



NASK ANNUAL REPORT

.PL DOMAIN NAME MARKET

2025



NASK

NASK ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARIZING THE YEAR 2025

WARSAW, APRIL 2026

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Introduction

The dynamic growth of e-commerce and the ongoing digitalization of services mean that an online presence has become one of the key elements for the operation of companies, institutions, and brands. In 2025, 96.2% of households in Poland had access to the internet, an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared to the previous year. The share of households with fixed broadband internet access decreased by 1.8 percentage points to 70.3%, while mobile broadband access increased by 2.3 percentage points to 78.2%.

As internet user activity increases, so does the importance of trust - both in the entities offering products and services and in the digital infrastructure that enables them to operate. One important, though often underestimated, element of this infrastructure is the domain name and its extension.

In this year's .pl Domain Registry Report, we present a study dedicated to Poles' knowledge of the .pl domain. We surveyed a representative group of citizens. The aim of the study was to analyze Poles' knowledge of domain names as well as their perception of the credibility and professionalism of companies in the context of their online presence. Particular attention was paid to the .pl domain as a national extension that plays an important role in building trust and local identification in the digital space. Internet users' purchasing behaviors were also analyzed.

The report presents both quantitative data and interpretative insights, highlighting key relationships between domain name recognition, user trust levels, and purchasing decisions. The analysis of the results makes it possible to identify areas requiring further digital education, as well as to indicate business and communication implications for entities operating in the online environment.

The findings indicate that a domain name, particularly the .pl extension, serves not only as a technical internet address, but also as an important signal of credibility, professionalism, and security. At the same time, the results highlight the need for consistent efforts to build awareness of the role of institutions responsible for the stability and security of the national digital space.

In this Report, you will also find data on market developments over the past year. As of the end of December 2025, nearly 2.56 million active domain names were maintained in the .pl Domain Registry DNS. The .pl domain enjoyed strong interest, as evidenced by an increase of more than 34,000 registrants over the course of the year. Of the 1.2 million registrants, 64.22% were organizations and 35.78% were individuals. At the end of the year, 198 registrars from 22 countries participated in the NASK Partner Programme, with entities based in Poland accounting for the majority. Detailed data on activity in the .pl domain name market can be found in the following sections of the report.

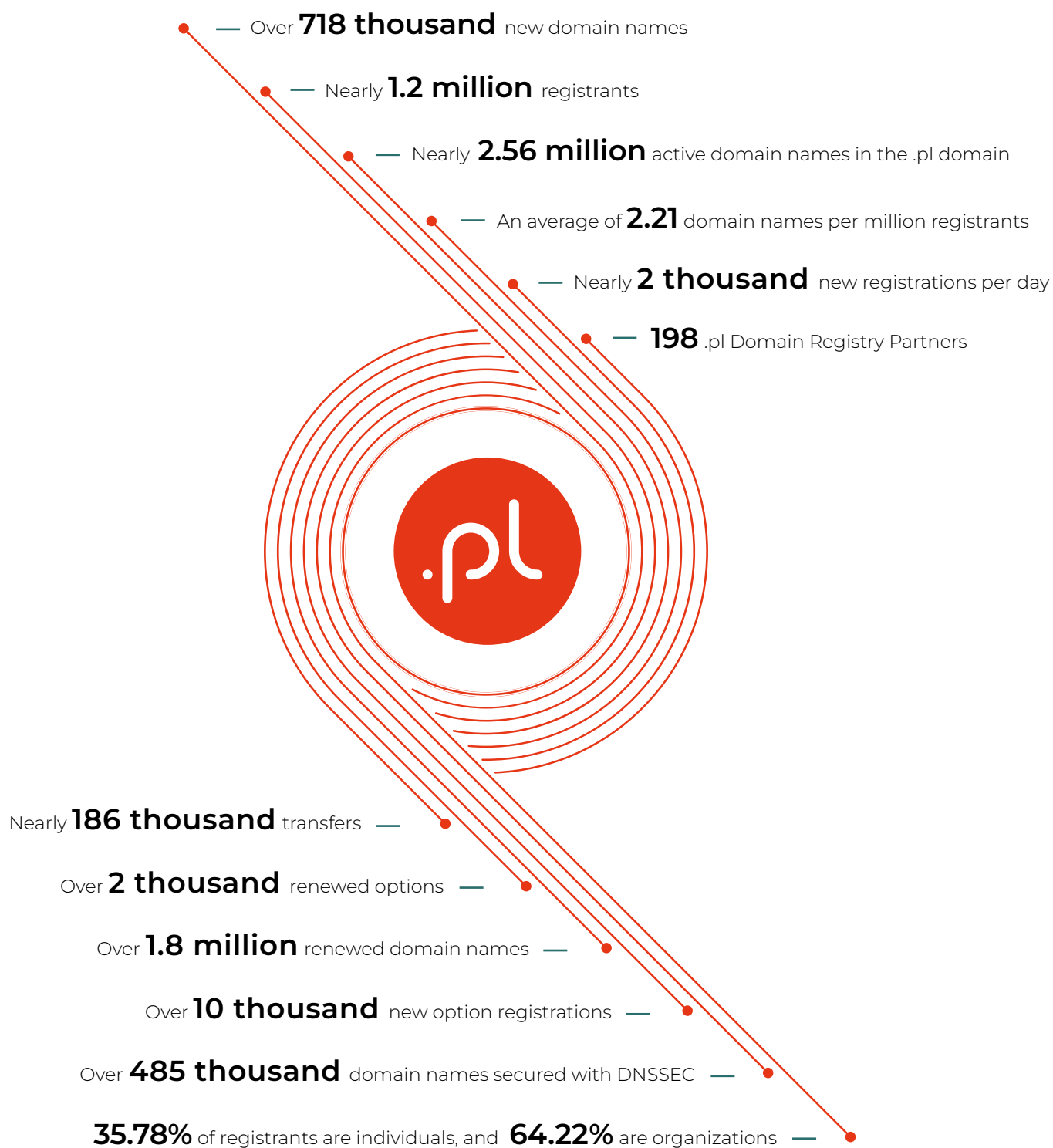
We invite you to read the report!



