

Time to Face the .MUSIC

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And the new top level domain names just keep on coming. As our readers may know, ICANN, the organization that operates the internet domain name system, authorized the launch of the New gTLD Program – the largest expansion of the generic top-level domain name (“gTLD”) system on the Internet in history. Prior to the launch of this program only 22 gTLDs had been approved and added to the Internet (e.g. .com, .net, .org). Now, you can obtain specialized domain names, such as .bank, .weather, or

even .rugby.

Now **.music** has been approved for launch for the purpose of serving the global music community. An entity named DotMusic Limited beat out Google, Amazon, and other interested groups for the right to operate the .music registry. DotMusic states that it will verify registrants to ensure that only the rightful owner of a name can obtain a corresponding domain name. DotMusic further promises safeguards to protect against both trademark and copyright infringement, including investigation practices, penalties, and takedown procedures.

To register a **.music** domain name, registrants must (1) belong to a music community membership organization (“MCMO”) and (2) meet clear membership criteria demonstrating “requisite awareness and recognition of their community.” MCMOs, according to DotMusic, constitute “a majority of all global music entities involved in the

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- Trademark, Copyright + Advertising
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legal production, distribution and promotion of music,” and we assume therefore include performing rights organizations, such as ASCAP and BMI, as well as music publishers and record companies. As far as we can tell, the membership criteria has yet to be defined, but we assume most musicians belonging to an accredited MCMO will qualify. If you are interested in a **.music** domain name and not already a member of an MCMO, now is the time to consider joining one.

.music domain names can only be registered if they are:

- the entire or portion of the applicant’s name;
- an acronym representing the applicant;
- a name that recognizes or generally describes the applicant; or
- a name related to the applicant’s mission or activities.

Once launched in 2020, **.music** domain names will be available to verified members in the following order: (1) sunrise, (2) MCMO members, and (3) general availability. **.music** will use a Globally Protected Marks List ([link here](#)). Registration in the sunrise period will be open to brands and trademarks in the Trademark Clearinghouse (“TMCH”). A TMCH registration entitles trademark owners to pre-register domain names corresponding to their registered marks, typically for a premium price.

We will keep our readers updated as more details emerge on the membership requirements and registration process. In the meantime, interested musicians might consider seeking registration of their trademarks in the TMCH to ensure early access to their **.music** domain name of choice.