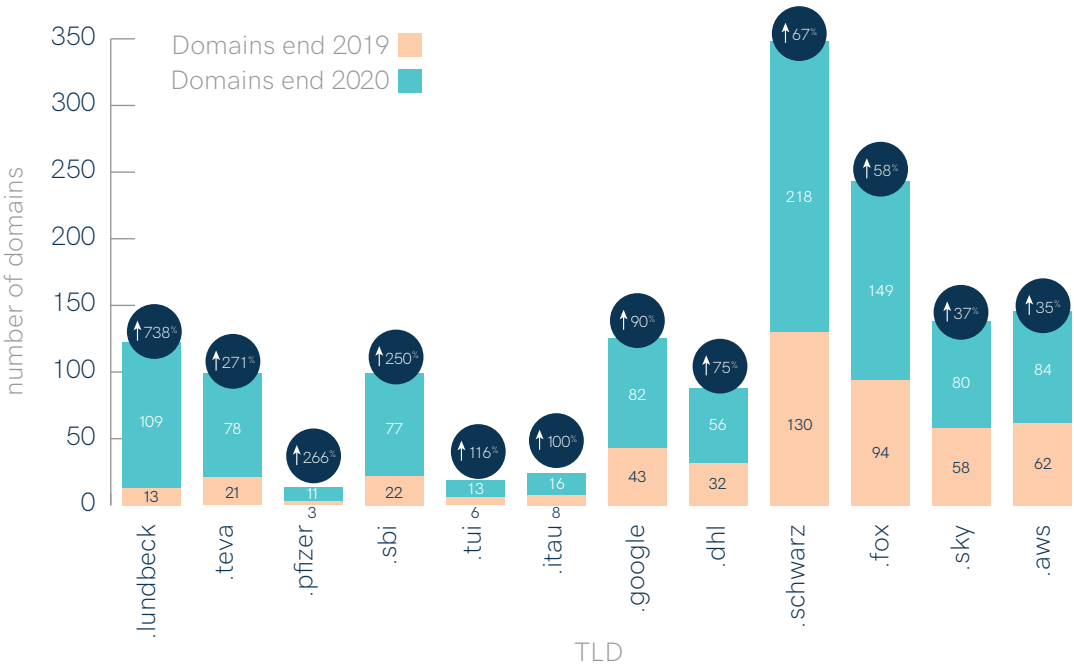


Jason Loyer
Director, Client Services,
GoDaddy Registry

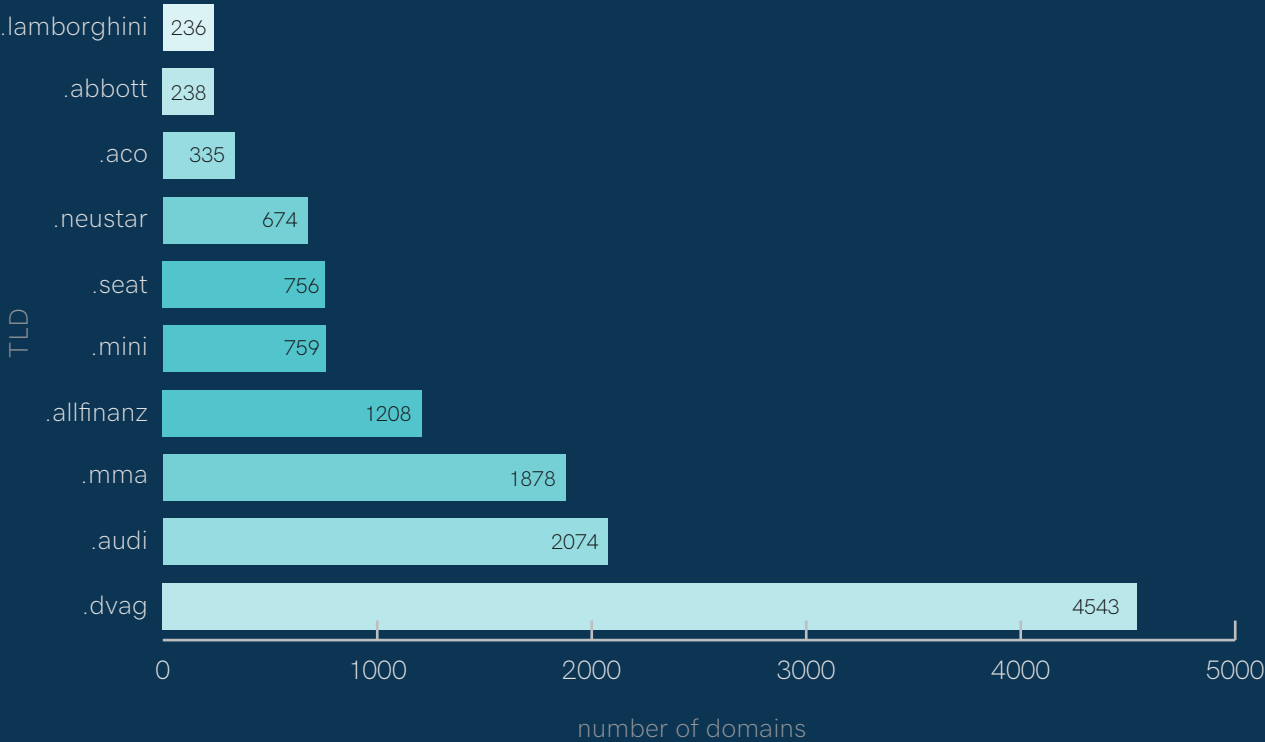
By The Numbers



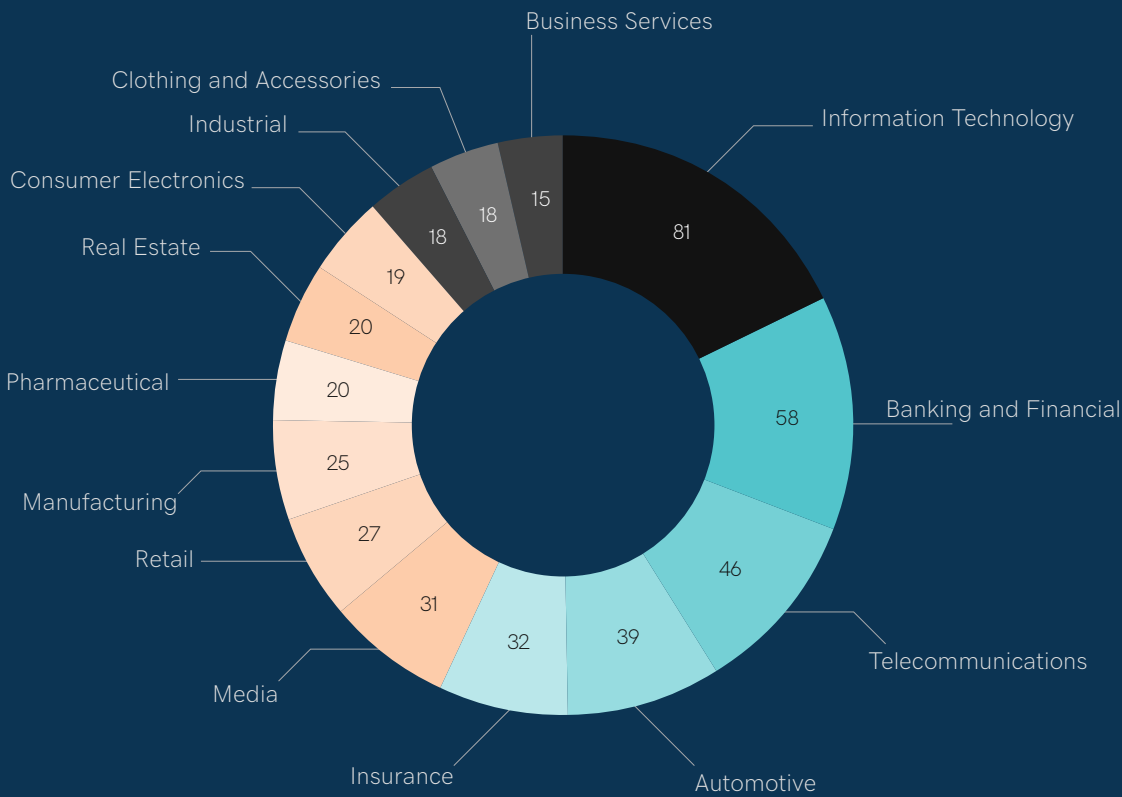
Notable domain growth 2020



Most .brand domains registered - as at end 2020



Which industry sectors hold the most .brand TLDs?



*Data - 30 June 2020 - 31 December 2020

*Data - 30 June 2020 - 31 December 2020

Number of .brand TLDs 2019 v 2020?

Number TLDs with	End 2019	End 2020	Change
>2 domains	291	296	1.72 %
> 20 Domains	99	107	8.08 %
> 50 Domains	53	60	13.21 %
> 200 Domains	10	12	20 %
> 500 Domains	7		0 %