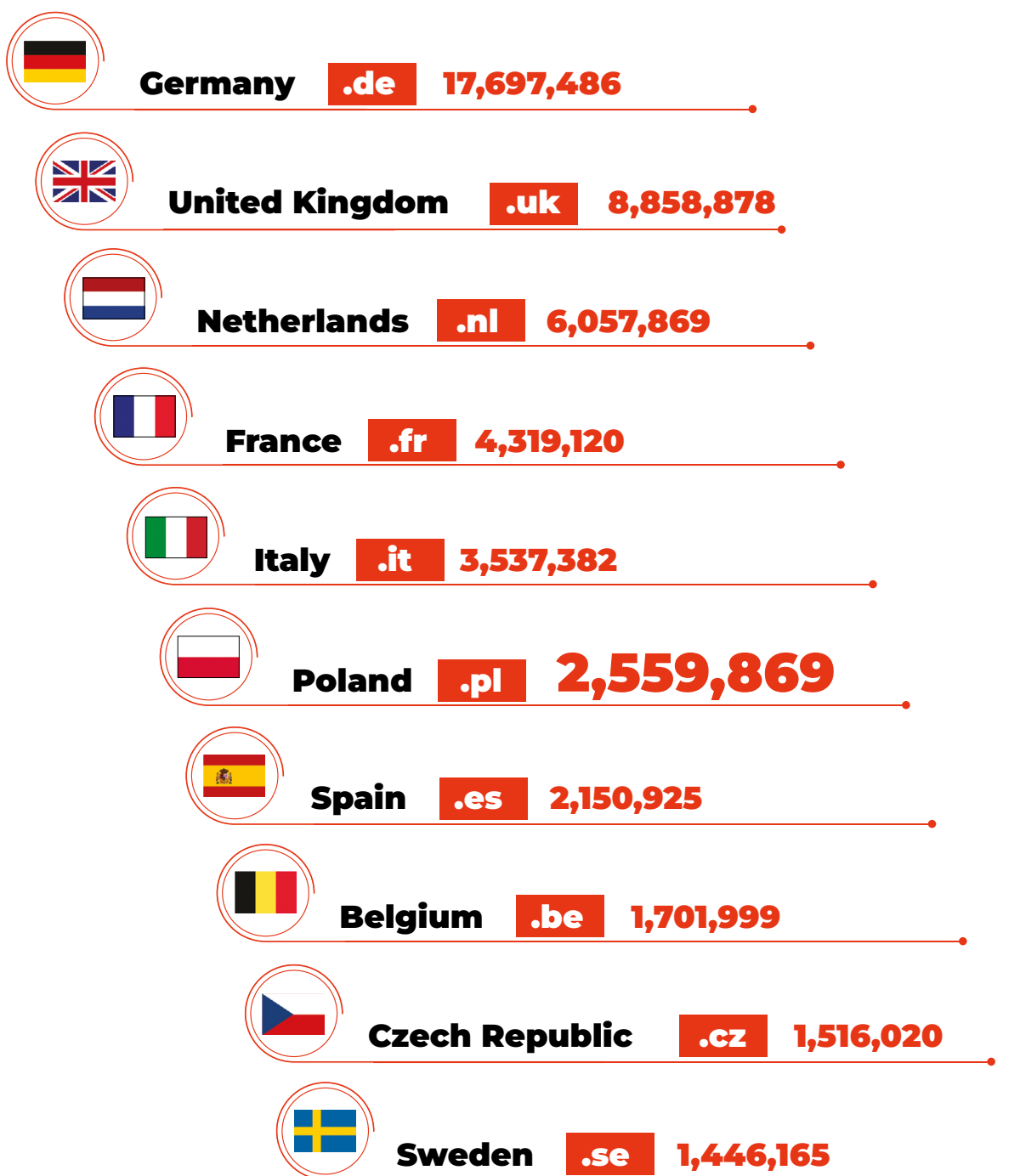
PART 1

The .pl Domain Name Market

Key Facts and Figures



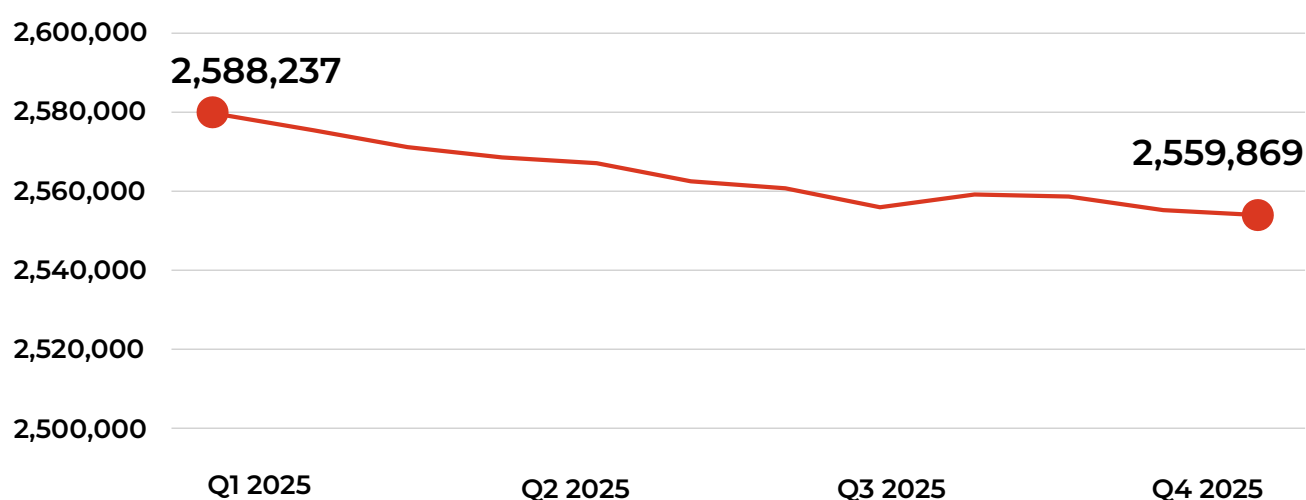
Ranking of European Domain Registries



Domain Services

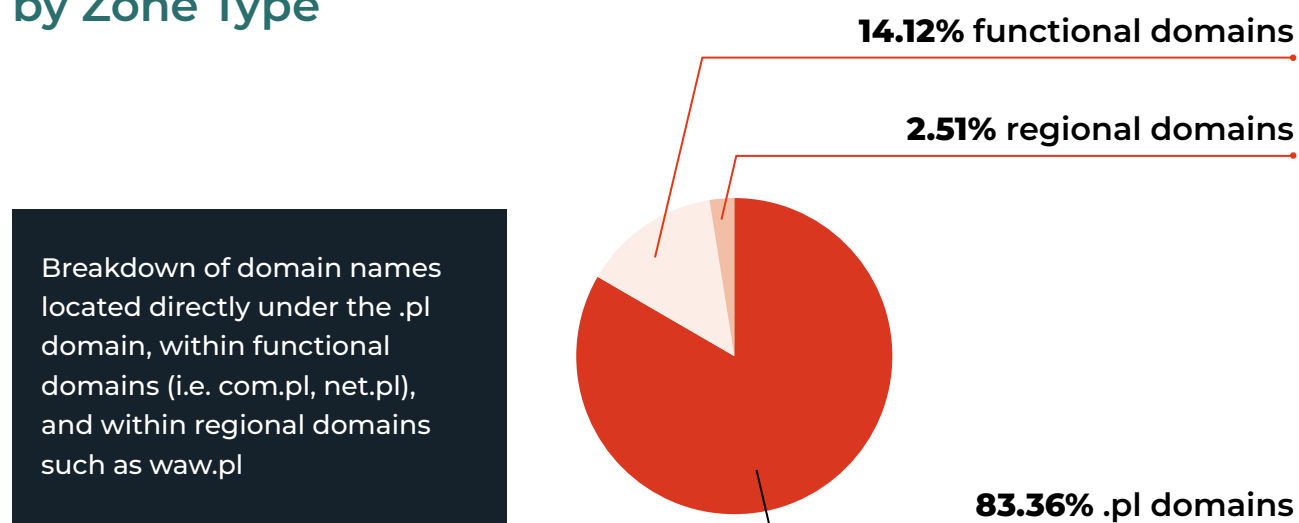
Number of Domain Names Maintained in the .pl Domain

At the end of 2025, the number of .pl domain names active in the DNS reached **2,559,869**.



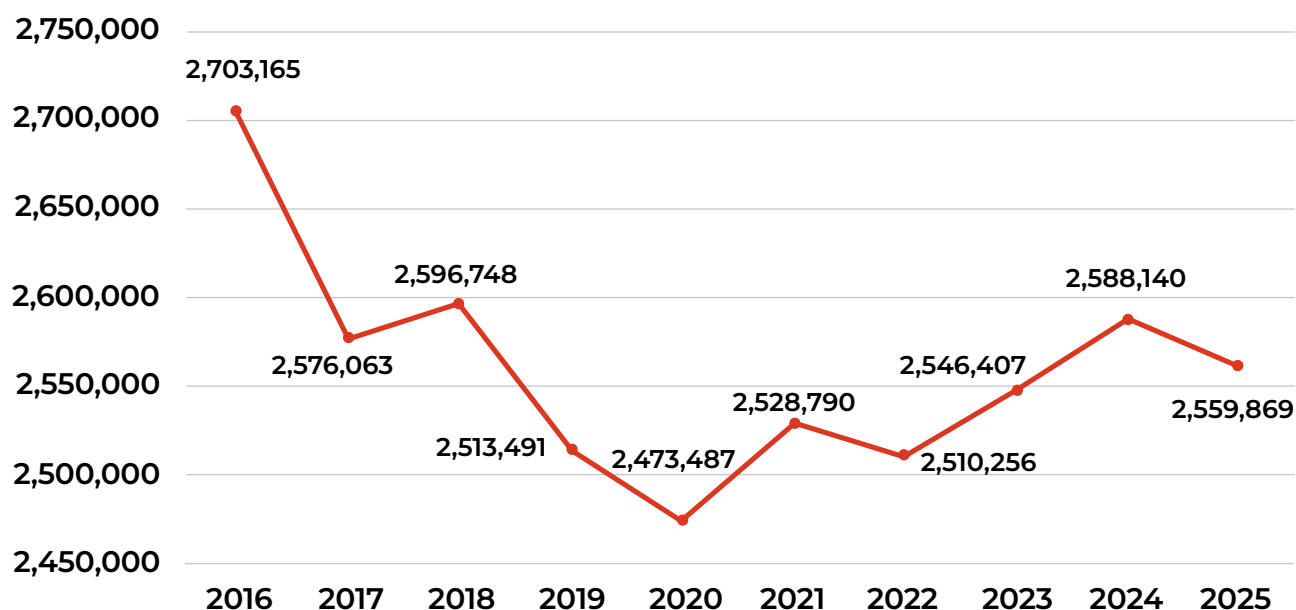
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Active .pl Domain Names in the DNS by Zone Type



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Number of .pl Domain Names in the DNS, 2016–2025



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Number of .pl Domain Name Registrations

2025



Number of registrations

718,368

Average daily number of registrations

1,968

The highest number of domains was registered in January:

65,965

The lowest number of domains was registered in June:

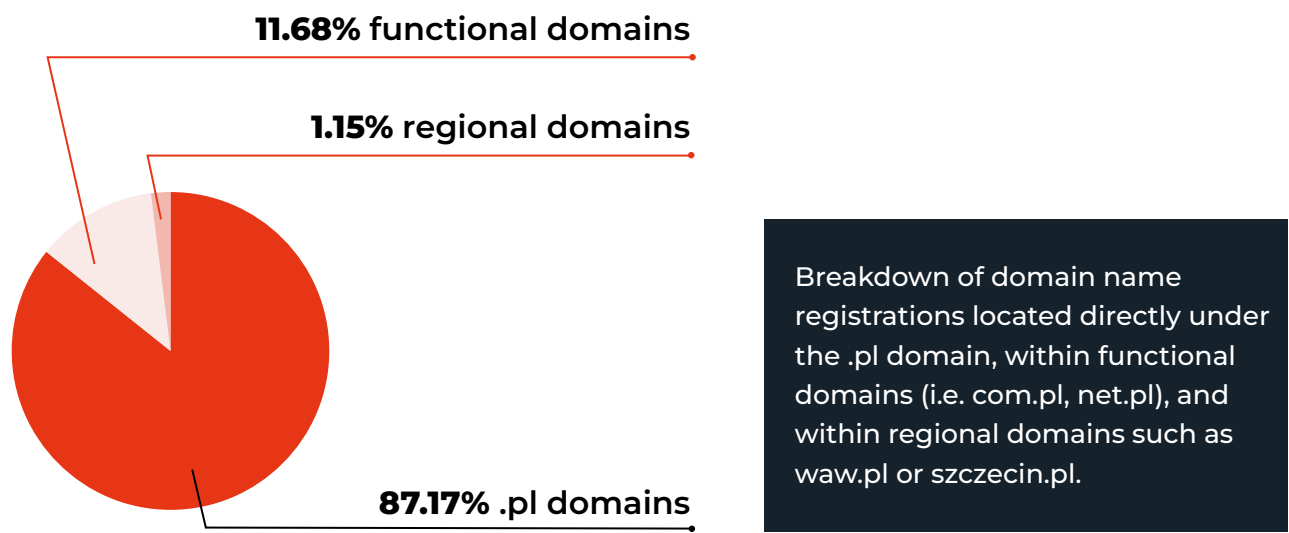
51,864

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Number of .pl Domain Name Registrations



.pl Domain Name Registrations by Zone Type



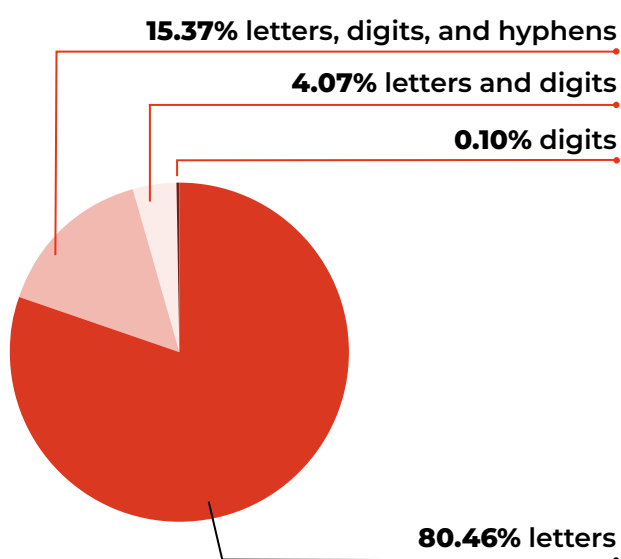
Structure of .pl Domain Names

The average number of characters used in .pl domain names at the end of 2025 was **10.91**.

