Test your name aloud, in writing and online

Will your customers be able to say your name, spell your domain name and use your email address? Test these elements of your digital identity together, in the languages and situations that matter.

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BEFORE YOU START

Will your name be as clear to other people as it is to you?

You give someone your business name over the phone. They hesitate: is there another letter, a space or a hyphen? You explain the spelling. A little later, they look for your website and type a different address. The name that seemed obvious on a presentation suddenly needs explaining.

These small differences are worth observing before you settle on a name. Return to the naming options and possible domains you prepared in the first article, then ask people to try them in situations close to those your customers will encounter. You can see where they hesitate, understand why, and decide what to keep or adjust.

YOUR PATH AT A GLANCE

- Prepare tests for the people and languages that matter.
- Observe what happens when the name is heard, then read.
- Explore what it suggests, what people remember and how they search for it.
- Try the domain and email address, then define the role of each address.
- Turn the difficulties you observe into questions and adjustments.

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Find the article and its tools online

CHAPTER 01

Prepare tests that reflect real situations

THE EXPECTED RESULT

A few situations to observe, with suitable participants and consistent instructions.

Start with your project. Who will hear the name, who will read it, and who will try to find you? In our bicycle repair workshop case study, a recommendation between neighbours and a telephone booking matter more than an entry in an international catalogue. A different project will call for different situations.

Invite people who are similar to your future customers and contacts, using the languages that will matter in practice. Someone close to you can help you try out the instructions; someone who already knows all your options will no longer be discovering the name under the same conditions. If you work alone, you can still arrange these conversations and take your own notes.

Usability testing involves observing people carry out concrete tasks. Neutral, consistent instructions help reveal where they hesitate, without giving away the answer. The GOV.UK user research guide describes these principles for digital services; Wize adapts them here to trying out a name and its addresses. [1]

Prepare the same materials for each candidate: a plain presentation of the name, a way to pronounce it, a possible domain and an email address. If you compare several names, vary their order from one person to the next. Record what each person has seen or heard: this will help you interpret what happens afterwards.

KEY POINT

You only discover a name once. Someone who has just read it already knows the spelling when they hear it. To observe a first hearing and a first reading, use different participants or assign these tests to different name candidates.

CHAPTER 02

Let people hear the name, then explore how they read it

THE EXPECTED RESULT

Unaided spellings and pronunciations, with the points of hesitation to examine.

For the first test, keep the name out of sight. Say it in an ordinary sentence, as you would on the phone or when recommending a business, then ask the person to write it down. Let them try and ask for a repetition if they need one. Keep their first answer before explaining the spelling.

An extra letter, a different division between words, or a request for clarification each tells you something different. Record what happened and any explanation that was needed. A name may occasionally need clarification; the question is whether that effort fits the situations you expect.

Two tests for two different questions

Situation	Possible instruction	What you record
The name is heard	“How would you spell this name?”	The first spelling, requests for repetition and uncertain letters.
The name is seen in writing	“How would you pronounce it?”	The spontaneous pronunciation, pauses and possible alternative readings.

For the reading test, first show the name in a simple form, without an elaborate logo or an explanation of where it comes from. You can then present it in context: a description of the trade, a short explanation or a visual identity. Keep the initial response separate from the response after these additions.

Repeat the exercise in the languages you will actually use. Explore possible pronunciations and unexpected associations with people who use those languages and know the intended audience. Machine translation may raise a question; a conversation in context helps you understand what it means for your business.

CHAPTER 03

Observe what the name suggests and how people find it

THE EXPECTED RESULT

Indications of how people understand and remember the name, and the searches it prompts.

Once someone has encountered the name, ask what it suggests to them. Let the answers emerge, then follow up with an open question: what makes them think of that activity, price range or type of service? You can compare these associations with the impression you wanted to create in your brief.

Returning to our bicycle workshop example, with Second Spin you could ask what someone would expect to find behind the name before introducing the workshop. Do they think of repairs, second-hand bicycle sales, motorcycles or something else? These are questions to explore. The name does not have to describe the whole offer; observe what adding a description of the trade helps clarify.

After another activity or a recorded interval, ask the person to recall the name without showing it again. Have they remembered the exact word, an approximation or an idea? If you compare several candidates, keep the presentation and recall conditions as similar as possible. Record the interval and any help given.

Finally, ask what they would type to search for the business. The name alone, the trade, a town? Observe their wording and any results that could cause confusion. A project that is not yet online will naturally have no search result: this test mainly helps you examine the route people take and the businesses or topics with which the name might be confused.

POINT TO WATCH

A few reactions can reveal a difficulty; they do not measure your market

A small number of tests can uncover a useful point to address. They cannot establish a name recall rate for your customer base or predict sales. Record who took part, their context and the test conditions before drawing a conclusion.

CHAPTER 04

Move from the name to the domain and email address

THE EXPECTED RESULT

A possible main address, transmission difficulties identified, and a role for useful variants.