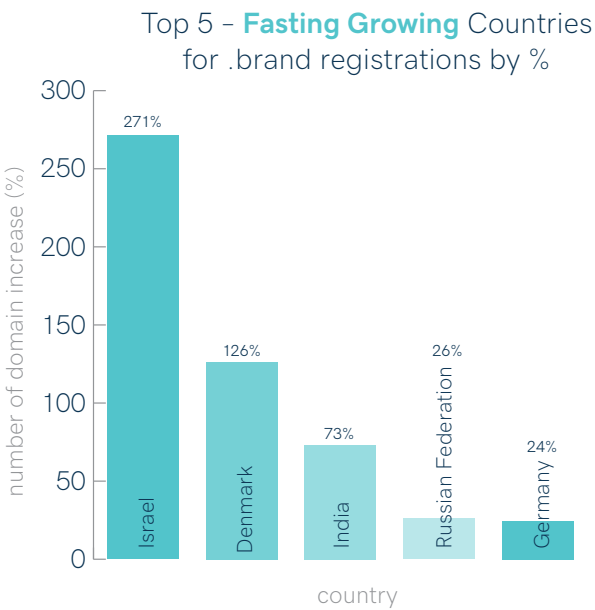
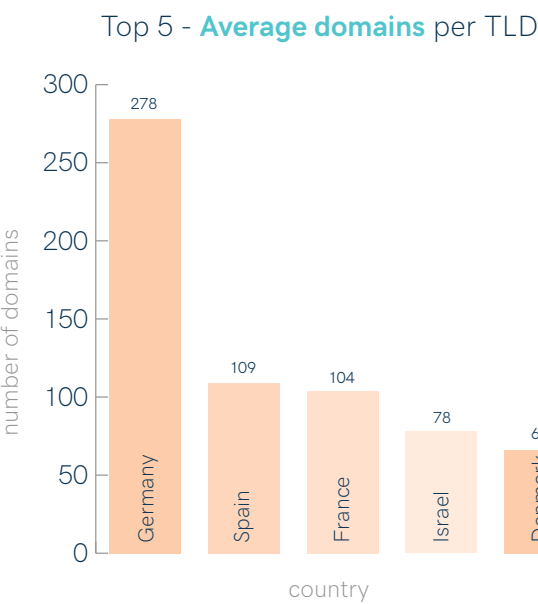
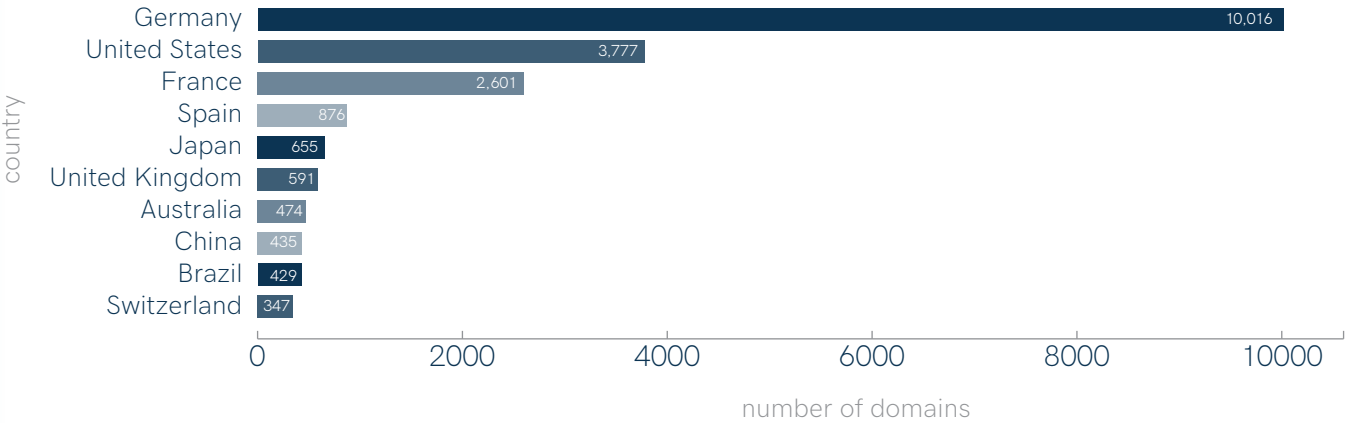
Which industry sectors are using .brand TLDs the most & the least?

Sectors using most .brand TLDs		Total Domains
	Banking and Financial	6940
	Automotive	4308
	Insurance	2397
	Information Technology	1834
	Industrial	1087
	Retail	617

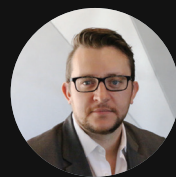
Sectors using the least .brand TLDs		Total Domains
	Luxury	49
	Leisure	49
	Clothing and Accessories	72
	Education	94
	Food and Beverages	95



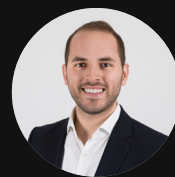
Total number of domains



.fox – A New Digital Footprint



Tony Kirsch
Head of Professional Services,
GoDaddy Registry



Crews Gore
Associate Director,
Domain Name Strategy

As one of the world's largest and most influential media organizations, FOX is one of the few companies that can single handedly expose the global audience to the power of new TLDs. Fortunately for us in the industry they are doing exactly that and through recent usage of .fox across all sectors of their business, FOX are bringing .fox to life.

In this exclusive, GoDaddy Registry's Tony Kirsch sits with Crews Gore, Associate Director, Domain Name Strategy at Fox to discuss all things .brand and why .fox is becoming the foundation for this media giant's digital future.

(This piece is adapted from the podcast which can be found in full at registry.godaddy.com/podcast)

Tony: Thanks so much for your time Crews. Before we get into .fox, could you share just a little bit about your background and what your current role is.

Crews: So, I've been in the domain industry for a little over five to six years now, I started at a registry and then made my way to a registrar. And after that I really wanted to get into the registrant position and I saw this domain manager position open up at FOX and I thought, "Okay huge brand. This would be really an awesome place to see how brands are using their domains and what their portfolio looks like." And so, when I was able to get the job it just worked out perfectly. I learned out that we have the .fox TLD. We have great portfolio domain names and it was just really interesting to see how we were going to use this .fox. Coming from a registry background I loved new TLDs and still love new TLDs. And I just want to see how FOX can use it in the future.

Tony: Not a lot of folks have had the three R's in terms of their experience - registry, registrar and registrant. What did you learn when you first came in that surprised you?

Crews: I really enjoy seeing the different aspects of the business at FOX and seeing what kind of domains the different marketing departments or IT departments are wanting to register and how we can either make that happen in generic TLD or .fox. Working at the registry, I always wanted to know how people are using the domain names, how did they come up with the domain name that they're registering.

Tony: Before we get into .fox, I'm interested just to dive a little deeper on your first thoughts being "in-house"?

Crews: I was surprised initially because everything's a little bit slower moving. I was very much "We got to jump on this. We got to use this now" but in big business things just are not as quick as you would hope, so I had to get used to that patience which is a bit tough sometimes but I can understand it because it's such a large corporation and a lot of moving pieces. So, I would guess that aspect and also pricing. Pricing is not something that's driving brands you know the make or break. It's really how that word fits exactly what they're looking for in marketing and if you can have that perfect

domain name, if it's in .fox or another TLD that's what they're going to want to go for.

Tony: .fox is one of the more prominent .brand TLDs and we know that FOX is obviously one of those real global organizations with a huge media footprint. Can you talk us through your journey from when you came in to where you are now?

