

**Do you want to provide your customers with an easy way to contact your business?  
Maybe it is time to register [yourcompanynamehere].TEL.**

By Cheryl Burbach

***New Top Level Domain Names Available***

Beginning on December 3, 2008, trademark owners have been able to register a ".tel" domain name. Traditional top-level domain (TLD) names (such as .com or .net) link to websites. Conversely, the new .tel TLD is designed specifically for access by mobile devices, and will access the contact information of the holder of the .tel domain name, without the need for viewing a standard website. It can be difficult to view information on web pages on cell phones and other mobile devices. The primary purpose of the .tel TLD is to allow instant access to contact information without having to access a website. The telephone numbers of the .tel owner will appear as "hot links" that will automatically dial those numbers upon touch or selection.

***Early Registrations Are Limited to Those Who Have Federal Trademark Registrations***

Right now, only owners of federally-registered trademarks or service marks will be permitted to register .tel domain names. The estimated cost to register a .tel TLD during the two-month "sunrise" period is estimated to be in the \$500 range. Beginning on February 3, 2009, the "landrush" period opens, and anyone may seek to register any available .tel domain names, including generic or descriptive marks or names, on a first-come, first-served basis. Of course, bad faith use of another's trademark will be subject to cancellation or transfer under existing domain name dispute procedures. The landrush period expires March 23, 2009, after which the .tel TLDs will be generally available to anyone at significantly lower fees.

Owning a .tel domain name will likely ease the ability of consumers to reach the genuine trademark owner. Further, registering the appropriate .tel domain names will serve to preclude predators and unsavory competitors from registering domain names containing a company's valuable trademarks. Preemptive registration is usually less expensive than a domain name dispute, and adds value to intellectual property assets.

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