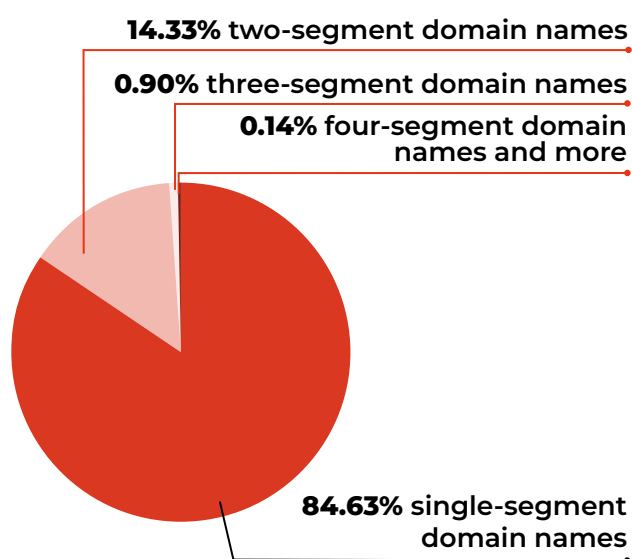
Eight .pl domain names had the maximum length of **63** characters.

The most common were **nine-character**, domain names, with **232,093** such names in the registry.

The maximum number of segments (labels) in a single domain name recorded at the end of 2025 was **8**.

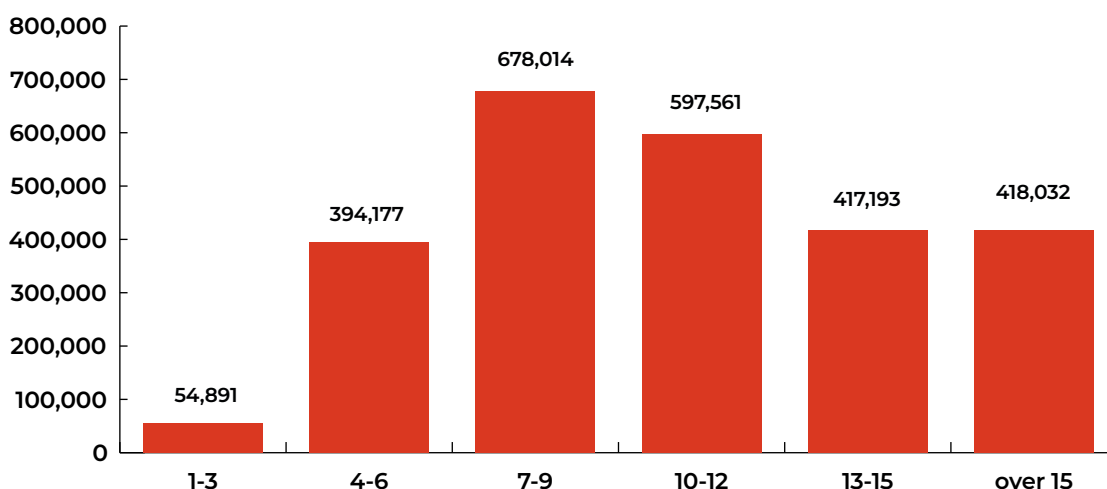


Characters Used in .pl Domain Names, 2025



Number of Segments in .pl Domain Names, 2025

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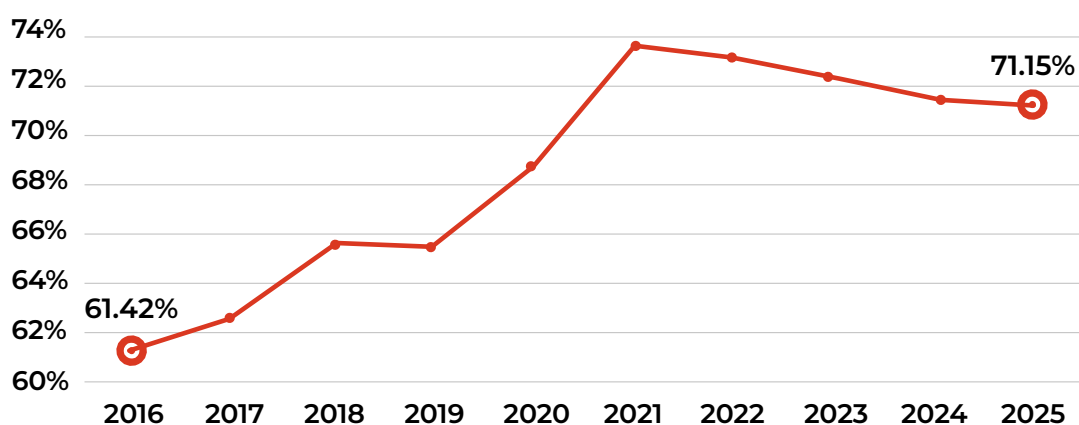


Number of Characters in .pl Domain Names, 2025

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Renewals of .pl Domain Names for the Next Billing Period

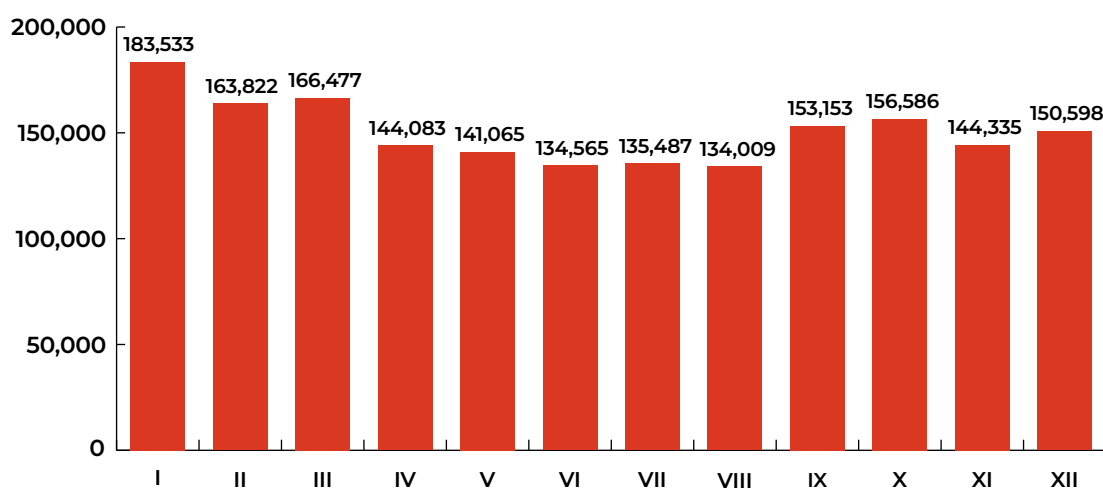
2016–2025



.pl Domain Name Renewal Rate, 2016–2025

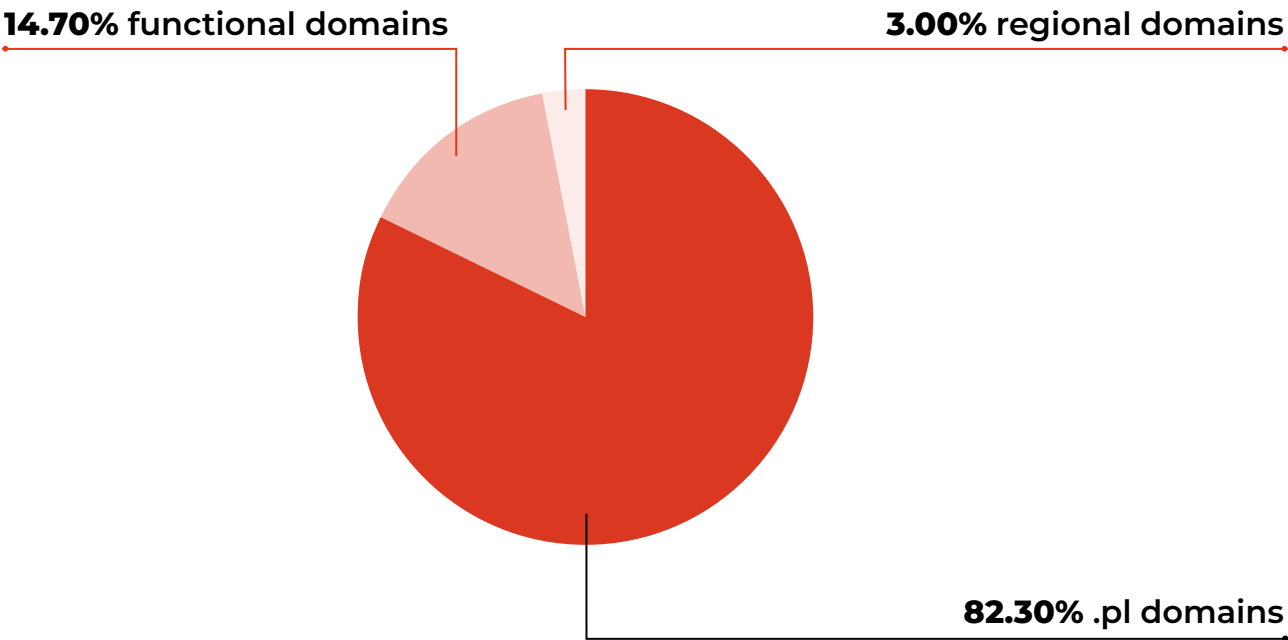
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2025



