Buy a domain name that is already registered

You have chosen to acquire a domain name for your digital identity. Before paying, establish who can transfer it, what the purchase includes and what will prove that your business has received it.

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BEFORE YOU START

Payment does not establish that handover is complete

The holder is willing to talk and a price seems possible. The transaction still needs organising. Who is authorised to sell? What exactly are you buying? What will establish that your business has received the domain?

For our bicycle workshop, acquisition is no longer a backup idea. It is a transaction to prepare. The previous article established a ceiling and an alternative. Now the agreement, payment and handover must fit together.

This guide concerns a consensual transfer. If you are relying on rights to challenge a registration, have that issue assessed separately. A purchase negotiation does not replace that analysis.

YOUR PATH AT A GLANCE

- Identify the exact domain and the person authorised to transfer it.
- Write down what is included and the payment conditions.
- Check receipt and prepare activation.

Contents

Identify what is offered, and by whom . . . 2

Write down what the purchase includes . . . 2

Link payment to a verifiable handover . . . 3

Check receipt before activation . . . 4

Key points / What to remember . . . 4

Mini-glossary . . . 5

Sources and method . . . 5

Read the article and find its tools online

CHAPTER 01

Identify what is offered, and by whom

EXPECTED RESULT

Establish the exact domain and authority to transfer it.

Copy the complete domain, including its extension, and check every character. A letter, hyphen or different extension can identify another registration. List multiple domains separately.

Look for accessible registration information, then ask how the seller's identity and authority will be verified. This may be the holder, a company representative or an authorised intermediary. Controlling a webpage or possessing technical access does not answer every question.

Hidden public details do not, by themselves, demonstrate an irregularity. They mean verification must use other appropriate methods. Ask the participants which documents and confirmations they will use.

Also examine previous use and known difficulties, including past activity, disclosed commitments, disputes or associations undesirable for your project. An attractive address can have a history that needs understanding before your business moves in.

DO THIS NOW

Clarify the intermediary's role

If one is involved, ask who appoints and pays them, what they check and which decisions require your agreement. Know whom you are contracting with and who can provide the required authorisations.

CHAPTER 02

Write down what the purchase includes

EXPECTED RESULT

Give buyer and seller a shared understanding of the scope.

Buying a domain does not mean buying everything once associated with it. Treat the address, any trade mark, website, text, images and accounts separately. Identify each asset with its handover conditions and relevant rights.

What the agreement should address

Item	What to specify
Domain	Exact address, intended holder, registrar and planned operations.
Additional assets	Included or excluded assets, files, stated rights and access to be handed over.
Financial terms	Price, currency, taxes, fees and allocation between the parties.
Receipt	Required confirmations, checks and conditions for releasing funds.
Unexpected events	Consequences if a check fails, an obstacle arises or the parties disagree.

For the workshop, the seller might offer an old website with the domain. Ask whether you need it and what the seller is actually authorised to transfer. The following article covers rights in creative work.

POINT TO WATCH

Previous messages are not automatically included in the purchase

Arrange the treatment of previous uses and data with the appropriate people. Do not request a general copy of the previous user's mailboxes to simplify handover.

Have the agreement adapted to the transaction's value and complexity. The parties, warranties and applicable law cannot be reduced to a contract template found online. These questions are a preparation framework proposed by Wize.

CHAPTER 03

Link payment to a verifiable handover

EXPECTED RESULT

Know who checks what before funds are released.

The central question is straightforward. On what evidence will the seller receive the money? Define the stages with the participants before sending funds. Their exact order depends on the extension, registrar and any service used.

An escrow service may hold funds until agreed conditions are met. Verify its identity, official address, fees, checks and exclusions. The word "escrow" does not guarantee that it assesses rights in the name.

Ask what happens if the domain appears in an account but the holder change is unconfirmed, an authorisation is missing or the parties dispute receipt. Conditions should match the outcome you expect.

Confirm payment instructions through a trusted channel, particularly if they change during the transaction. Do not share the password of an account containing other domains to bypass the intended mechanisms.

KEY POINT

Agree the evidence of receipt before payment. Temporary access, an invoice or a screenshot does not automatically replace confirmation of the agreed outcome.

CHAPTER 04

Check receipt before activation

EXPECTED RESULT

Confirm the domain's status and management access.

For .lu, a holder change requires approval from the current administrative contact, who represents the holder. If the registrar also changes, a separate management transfer is required. Have the coordination of these operations confirmed.

For generic extensions such as .com, check ICANN's Transfer Policy and the conditions of the registrars concerned. Do not apply a restriction or timetable encountered for another extension to .lu.

Confirmations to keep

Confirmation	Your check
Holder and contacts	The expected details for your business and its representatives are confirmed.
Management	The registrar and management account are identified, and an authorised person can access them.
Recovery and follow-up	Recovery details, expiry date and the person responsible for renewal are defined.
Existing services	You know what must be maintained, changed or stopped for the website and email.

Before changing settings, check which services remain in use and prepare the transition. Receiving the domain and launching the new website are separate stages. Keep the agreement, confirmations and receipt record to organise what follows.

Sources: [1], [2]

Key points / What to remember

YOUR KEY POINTS

- Check the exact domain and the seller's authority before paying.
- Define what is included and excluded, asset by asset.
- Link the release of funds to explicit receipt conditions.
- Separate holder change, registrar transfer and activation.

FURTHER READING

Clarify the rights to your logo, text and visuals

Prepare to launch your identity

Mini-glossary

Term	In a few words
Holder	The person or organisation in whose name the domain is registered.
Registrar	The provider through which the domain is registered and managed.
Escrow	An arrangement holding funds subject to agreed release conditions.
Receipt check	Verification of the outcome and items specified in the agreement.

Sources and method

The explanations draw on the cited sources, checked within their stated scope on 6 November 2026. Comparison frameworks, preparation examples and working questions are proposed by Wize. No example establishes availability or rights in a particular name. Transaction-specific arrangements remain to be confirmed with the participants concerned. Some official resources are in French.

1. DNS Luxembourg - Change of holder
Approval by the current administrative contact and distinction between holder change and registrar transfer. French official resource.
https://dns.lu/fr/fonctionnement/gerer-un-lu/changement-de-titulaire

2. ICANN - Transfer Policy, published 21 February 2024
Policy for accredited registrars and generic extensions. Do not transpose it to country-code extensions.
https://www.icann.org/en/contracted-parties/accredited-registrars/resources/domain-name-transfers/policy

References in brackets identify the sources above.