Crews: Absolutely. So, when they originally applied for the .fox extension there were a lot of people on this and it was a priority to be able to secure .fox because of the fact was a generic word in nature, it matched perfectly with our brand and it is a three letter TLD which is great. So, there was a lot of emphasis that we needed to secure this domain name and then when I came in it was all about okay, we have this large portfolio of domain names. Maybe we can either reduce the cost by registering .fox domain names or build great domain names and websites off of our new TLD. And so, we really try to reach out to different marketing departments, different departments within the organization to see how .fox would fit for them. And of course, you had some departments that were on

board, some were a bit confused. But like many other TLDs it's all about education. You have to get it out there and show them that this is available and these are the possibilities.

Tony: Makes a lot of sense. So, have you been able to do that just in terms of .fox? Has it had an impact in your overall spend and digital footprint with other domains?

Crews: Yeah. I think when we started it was a little bit slower because FOX has gone through a lot of stuff in the past three years including the Disney acquisition. So, it was a much larger corporation which also made it a lot slower moving. And as a result, it was a little bit more difficult to figure out from every department and try to spread that word that, "Hey, we have this .fox the main extension. This is how it can be used." But as we were continuing to educate and new websites were coming online in .fox it kind of just spread by word of mouth. And slowly but surely, those registrations continued to go up and to a point now where we're seeing more .fox registrations than any other domain registration.

Tony: Can you give us a little insight on the stats around that, in terms of the number of domains you've gotten and how they're being used?

Crews: Absolutely so now we have 129 domain names in total with .fox and 77 of those domains are actively being used on our DNS. And then we have a little over 40 that are redirecting and then the rest would just be parked for the current moment as we're not using them and maybe we'll use them in the future.

Tony: Do you have a formal process or a consultative process that you have with the organization to work out whether a domain will be a redirect or resolve?

Crews: That all depends on the actual business. So, if the business wants to build a website, I'm there to give them all their possibilities. If they want the domain name to be their active website or if they're just using it for a campaign and they need it to redirect to one of the main pages that they have already developed then I really give them the options of what we can do and how .fox can be helpful for that or any other domain extension.

A lot of people within the organization understand .fox

and they love everything behind it and they have either asked their IT teams to only use .fox domain names or their marketing departments that reach out to me that are only requesting .fox domain names. They're not asking for .com or any other TLD anymore. Whereas, in the past we were always acquiring domain names at a premium price for those marketing departments for those specific programs or projects. So, it's interesting to see how it's switching a bit. Of course, we still are going out and acquiring domain names but you are seeing more and more people within the company understanding .fox and wanting to use it.

Tony: It appears as though you've reached the internal tipping point when the culture of the organization is such that not only is .fox a possibility but we're going to use it wherever possible. That's a pretty significant.

Crews: It really has been great. And like I said after the acquisition with Disney we're able to really focus on the domains that we used in the past and ask ourselves what are the domains that we're going to be using in the future. We've been able to land some great domain names with the IT team, and the DNS team were discussing using dns.fox

to be our name servers. There are security benefits to it and there are automation benefits to it. That automation of a .brand really stuck with the IT teams and the SSL teams. When you're registering certificates or having to validate your domain name in any kind of way, our SSL provider now automatically grants us authorization and approves the SSL certificate because we own the .fox TLD so they know any website built on .fox has to be coming from us.

Any kind of automation really helps speed up our process because when you're working in a huge department of a huge organization, you're having to set up a domain name, you're talking with the marketing team, you're having to talk with the SSL team, and everyone benefits from it. So, that's just one of the great benefits that the .brand TLD offers.

Tony: Do you have some favorite .fox domains and are there ones that stand out where you might say "Hey, these have really made a difference"?

Crews: I love dns.fox because it's associated with all of our big brand domain names. If you're running a WHOIS check on those domain names you'll see that they're running on dns.fox which I love, but that's

not something that's forward-facing to the public.

We've had recent projects with maskyourself.fox where the Masked Singer has really enjoyed the FOX TLD and they continue to request .fox domains before any other extension.

On the lot we have wayfinder.fox so if you want to find anything on our studio lot to see what each different studio offers or where the specific department that you're looking for is. Once you walk into the lot you there's prominent marketing for wayfinder.fox so that you can find your way around the lot in Los Angeles.

Tony: When you were trying to push .fox internally, what was in the conversation that they really were able to get their head around and I guess buy into the idea?

Crews: I would hope that they were able to see .fox domain names being used around the lot but you let them know that .fox functions the exact same as any other domain extension when you put it into a browser. The big thing still is you need to have that 'www' in front just so that it clicks and that will make the people actually realize, "Oh that's a URL. I can put that into a browser and it's going to work." And really it was about if they wanted a specific domain

name – for example, we could not easily go out and get studiostore.com, we started to say, "Why would we go and acquire a domain name when we have the .fox extension that we can use?"

Tony: So, do you have a feeling of when that internal tipping point happened, when people started to come to you rather than you having to push it to them?

Crews: I really think it came at that point where FOX sold assets of the movies and TV shows over to Disney and we had this clear focus. I had different people within the FOX organization reach out to me and we basically formed an alliance; we have the SSL team; the DNS team; the infrastructure team; and security team that all come together.

And when I told them that we have the FOX TLD they just needed about 30 seconds to a minute of explaining what it is, that we own this entire TLD, and that we should use this. And then once you mention the security benefits it was it was easy sailing from there especially the security team and DNS team. And then once the SSL team found out that automation is possible, they were all on board. Then that even turned into the security team saying, "Okay there

will be no more links sent within .fox that is not using a .fox." So, now any emails that are sent within the FOX organization are being sent on a .fox domain so the security team can make sure if there's any website that's sent inside of the email that's not using .fox that's not something that we would open.