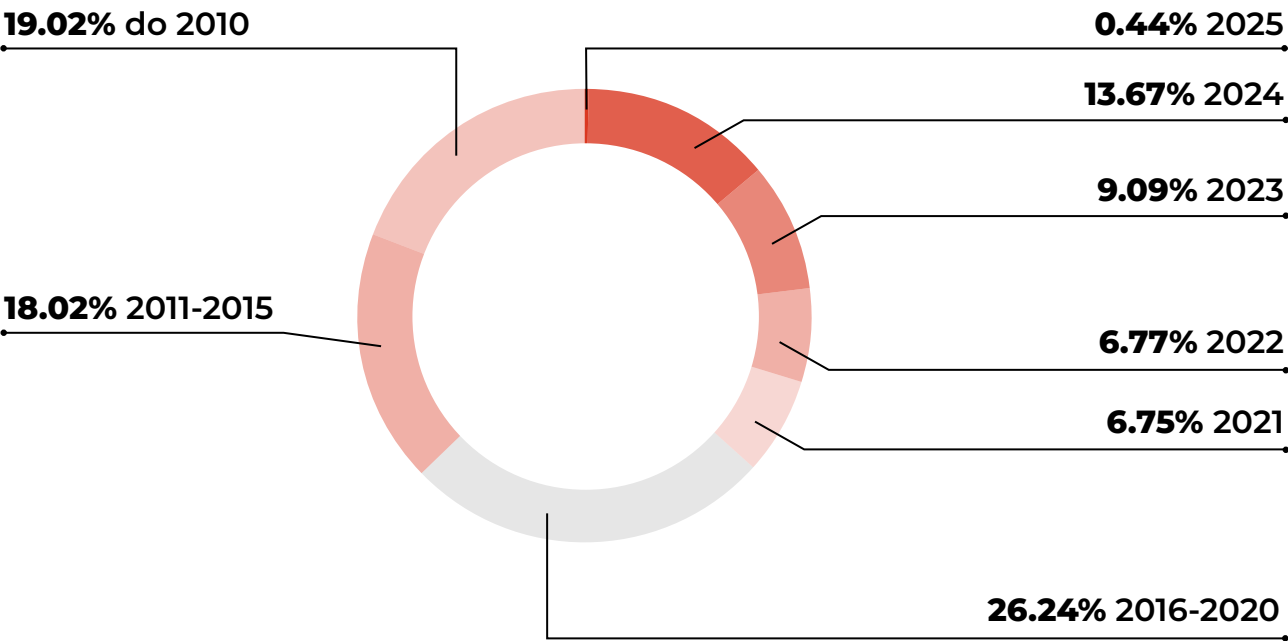
Number of Renewed .pl Domain Names, 2025

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Structure of Renewed .pl Domain Names

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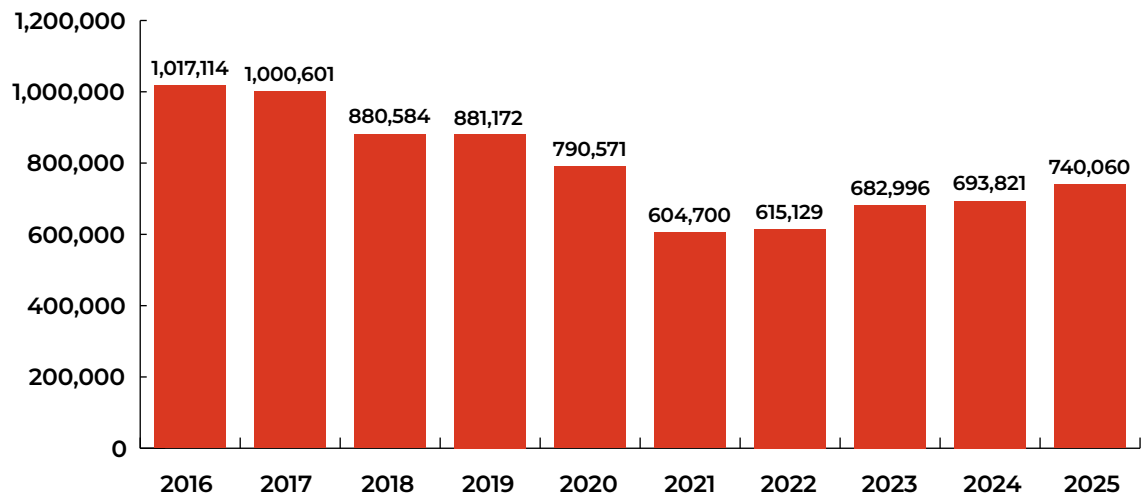


Number of Renewed .pl Domain Names in 2025 by Year of Registration

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Number of Non-Renewed .pl Domain Names

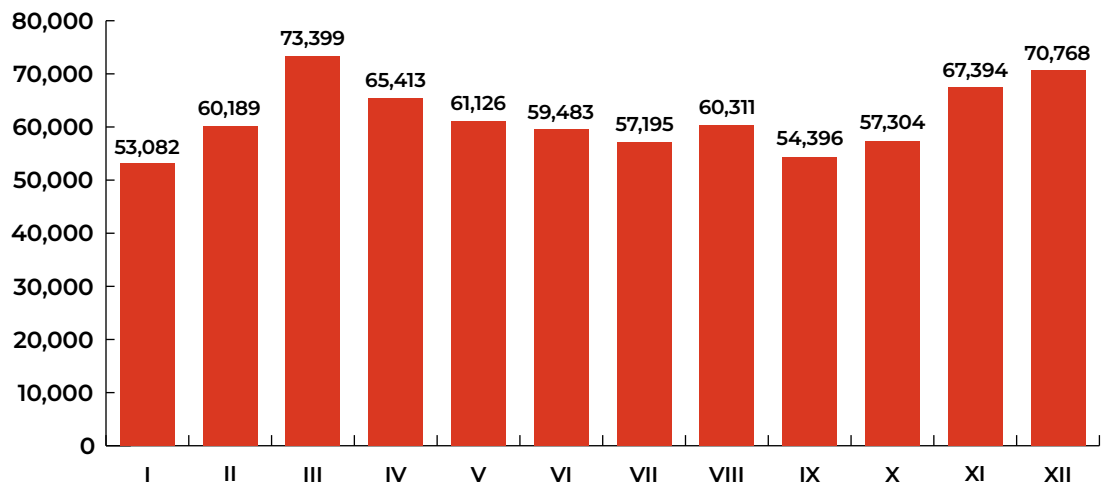
2016–2025



Number of .pl Domain Names Released Due to Non-Renewal, 2016–2025

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2025

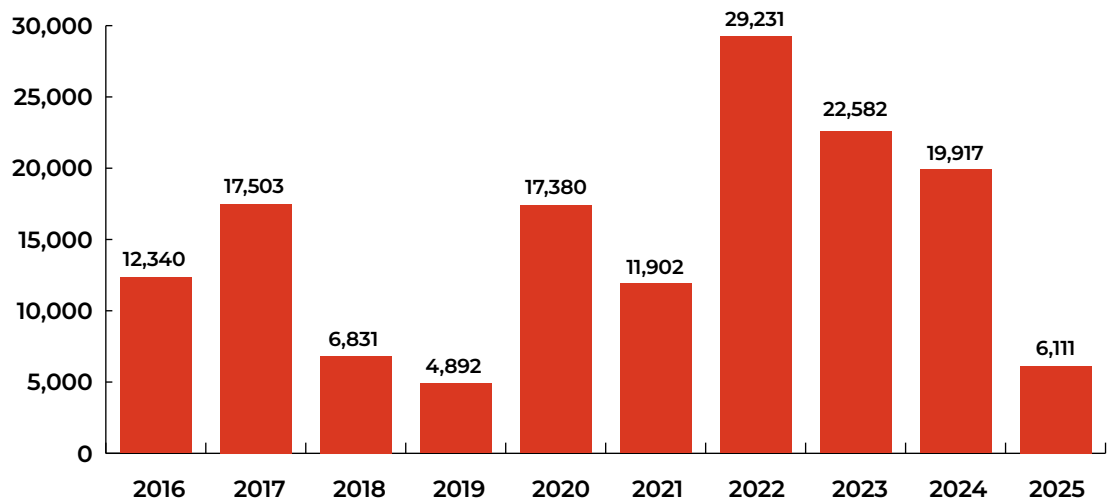


Number of .pl Domain Names Released Due to Non-Renewal, 2025

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Number of Deleted .pl Domain Names