A name can be understood when spoken yet become harder to read in an address. Write each possible domain without spaces, then look at where words meet and how they could be divided. Ask someone to read it on a phone and give it to them aloud, including the extension. Ask them to show what they would type before correcting them.

Add a complete email address, using a first name or a department. Observe whether the person can distinguish the parts before and after the at sign, any hyphens and the extension. For dictation tests, write the address in a note: there is no need to send a message to a domain you do not control.

If you are considering accented characters or a particular writing system, also check support in the tools you will need. ICANN describes the acceptance of domain names and email addresses by applications: a valid name alone does not establish that every tool will handle it correctly. Ask your provider what is supported and try the relevant user journeys. [2]

Next, choose the address you intend to use most prominently. A primary domain provides a consistent point of reference for the website and communications. Any additional domains should serve a purpose: redirecting to that website, serving an identified market or addressing a significant risk of confusion.

A .lu can express a connection with Luxembourg and address its local market, as DNS Luxembourg explains. Its value to your project depends on your positioning and expected uses. Consider extensions that matter for your planned markets too; a .com does not become a compulsory purchase by default. [3]

Look at where a mistaken extension would lead and what business already uses a similar address. For versions with or without a hyphen, possible misspellings or social media handles, start with plausible errors and the channels that matter in practice. A few choices with a clear purpose will be easier to justify than a collection of addresses with no defined role.

KEY POINT

Checking whether an address is available and researching rights remain separate from these practical tests. A name that is easy to pass on has not, for that reason alone, been checked for legal use.

CHAPTER 05

Turn observations into practical choices

THE EXPECTED RESULT

A short list of questions to resolve, adjustments to try and the next decision to make.

Bring together the answers for each name and address. Separate what you observed, what you infer from it and what you could change. This helps prevent an isolated reaction from becoming a verdict on the whole project.

Questions to consider if these difficulties arise

Observation to record	Question to explore	Possible next step
The person adds a letter after hearing the name.	Which sound or spelling habit causes the addition?	Try another option or presentation, then repeat the dictation with a new participant.
The name mainly suggests second-hand sales.	Does that association suit a workshop focused on repairs?	Try a short description of the trade and observe what it clarifies.
The extension entered differs from the one given.	Does the confusion recur in situations that matter?	Examine the addresses concerned, their possible role and the alternatives.
The email address needs several corrections.	Does the problem come from the name, the domain or the part before the at sign?	Change one identifiable element and repeat the test under the same conditions.

Return to your project criteria when weighing difficulties. Hesitation on the phone deserves particular attention if customers mainly recommend you by word of mouth. An unexpected association matters if it takes people away from the offer you want to present. You can continue with an option, adjust its presentation, compare another address or explore a different name.

If the name is already in use for your business, start with concrete problems reported by customers: typing errors, the need to spell it out, or confusion with another activity. You can examine a targeted correction before considering a broader change. The article about obstacles will help compare the consequences of these options.

DO THIS NOW

Prepare your first test

Choose a naming option, the proposed domain and a complete email address. Record the situation to reproduce, the language and the questions to observe. Keep the first answers, then add the difficulties to check and the date of your next review to the brief.

Key points / What to remember

KEY POINTS TO GUIDE YOUR CHOICE

- Try the name in situations where it will actually be used, with people similar to your intended customers and contacts.
- Keep the first hearing, the first reading and any later explanations separate.
- Consider the name, domain and email address together; give secondary addresses a defined role.
- Keep the initial answers and use them to identify an adjustment or a question to resolve before confirming your choice.

FURTHER READING

Start with your project to choose a name

Mini-glossary

Term	In a few words
Qualitative test	Observing reactions and difficulties to understand a use, without producing a representative measure of the whole market.
Name dictation	A test in which someone writes a name after hearing it, before seeing the spelling.
Extension	The final part of a domain name, such as .lu or .com.
Primary domain	The main address a business chooses to present for its online uses.
Web redirect	A mechanism that sends a visitor from one web address to another.

Sources and method

The situations, instructions and interpretation grid are working suggestions from Wize. The examples continue the bicycle workshop project; they do not describe an actual test, testimonial or availability result. User research principles are adapted here to choosing a name; they are not a protocol for scientifically validating a name. The technical and institutional references support the passages that cite them. Sources consulted on 5 November 2026.

1. GOV.UK - Using moderated usability testing
Observing concrete tasks, using neutral and consistent instructions, and recruiting people similar to the intended users. This guide concerns digital services and is adapted here by Wize; it does not specifically validate name testing.
https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/user-research/using-moderated-usability-testing

2. ICANN - Universal Acceptance
Acceptance of domain names and email addresses in applications, devices and systems. Support needs to be examined in the tools concerned.
https://www.icann.org/ua

3. DNS Luxembourg - Choosing a .lu
The connection between .lu, Luxembourg and the local market; no availability, search ranking guarantee or purchase requirement is inferred from this page.
https://dns.lu/en/functioning/choosing-a-lu

Numbers in square brackets refer to the sources listed above.