Tony: So, is that done by way of an in-house URL shortener or something?

Crews: Correct. On a regular basis, we've seen so many internal sites go up on .fox because we had this alliance where we're saying, "Okay hey, DNS team you guys are creating this new instance and this is where a lot of our employees or visitors may go to so it's going to be on a .fox because we know we own it the automation with security so let's only use .fox." From there hopefully the other colleagues at FOX see this and say, "Oh okay this is .fox. Oh, it works exactly the same as another TLD and that that's really cool." We've seen the marketing and IT teams wanting to use the FOX TLD but there are plenty of business units that have been hesitant about using .fox where it would work perfect for them, they're just not quite there yet. There are always going to be those people that are a bit skeptical and they

want to see more use cases before they're going to jump on board. But it's a process and it takes time. And I think that's something that I've learned at FOX that I need to be patient because coming from a registry I always was just like, "It's launched. This is day one. Let's get the registrations up and the usage up." But with .brands it's a little bit different. It's a slow moving process, it's an education process and we're doing everything right. So, the future looks great for .fox and I think just with the continued education and use cases is only going to push it further up.

Tony: I'm interested in some of your current users right now - whether it's the Masked Singer team or the Studio Store, what feedback have you been able to get from people who have used .fox?

Crews: I'm not hearing any kind of negative impact that domain name has had so we know that those campaigns are working which is great. That's exactly what you want to have the TLD to work normally like any other domain extension. They're also asking me to register a domain name before I even have to sell them and that's happened only in the past couple months.

So once we hit that point, I knew these departments know about .fox and they know the benefits and they're obviously liking it. So, I'm not having to argue against them or have to tell them the actual benefits; they understand it.

Tony: What do you see as being next for .fox?

Crews: I've been looking at HSTS preload for

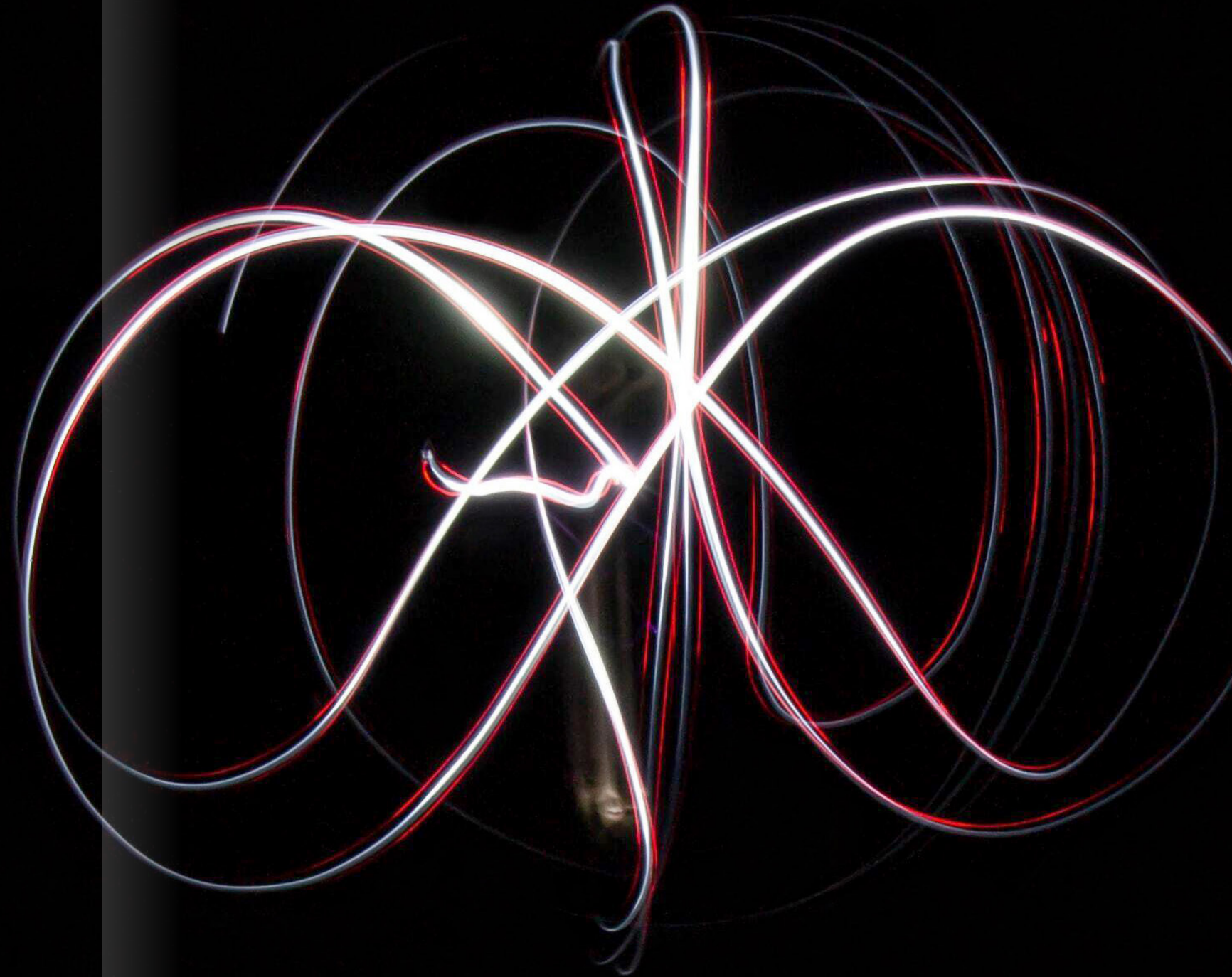
the .fox domain extension which has its great benefits but also challenges especially starting from when you launch which I'm trying to learn more about.