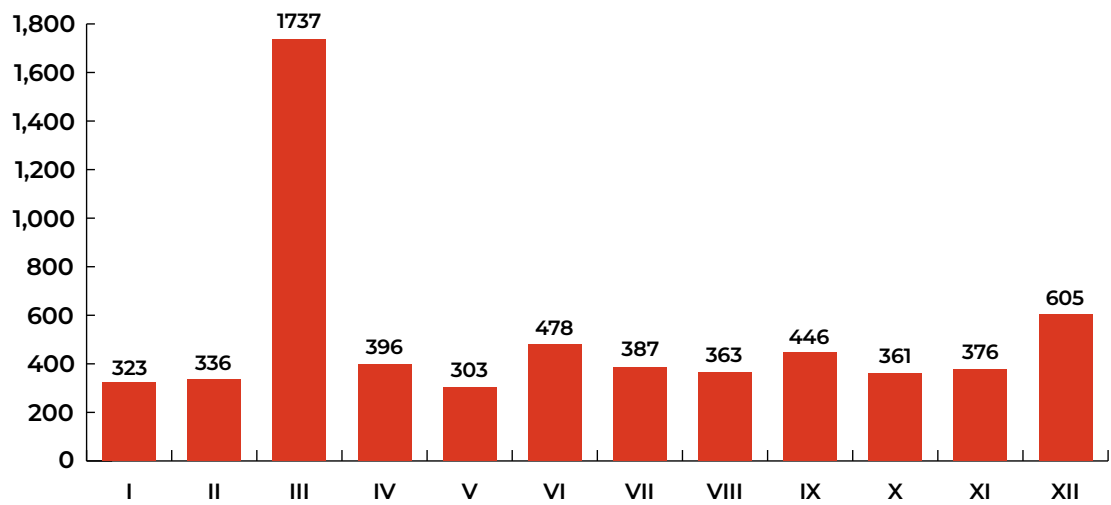
2016–2025



Number of .pl Domain Names Released After Prior Deletion, 2016–2025

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2025

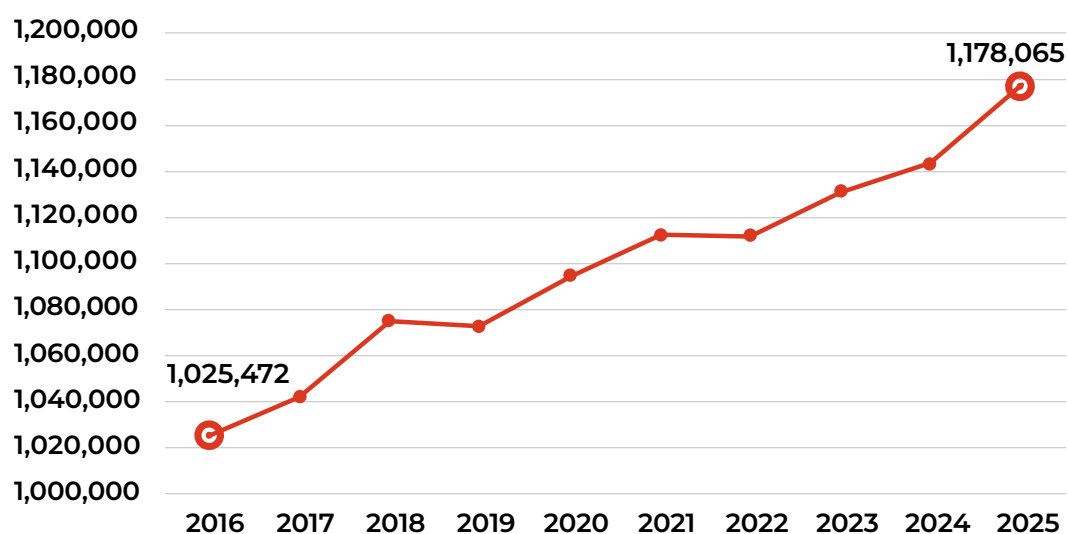


Number of .pl Domain Names Released After Prior Deletion, 2025

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.pl Domain Registrant Services

Number of .pl Domain Name Registrants



Number of Registrants, 2016–2025

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34,414

Registrants who joined in 2025

137,466

changes of .pl domain name registrants in 2025

2.21

Average number of .pl domain names per registrant

64.22%

of registrants are organizations

35.78%

of registrants are individuals

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Location of .pl Domain Registrants

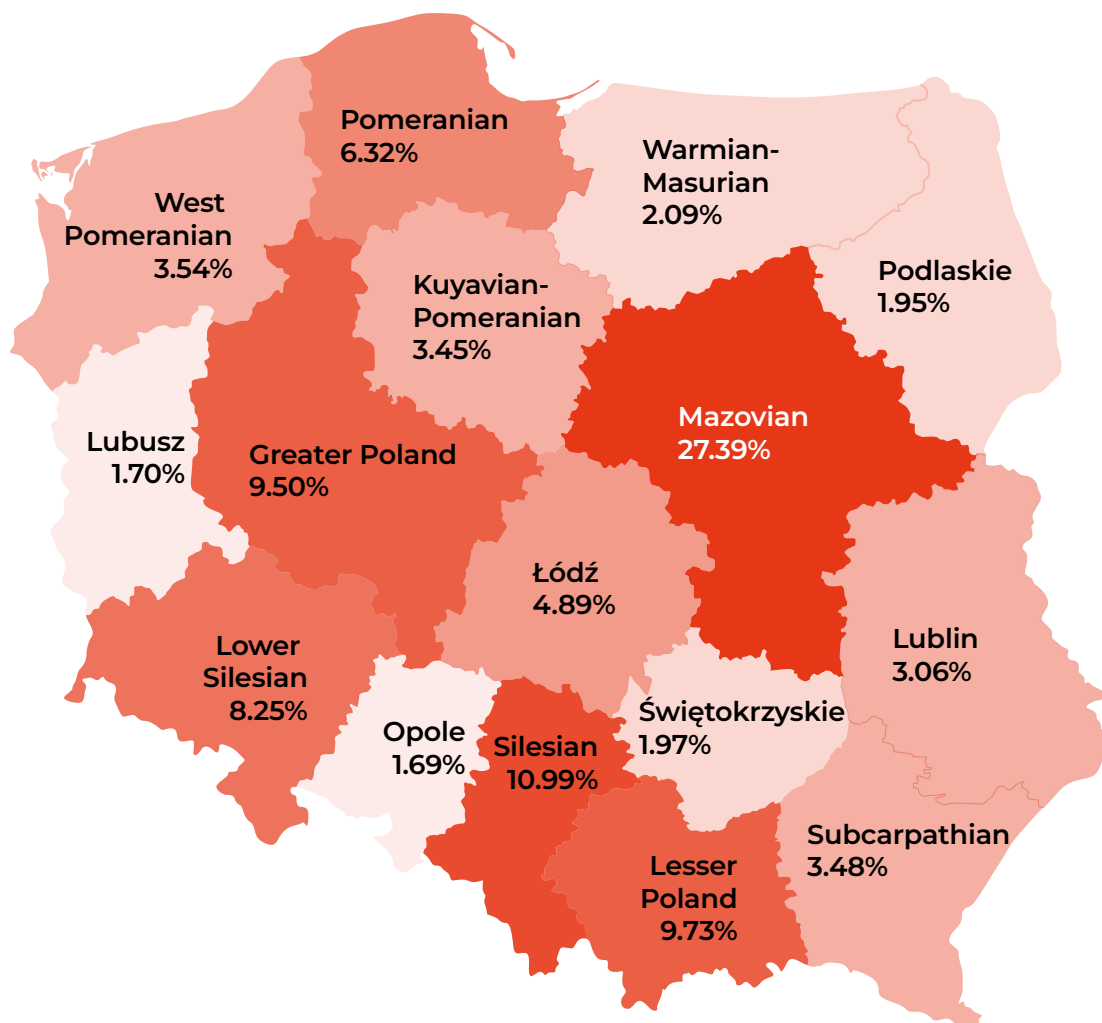
90.98% of .pl domain names existing in the DNS at the end of 2025 were maintained for registrants based in Poland.

27.39% of domain names were registered to individuals and organizations from the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, of which as much as **19.56%** were from Warsaw.

Nearly half of all registrants in Poland were users of domains from the following voivodeships:

27.39% Mazowieckie Voivodeship
10.99% Śląskie Voivodeship
9.73% Małopolskie Voivodeship

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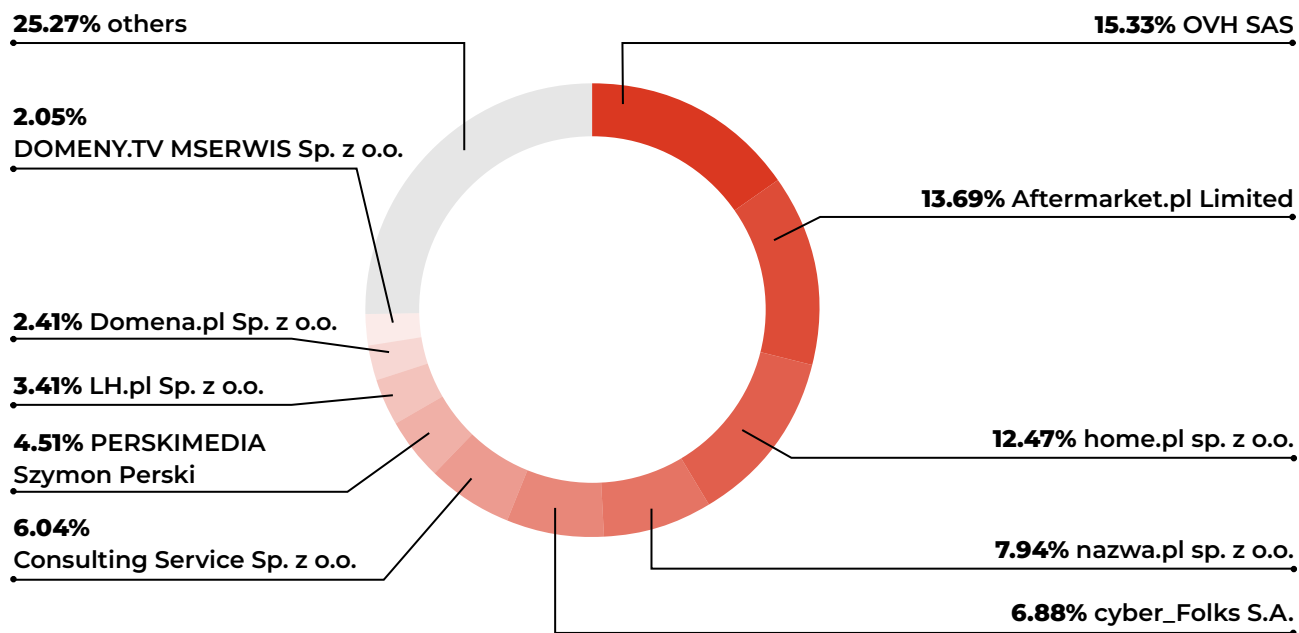


