



UNDER THE SHELL

A Free informational publication for direct marketers



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Making Sense Out of Domains Giving GURLS and PURLS a nice place to hang out

Everyone loves PURLS! Who doesn't want their very own name in the URL they type into their computer? Creating a personalized URL is so popular there are whole companies named after them. Plus, using PURLS has some significant advantages, but it may not be quite as simple as you'd think. Here's a little basic information you should know about PURLS, domains and subdomains. How can this not be fun!?

Domains are the hierarchy of naming conventions on the Internet. Web sites are really organized as numbers, but they are given names – URLs or domain names – as a tool to help in locating them. The highest level domain is the “.com” or “.org” that follows the name. The next level is the name of the site – “snailworks” in our case. The domain level in front of the site name – often “www” – is a subdomain. This is typically where we can get personal. You can read more about domains [here](#). Go ahead if you like – we'll wait.

When you build a PURL, first you will need a domain name. Generally, when someone creates PURLS for you – such as SnailWorks - they will need to host the web page the PURL directs to for data collection purposes, which is why you will not use your own web address for the PURL. For example, when we do a campaign for SnailWorks, we do not use “SnailWorks” in our PURLS. Instead, we use campaign-specific domains such as “HailTheSnail” or “MailMeetsPURL”. Thus the PURL is “SallySample.HailTheSnail.com” or “SallySample.MailMeetsPURL.com”. We have had conference organizers use the name of the conference as the domain name: [SallySample.MFSAMW2013.com](#).

It typically costs \$10 - \$35 to register a domain with Register.com or GoDaddy.com, although there may be add on costs such as a security certificate if you're accepting payments. The hardest part is often coming up with a memorable URL that isn't already in use – at SnailWorks we think that is half the fun. It really is worth thinking of an easy-to-remember name that has meaning to your prospects. The domain you use in your PURLS is also the domain you will use for your Generalized URL (GURL) so it should be memorable.

If you really don't want to create your own domain name for a campaign, we keep an inventory of “house” names at SnailWorks that you can incorporate. One of those domains is “msreply.” If you choose to use this domain, your PURLS would look like this: [SallySample.company.msreply.com.](#), where “company” would be you. This involves a bit more typing for your prospects, but it does free you up to include your company name in the PURL rather than searching for your own witty little domain.

This string of sub-domains can go on to 127 levels, but let's not try that, OK?

The essential lesson from all of this is that PURLS do not stand alone. If someone is going to create PURLS for you, they'll need to obtain a domain as well.

We know more about this stuff than we like to think about at SnailWorks, so if you need some help, by all means give us a call –even if you just want to really nerd out over it.

Postal News You Need to Care About Even the multi-channel set needs to read the DMM

The “Snail” in SnailWorks means that postal mail is still in the middle of most of what we do. Thus, we can't escape changes that take place at the US Postal Service, omni-channelish as we are. Here are a couple of nuggets we thought you might want to be aware of:

New folded self-mailer rules

On January 5, 2013, the Postal Service says “Happy New Year!” by implementing a new set of rules about folded letter-size self-mailers. You can read all of the details [here](#). The highlights we saw:

- The maximum size of a folded self-mailer was reduced to 6” high by 10.5” long. You can't just fold an 11” x 17” sheet in thirds anymore;
- There are all kinds of new tabbing rules. You'll need at least 2 tabs on any folded self-mailer, maybe 3;
- Paper weights will be a much bigger deal, particularly if your self-mailer weighs more than an ounce;
- The penalty for not following the rules is severe. If your folded self-mailer does not meet these new requirements, it will become a dreaded non-machinable mail piece, subject to a surcharge of about 20 cents.

These new rules apply only to folded letter-size self-mailers, not booklets or flats. They also do not apply to cards. This may be a good time to consider simplifying your direct mail to a nice big card with a PURL and QR Code prominently displayed. Just a thought...

Click-to-Call Promotion

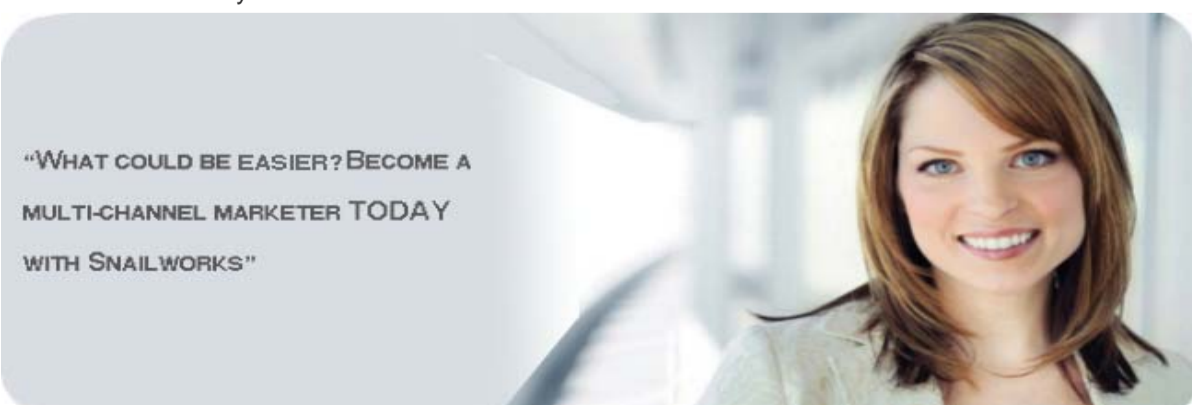
USPS has rolled out a slate of new promotions for 2013 rewarding certain uses of multi-channel marketing and other technologies. Many of them are very difficult for most organizations to participate in, but there are potential benefits if you are able to meet the requirements. The first of the series, which will run in March and April, will allow you to claim a 2% postage discount for including a QR Code or similar link on the mail piece that can be scanned by a mobile phone to automatically call a phone number. Alternatively, if you provide a coupon on the mail piece, and you add a link to a mobile site, typically a QR Code that has the same coupon, you may also be able to get a discount.

If inbound telemarketing is part of your direct marketing strategy, or if you mail coupons you may want to talk to our multi-channel specialists at SnailWorks to see if you may qualify for a postage discount.

In addition to the Click-to-Call promotion, The Postal Service has proposed the following promotions for later in 2013:

- Earned Value Reply Mail Program;
- Emerging Technologies Promotion;
- Picture Permit Promotion;
- Product Samples Promotion;
- Mobile Buy-It-Now Promotion.

You can read all about them [here](#). It is worth noting that these are all proposals now – none have received PRC blessing yet, and rules are likely to change a bit. Stay tuned to **Under the Shell** to learn more details as the year unfolds.



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