I think as long as we keep educating everyone that we have this extension, and as premium domains are rising in price that is always something that hopefully we continue to show the benefit of .fox and us owning that.

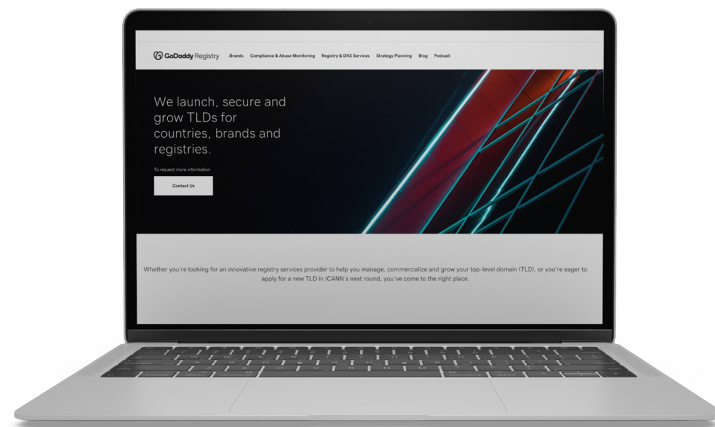
Tony: What's the one thing that you wish you knew earlier? If you were talking to Crews from six years ago what's the one thing you tell yourself?

Crews: Six years ago, I would tell myself to be patient. All good things come with time.

I think a lot of people in the domain industry were expecting things within too short of a time span; and I had that mindset for a long time. And now that I'm being able to sit back a little bit and look at the bigger picture, I think the domain industry is moving in the right direction. It's just through education we will educate everybody about how important domain names are to your web presence and being online. Because really every website and everything starts with the domain name; that's where you start out.

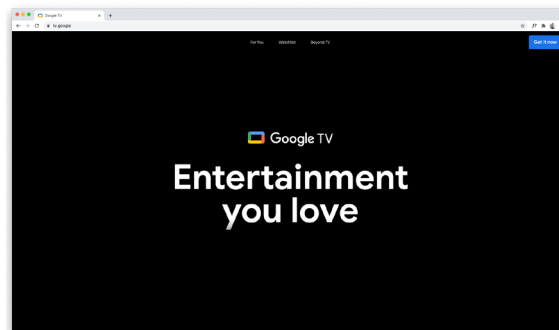


Showcase: Highlights



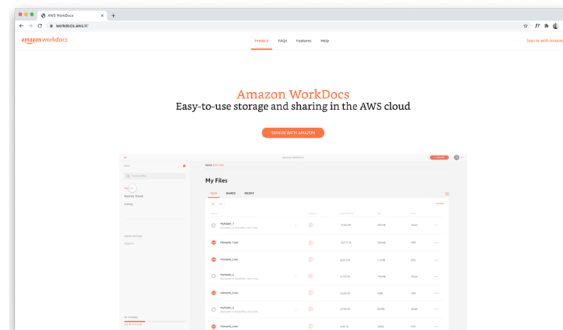
GoDaddy launches its website on its own .brand domain