Location of Registrants in Poland by Voivodeship, 2025

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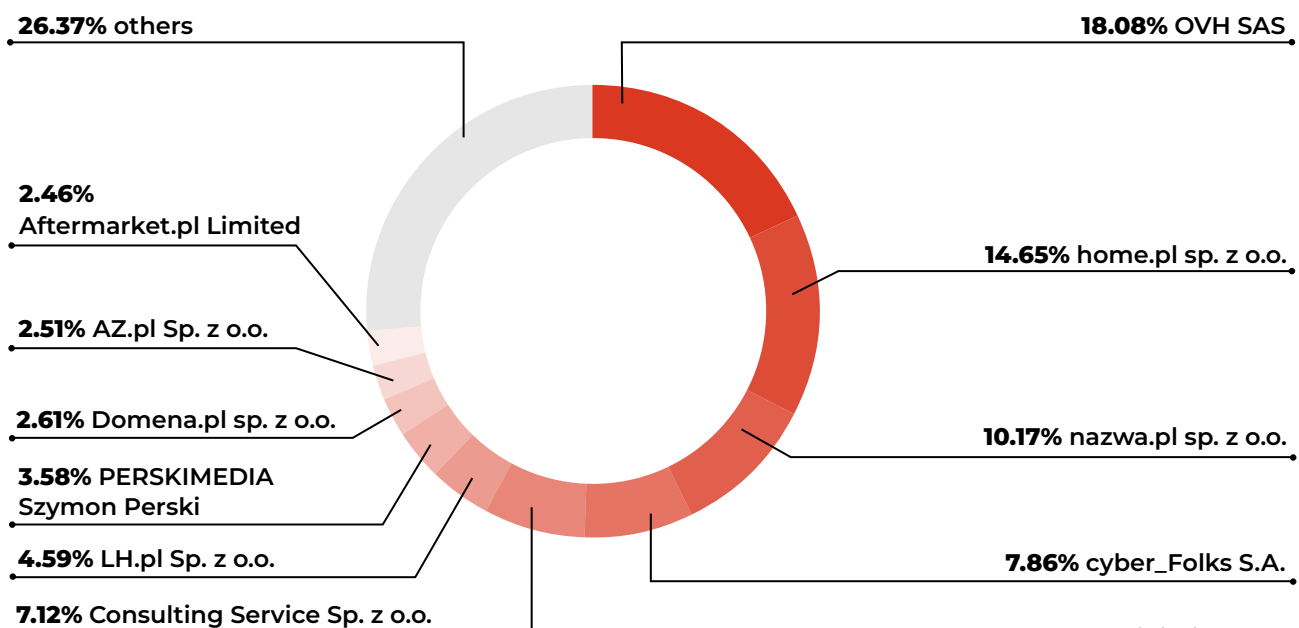
Breakdown of the .pl Domain Name Market

Percentage Share of Partners in the Servicing of .pl Domain Names, 2025



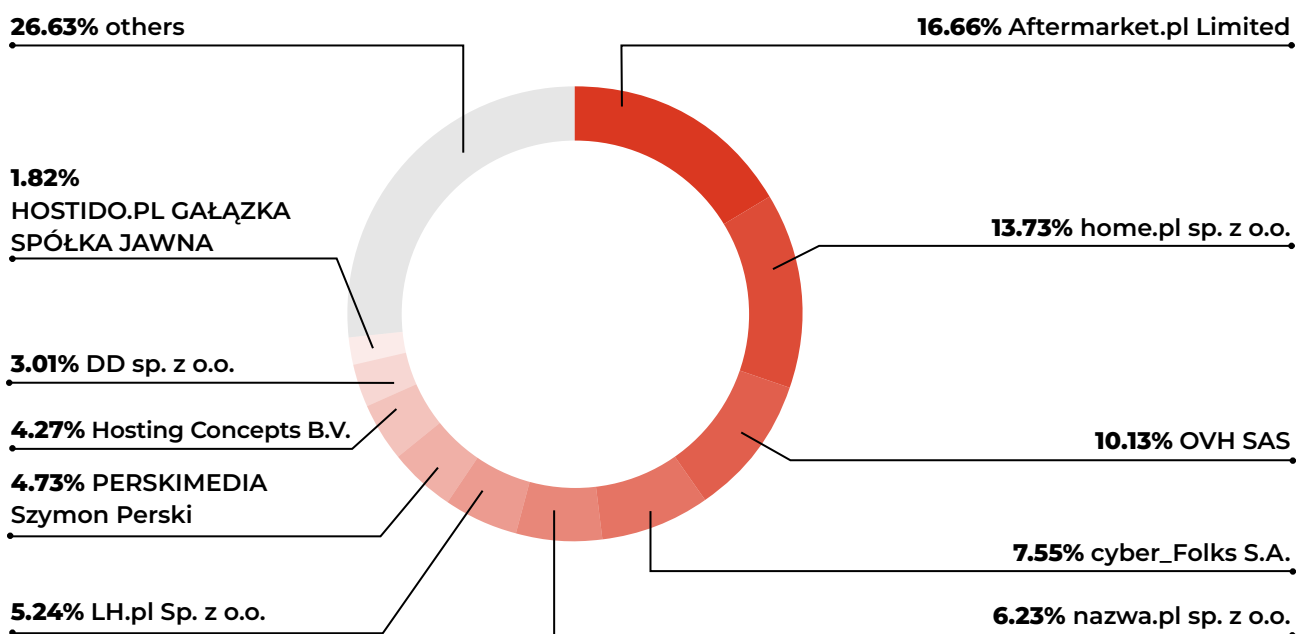
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Percentage Share of Partners in Servicing .pl Domain Name Registrants, 2025



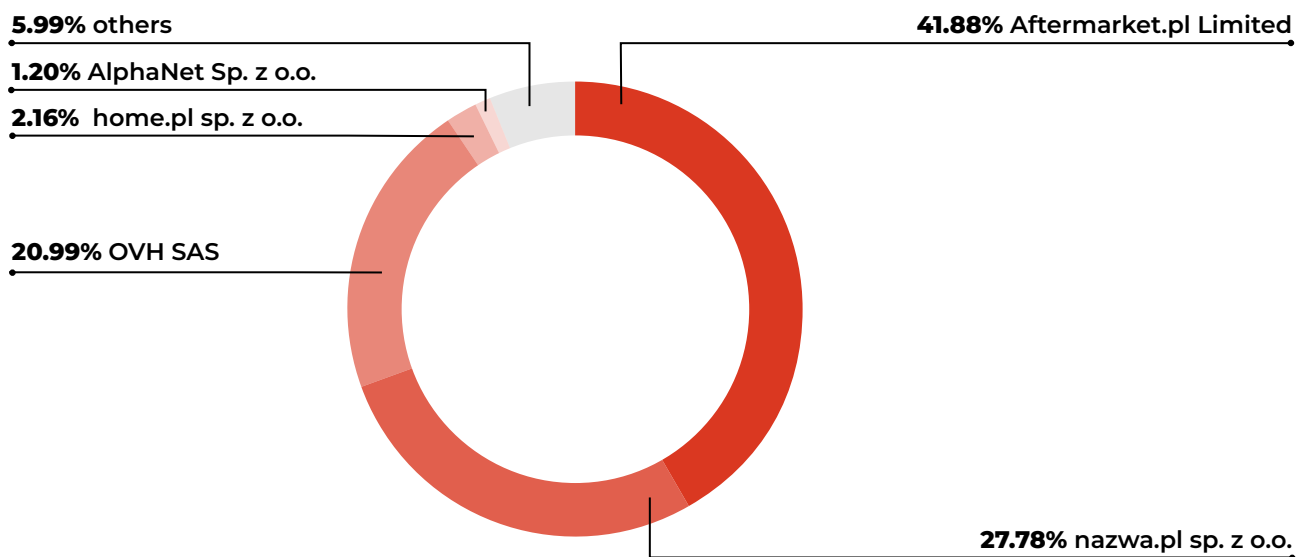
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Percentage Share of Partners in Servicing .pl Domain Name Registrants, 2025



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Share of Partners in Servicing .pl Domain Names Secured with DNSSEC, 2025



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Comments from .pl Domain Registry Partners on 2025

home.pl sp. z o.o.

home.pl

Regardless of changing market trends, at home.pl we are proud to consistently support Polish entrepreneurs in their digital evolution. We thank NASK for another year of successful cooperation. We are pleased that, through our educational activities, we can help promote the .pl domain, which serves as an important foundation of digital sovereignty and the stability of Polish business – comments Magdalena Chudzikiewicz, General Manager of home.pl.

From home.pl's perspective, 2025 was a year full of challenges for the Polish digital ecosystem, but at the same time a testament to its great maturity. In an era of global technological turbulence, the .pl domain strengthened its position as a fundamental pillar of Poland's digital economy. Moreover, having a national domain address is now not only the basis of digital identity for Polish companies, but above all a key element in building technological sovereignty. This topic dominated the past year, focusing discussions on online security and the implementation of the NIS2 directive.

Although the amendment to the National Cybersecurity System Act (NIS Act) was adopted by Parliament only at the beginning of 2026, the entire previous twelve months were devoted by the industry to advanced preparations. Efforts to tighten procedures and improve the verification of registrants' identities mean that we are entering the new year as an ecosystem that is far better protected, and more aware of its role and priorities in the field of cybersecurity.

At the same time, the macroeconomic environment in 2025 posed a significant challenge, particularly for SMEs and sole proprietorships. Inflationary pressure, rising wage expectations, and higher operating costs - including IT infrastructure - forced companies to undertake deep budget optimization. The growing sensitivity of both the market and consumers to these burdens led to tensions, ultimately creating a mixed and ambiguous picture of the past year.

The accumulation of several significant factors led to a partial flattening and stabilization of the domain market. Entrepreneurs operating in the secondary market began optimizing their portfolios, which naturally reduced the number of domains registered and maintained primarily for resale, steering the market toward genuine business applications – notes Magdalena Chudzikiewicz.

nazwa.pl sp. z o.o.

According to nazwa.pl, 2025 brought a shift in how entrepreneurs perceive domain names. They are increasingly viewed not only as a single website address, but also as a key element of a company's digital infrastructure. A domain name is becoming a point of identification across multiple services at once: from e-commerce solutions and email communication to integrations with SaaS systems and other online communication tools. In practice, this means moving away from the random registration of individual addresses toward a more deliberate and strategic approach to their use in online activities.

From nazwa.pl's perspective, it is clearly visible that entrepreneurs are managing their domain assets with increasing awareness. Already at the stage of planning an online project, different name variants are secured, and the domain is treated as an element of brand strategy in the digital environment – as noted by Michał Kusz, Vice President of the Management Board of nazwa.pl.

At the same time, according to nazwa.pl, the importance of security in domain management is increasing. As companies expand their online operations, they increasingly understand that losing control over a domain can disrupt the functioning of key digital services, such as websites or email. Therefore, they expect operators not only to offer domain registration, but also to provide a stable infrastructure and procedures that safeguard access to the domain.

At nazwa.pl, we observe a clear integration of domain services with cloud solutions. For many companies, a domain name has become the starting point for an entire online services environment, including hosting, email, security certificates, and marketing tools. Clients expect all these elements to be consistent and manageable from a single place, which simplifies administration and enhances operational security – comments Michał Kusz.

The .pl domain name market remains a stable foundation of companies' presence on the Polish internet. The country-code extension naturally enhances the credibility of businesses operating in the domestic market and is closely associated with business identity among Polish internet users.

From the perspective of one of the largest domain registrars in Poland, it can be concluded that the market is increasingly focusing on the quality of domain use, security, and integration with modern internet service infrastructure. These elements will determine the value of domains in the digital economy in the coming years, and in this area the .pl domain holds a well-established position.

OVH SAS

In the Partner's assessment, the Polish internet continues to develop dynamically, both in terms of individual initiatives and the growing activity of companies. A successful online project invariably begins with the right domain name. In 2025, for OVH SAS, the .pl domain remained an important part of its operations, and consistent efforts in promotion and service translated into further growth in both new registrations and renewals.

The .pl extension continued to enjoy the greatest interest among customers, remaining the primary choice for companies and users building their presence in the Polish digital space – admits Dagmara Solska, Ecommerce Marketing Manager at OVHcloud CEE.

We also believe that our broad product portfolio encourages companies of all sizes: from microenterprises to large corporations - to purchase services ranging from domains to cloud solutions – comments Dagmara Solska.

In response to the needs of both current and future customers, OVHcloud continued to develop services supporting domain management, including user-friendly tools that enhanced the value of its domain offering. While improving tools and processes to enable customers to more efficiently use the full range of online services, a strong emphasis on stability and security was maintained. The Partner also highlights its ongoing focus on educating users about the importance of accurate registrant data, which is gaining significance in light of new cybersecurity regulations.

LH.pl Sp. z o.o.

The LH.pl Partner assesses 2025 as a period of stable growth and continued strengthening of the security of digital services. A high level of new domain registrations was maintained, with the .pl domain still accounting for the clear majority of extensions chosen by customers. Entrepreneurs are taking an increasingly conscious approach to their online presence - not only is the number of registered domains growing, but so is interest in services supporting online business operations, including hosting, email, and solutions enhancing website security.

In 2025, we significantly increased our effectiveness in detecting and blocking attempts of domain-related abuse. Thanks to the development of advanced analytical tools and improved procedures, we are now able to identify and respond to potentially harmful registrations even more quickly, thereby meaningfully enhancing the level of cybersecurity of our services – emphasizes Marek Panek, CEO of LH.pl.

For LH.pl, the past year was also a period of intensive preparatory work related to upcoming regulatory changes in the area of cybersecurity. Particular attention was paid to analyzing the requirements arising from the NIS2 Directive and subsequent stages of work on the amendment to the National Cybersecurity System Act. The processes implemented at LH.pl, along with appropriate organizational and technical solutions, will ensure full compliance with the new regulations and the maintenance of a high level of security for the services provided.

We look to the coming years with optimism and are ready to continue investing in infrastructure, technologies, and solutions that support the stability and security of our customers' online operations. We are confident that the .pl domain will remain a strategic choice for many companies – summarizes Marek Panek.

DD sp. z o.o.

 **ddregistrar.pl**

According to Daniel Dryzek, from the perspective of DD Sp. z o.o., 2025 brought stabilization of results at a level similar to the previous year. The stable position of the .pl domain name market confirms the lasting value of domain names within the Polish digital ecosystem. A domain name is more than just an address – it is a digital foundation and a unique identity.

The Partner also observed sustained demand for expert services, such as domain name back-ordering and the management of extensive domain portfolios. By supporting SMEs, SEO agencies, and similar clients in this area, DD Sp. z o.o. offered tools enabling rapid registration and efficient management of thousands of addresses within a single control panel.

We continuously adapt to the specific needs of our clients. In 2025, 737,000 .pl domain names expired – nearly 40,000 more than in 2024. Our data show that between 15% and 20% of them quickly returned to the market and found new registrants. Daniel Dryzek points to the natural turnover of domain names in the online space, emphasizing that DD Sp. z o.o. specializes in acquiring domains immediately after their expiration.

Despite the rapidly growing role of artificial intelligence (AI), domain names remain a key element of digital identity, continuing to enjoy strong popularity and prestige. Registering a domain name under the .pl extension is perceived as a symbol of professionalism, trust, and brand stability.

A website with its own domain name builds credibility that cannot be replaced by mere presence on social media or results generated by AI. In the era of artificial intelligence, a domain name becomes one of the key tools for controlling content presentation and brand image in the online space. It supports search engine optimization (SEO) and provides a consistent foundation for marketing activities – comments Daniel Dryzek.



PART II

A Study of Polish Public Opinion Regarding the National .pl Internet Domain

Study Information

In this Report, we present the findings of a nationwide survey examining public perceptions of internet domains. The primary objective of the study was to assess the level of awareness and knowledge among Polish citizens regarding internet domains, their associations with and evaluations of the credibility of various domain extensions, as well as the role of domain names in building trust in companies and institutions operating within the digital environment.

The study was conducted on a representative sample of adult residents of Poland (N=1,000). The research scope encompassed both declarative knowledge concerning internet domains and users’ practical experiences related to internet use, assessments of website credibility, and online shopping behavior. Particular attention was devoted to the perception of the .pl domain and the attributes commonly associated with it, including security, trustworthiness, and professionalism. The study also incorporated the experiences of individuals who own websites, including their motivations for domain registration, criteria for selecting a web address, and practices related to domain maintenance and management. In parallel, the attitudes of individuals who do not own a website were examined to understand the factors that could motivate them to register a domain name in the future.

The research further investigated how internet users utilize information contained in website addresses when making consumer decisions, particularly in the context of online purchases.

The findings provide valuable insights into the level of public awareness regarding internet domains. They may also serve as guidance for the design of educational and communication initiatives aimed at supporting the development of a secure and trustworthy digital environment in Poland. The study was conducted by the consortium comprising SYNERGIA Research, Analysis & Consulting and the Radosław Meissner Field Research Centre.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY The research was conducted on a representative sample of Polish women and men using the CAWI.	RESEARCH SAMPLE A representative sample of Polish women and men aged 18+ (in terms of gender, age, region of residence, and place of residence size and education level).
RESEARCH PERIOD November – December 2025	Sample size: N=1000 (including: 52.5% women and 47.5% men).

Research Questions

1. Which internet domain extensions do you recognize?
2. Do you pay attention to domain extension in various internet-use scenarios, such as online shopping, providing personal data, making payments, verifying the credibility of a company or information source, handling official administrative matters, or clicking links on social media platforms?
3. What associations do you have with the .pl domain?
4. To what extent do you associate the following attributes with .pl, .eu, and .com domains: credibility, security, trustworthiness, prestige, professionalism, maintenance costs, vulnerability to cyberattacks, risk of fraud, and low credibility in the eyes of customers?
5. In your opinion, does the .pl domain extension indicate that a website is registered in Poland?
6. To what extent do you trust companies that use a .pl domain, companies using other domain extensions, businesses operating exclusively through social media platforms, and businesses operating exclusively through online auction marketplaces?
7. Do you know how a .pl domain can be registered?
8. Do you own a website (e.g., for business, project, or blog)?
9. How many websites do you own?
10. Which domain extension is used by your website? If you own multiple websites, please indicate the domain extension of the most recently registered domain.
11. What were the primary reasons for registering your most recently registered domain name?
12. Which factors were most important to you when selecting your most recently registered domain name?
13. For what registration period do you typically register a domain name?
14. How would you assess the level of difficulty involved in maintaining control over a domain name (e.g., keeping registrant information up to date and ensuring timely renewal payments)?
15. If you were to create a website, which domain extension would you choose?
16. What factors could motivate you to register your own domain name?
17. Which factors would be most important to you when choosing a domain name?
18. In your opinion, what significance will the .pl domain have in the future?
19. Where do you most frequently purchase products or services online?
20. In which situations, when making online purchases, do you not pay attention to a website's domain extension?
21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the impact of having a dedicated website, the type of domain extension used, and a company's presence on social media platforms on its professionalism and credibility?

Key Findings of the Study

1. The .pl domain enjoys a strong and positive brand image. It is primarily associated with Poland, professionalism, and security.
2. Country-code domain extensions (.pl, .gov.pl, .eu) and generic top-level domains (.com, .net, .org) remain the most widely recognized. This is largely attributable to their long-standing presence in the market and widespread usage.
3. New industry-specific domain extensions occupy a niche position. Extensions such as .tech, .io, .app, .xyz, and .co are popular among professionals but are not widely recognized by the public.
4. The type of domain serves as a security indicator. For many users, it is a key trust signal when making payments or providing personal information online.
5. Social media platforms can reduce users' vigilance. Internet users are less likely to verify website addresses when clicking links or making purchases via social media, thereby increasing the risk of fraud and abuse.
6. The local character of domain extension enhances the credibility of domestic businesses. This contributes to building consumer trust and confidence.
7. .com and .eu domains are viewed positively but remain secondary to .pl. Users are less likely to associate them with the local market and generally place less trust in them.
8. Trust in a seller depends on the sales context. Companies operating under a .pl domain on well-known platforms are perceived as more trustworthy than businesses operating exclusively through social media channels or lesser-known websites.
9. Users' technical knowledge remains limited. Fewer than one-third of respondents know how to register a domain name, and only one in five owns a website.
10. Domain registration is primarily used as a branding and reputation-building tool. The main motivations include enhancing a company's credibility, supporting personal projects, conducting online commerce, and protecting a brand.
11. Price and the .pl extension are the primary determinants of domain selection. Other important considerations include domain availability, memorability, and security.
12. The registration process constitutes a barrier for some users. Divergent assessments of its complexity indicate a need for simplified procedures and more effective communication regarding domain registration and management.
13. The .pl domain demonstrates strong growth potential. Many respondents expect its market position to be maintained or further strengthened in the future.
14. Online shopping is concentrated around major platforms and well-established brands. Brand recognition and corporate reputation are often more influential than the website address itself.
15. A website address influences perceptions of credibility, but it is not the primary factor. Recommendations, customer reviews, and professional website appearance are generally considered more important. The study highlights a strong need for digital education, particularly with regard to domain name types, the domain registration process, and the risks associated with unfamiliar or lesser-known domain extensions.