registry.godaddy



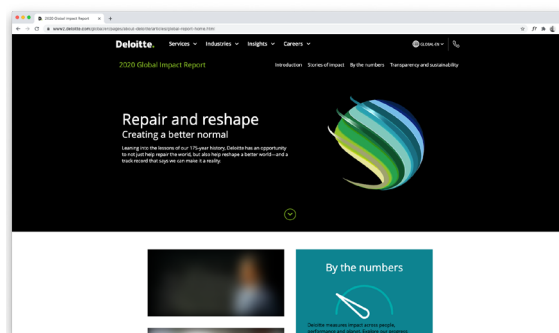
tv.google

Google goes big with the launch of Google TV on a .brand



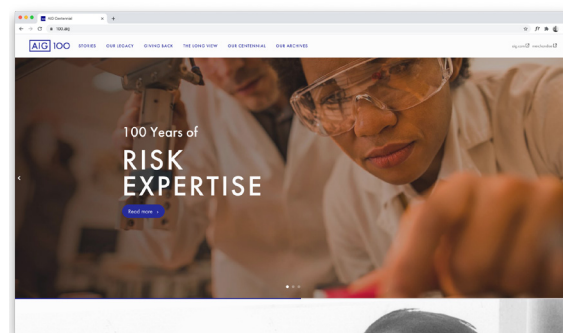
workdocs.aws

Amazon launches their new product on .aws



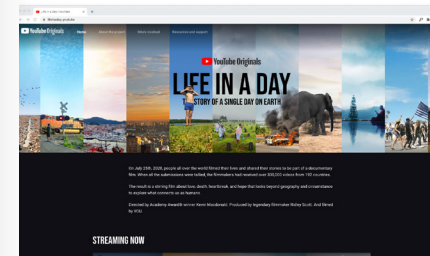
annualreport.deloitte

Consulting firm Deloitte uses their .brand for investor relations



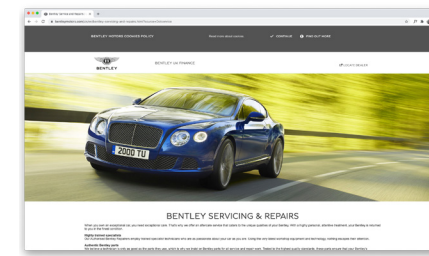
100.aig

US insurance giant celebrates 100 years of innovation



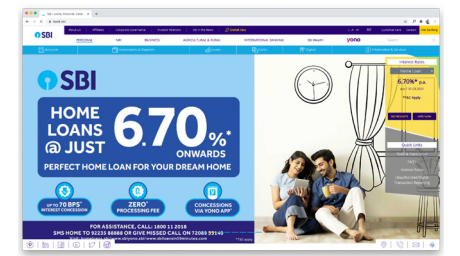
lifeinaday.youtube

A great site that shows a day in the life of many people across the world



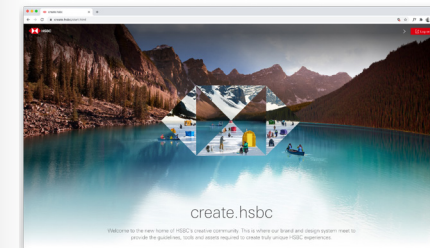
service.bentley

Classy domain to get your Bentley serviced



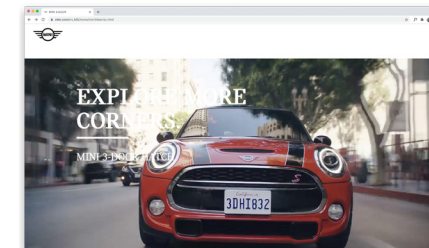
bank.sbi

India's state bank drops the legacy domain and goes all in on the .brand



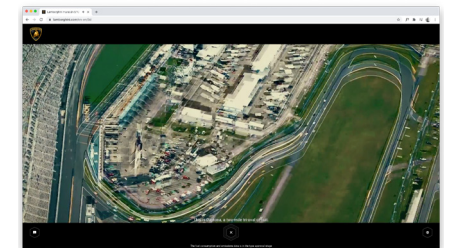
create.hsbc

International leading bank publishing it's own brand hub to the world



3door.mini

The new MINI car gets it's own .brand domain



unveil.lamborghini

Watch Lamborghini's effort in Daytona

Apple launches it's credit card with a cool .apple redirect

applecard.apple





Tony Kirsch
Head of Professional Services,
GoDaddy Registry

New gTLD Program Update

ICANN's New gTLD Program yielded almost 2000 applications and changed the internet forever. Many have been waiting for the next round and recent progress from the community has this moving closer to being a reality.

The New gTLD Round 2 Program took a significant step recently when ICANN's policy body, the GNSO Council, unanimously approved the recommendations put forward in the final report from the community led Subsequent Procedures Working Group and sent it to the ICANN Board for approval.

But what does that really mean?

Is it finally time for those interested in applying for a new gTLD to mobilize and get excited? Or should they continue to sit patiently whilst this near decade long process continues?

Here's an attempt to explain what this really means in 'non-policy' speak - and what you should be doing about it if you're thinking about applying in the second round of New gTLDs.



The Good News

Firstly, a situation such as this where the GNSO Council approves a report unanimously and sends it to the ICANN Board is a very significant step forward as it moves the process all the way to the final decision makers.

Over my 14 years in the industry, I can't recall the GNSO unanimously approving things this quickly unless they are mission critical or based upon a change of international law. Equally rare would be a situation where something like this would pass through without multiple revisions or iterations. Given that this has taken ten years, I think it's reasonable to say the new gTLD program isn't mission critical, so I think it's more likely that this swift approval represents a big tick for the consensus driven content of the Working Group's report and for their efforts in meeting the needs of the individual constituencies along the way.

Yes, it's true that the community driven Subsequent Procedures Working Group took five years to finalize the report. And yes, it's also true to say that after all that time and hundreds of conference calls, there really wasn't a huge number of changes that were recommended in the report.

However, despite being relatively few in number, the proposed changes that were recommended were significant and absolutely needed to overcome some horrible situations and/or delays in the 2012 round.

For example, included in the new changes is a recommendation that the ICANN Board formally agree to opening up future rounds after this next one, and also a recommendation that whenever the Board approve a round, they must also approve a timeline for the round subsequent.

Another key change from the report that will impact future applicants includes the formalization of a specific process for .brand TLDs and a long overdue 'pre-approval' for backend operators to speed up technical testing and ensure that the review processes can be as quick as possible.

So, with all of that said, will the ICANN Board look to facilitate a prompt approval to keep the process moving quickly?



The Balancing Argument

It's important to remember that despite the GNSO's prompt approval, the Board's decision to approve the recommendations and open up the program is significantly more complex one. Whereas the GNSO was simply agreeing to the policy, the Board needs to firstly consider a range of factors around when the program should go ahead, the price for an application, the suitability of auctions to handle contention in applications, and then consider all of the operational elements and financial allocations that a Board approval will trigger.

So, what does that mean in reality?

On the assumption that the Board approves the recommendations to open the second round, a number of high-level key elements need to be undertaken, including:

- Directing the CEO to implement the program - including allocating the necessary resources
- Generating a new Applicant Guidebook that implements the new recommendations
- Updating the baseline Registry Agreement
- Building the technical systems to support the application process (the Round 1

- systems are end of life)
- Engaging the necessary third-party dispute resolution organizations
- Building a communications program

Each of these has been done before in some way so it's reasonable to assume that things should move with some level of speed. But there are many elements to the steps described above and it's possible this could take 12 months or so to implement.

Did this wake up the naysayers?

Outside of this Board approval process is the 'hidden' challenges that exist in this multi-stakeholder community and plagued the first round.

For those with good memories, you may recall the numerous last-minute delays that happened in the first round that were caused by all sorts of scaremongering and 'fake news' campaigns put out by some groups that took



years to resolve and dampened the appetites of many possible applicants in the process. Well, these groups still exist, and it will be interesting to see their tactics following this recent announcement.

The ICANN Board will have to make sure they take a strong stance against those with commercial interests that are not aligned with the new gTLD Program from trying to derail the process in order to keep it moving forward.

What's next?

The ICANN Board will begin to consume the 400-page report over the coming weeks and involve the community as necessary through Public Comment processes. No-one knows

when the Board is actually going to approve the report but for future applicants, it seems like now might be a good time to start the internal conversations on the feasibility of a new gTLD for your organization. We're certainly starting see more folks come to us and asking for our help on that journey over the last few months.

We generally advise an 18-24 month preparation prior to submitting an application - with the longer times generally recommended for governments, or large international companies with a complex approval process. In our next series of blog posts, we'll outline for you how to kickstart your internal preparations but for now, the second round has moved forward in a major way so it's exciting to start sharing this with the community.



.brands Spotlight: .youtube

Over the last few years, there has been significant attention paid to the numerous sites that have launched under the .google branded top-level domain. In this edition of the .brands Spotlight Series, we turn our attention to YouTube and discuss how the .youtube extension is being used to support some amazing innovations for the world's largest video streaming service.

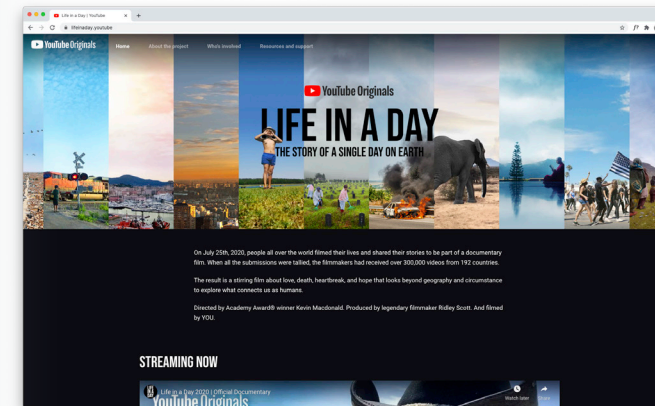
There's little debate over the incredible rise of YouTube since Google's acquisition in 2006 for \$1.65 billion which seemed like an incredible amount of money for deal of that nature at the time for many industry watchers. 14 years on, YouTube continues to go from strength to strength with over 1.3 billion users and almost 5 billion video views each day helping the hosting/streaming giant to generate \$15 billion in revenue in 2019.

Perhaps even more impressive has been YouTube's seamless integration into Google's search results which has created a formidable synergy that generates mutual benefit for publishers and advertisers alike, making it one of the most widely used and powerful digital platforms on the planet. How then does a new web extension like .youtube

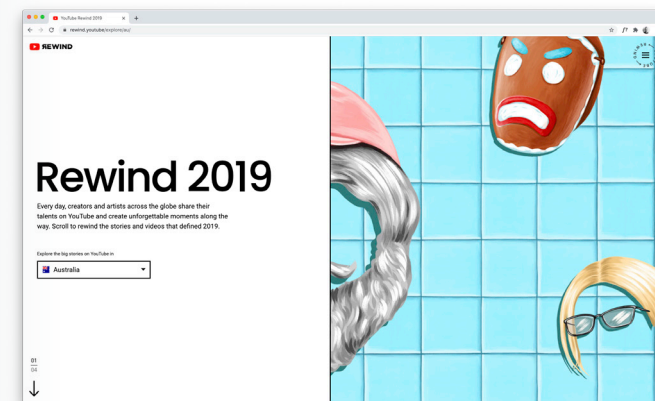
create value for an organization that is already so rich in traffic through its combination of web and app platforms?

As we noted with .google where domains were being used for communication and product launches, usage of .youtube has not become integrated as yet with the primary purpose of the business nor the primary [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) domain.

And whilst .google and .youtube both host their corporate blogs at blog.google and blog.youtube respectively, it's two new innovation sites that are being hosted on .youtube domains that has really got our attention for this .brands Spotlight.



lifeinaday.youtube



rewind.youtube

It's been almost a decade since the first 'Life in a Day' film and its revival has drawn attention from all over the world. And with world class directors like Ridley Scott on board and a plan to submit the video for the Sundance Festival in January 2021, why wouldn't it?

This year, over 300,000 aspiring videographers from 191 countries submitted videos of their day from July 25 2020 and this will be painstakingly compiled into one 90 minute video over the coming months.

With the aim of showing what a day across the entire world looks like, this amazing initiative by YouTube has found its way onto a .youtube address and we think this level of innovation seems only fitting to have an innovative web address to promote it.

Want to know what the most popular topics were in your country during 2019 based upon YouTube stats and relive the experience? Thanks to rewind.youtube you can!

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It seems so simple and intuitive for YouTube to share this sort of data. However, this is done with a beautiful and interesting design, allowing users to scroll effortlessly through the year and see what people were watching with an interesting description and links to the videos themselves.

Seeing and remembering what was popular in your country last year is great, but also just as intriguing to see what was popular in other countries and of course, the similarities like the global fascination with Minecraft.

And let's face it, the fact it's available on a .brand domain makes it just that little bit cooler, right?

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