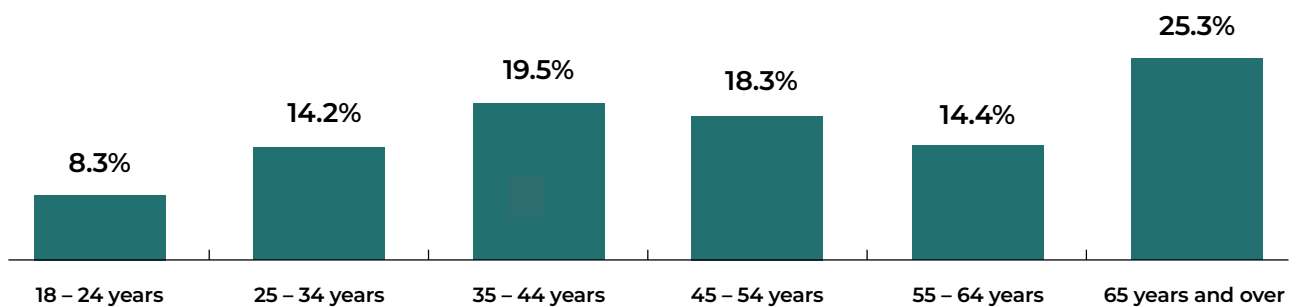
Respondent Profile

The study was conducted among 1,000 adult residents of Poland (aged 18 years and above), including 52.5% women and 47.5% men.

The gender distribution and age structure of the sample reflect those of the adult Polish population aged 18 and over, based on data published by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS).

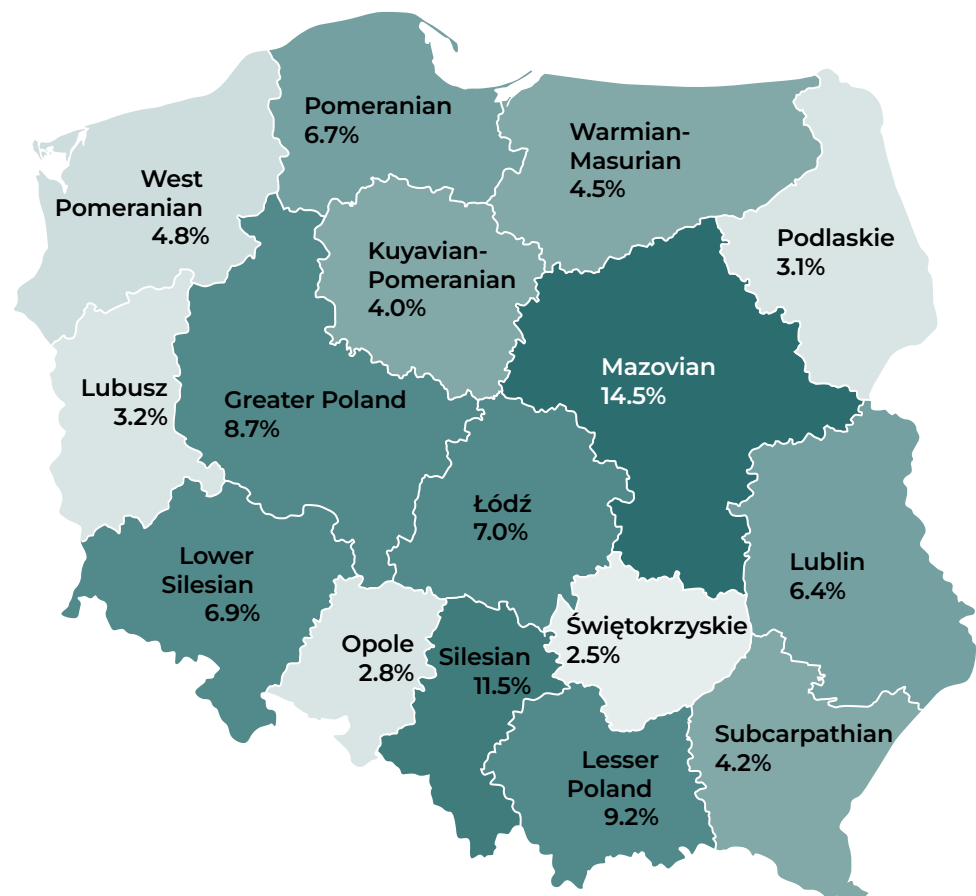
Age of Respondents

N=1,000



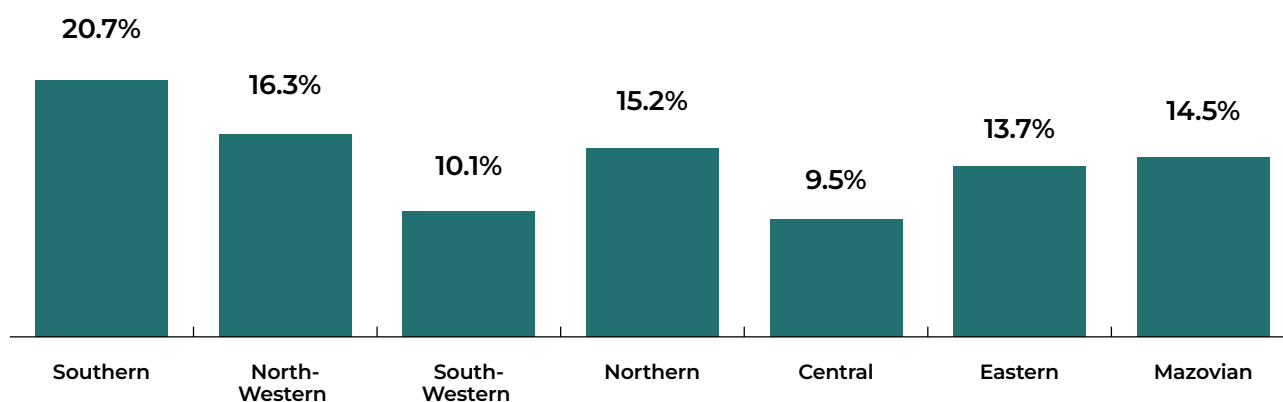
Region (Voivodeship) where respondents live

N=1,000



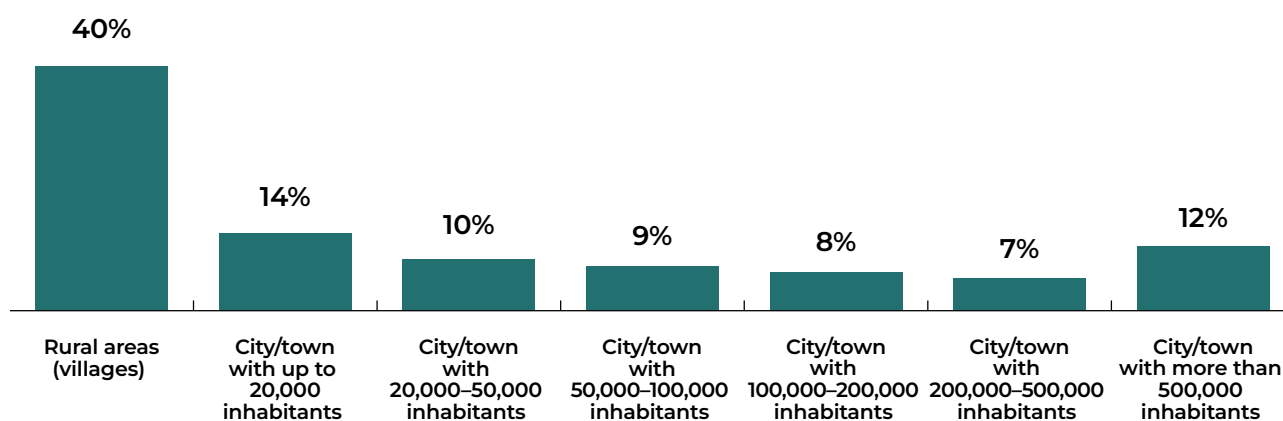
Macroregion where respondents live

N=1,000



Size of locality where respondents live

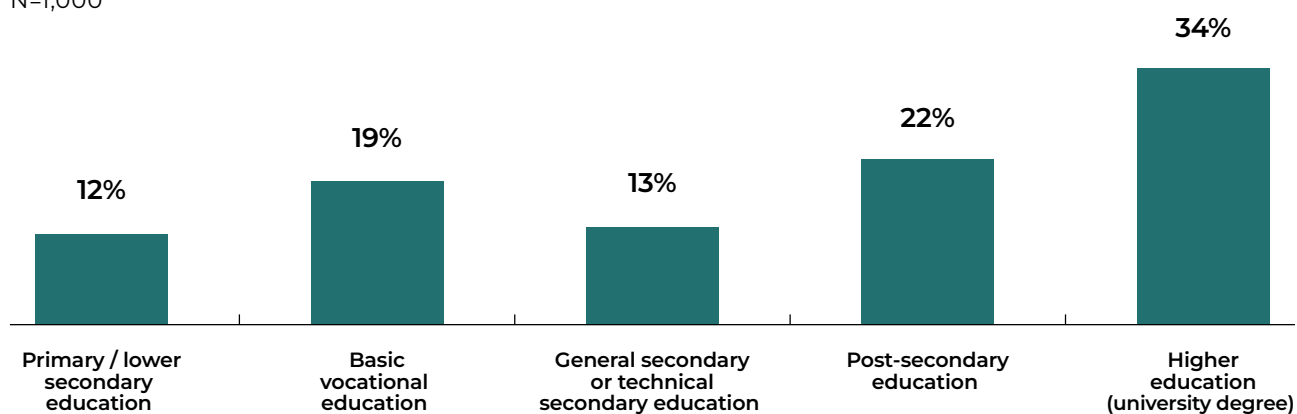
N=1,000



Among the respondents, 40% were residents of rural areas, while 60% lived in urban areas, including: 33% residing in cities with a population of up to 100,000 inhabitants, and 27% residing in cities with a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

Education level of respondents

N=1,000



Among all respondents, 64.3% declared that they are engaged in paid employment or professional work for which they receive remuneration.

Respondents' Employment Sectors (Multiple responses permitted)

N=1,000

INDUSTRY	%
Wholesale and retail trade	8.70%
Construction	7.90%
Other service activities	6.00%
Transportation and warehousing	5.50%
Don't know / hard to say	4.80%
Manufacturing	4.50%
Human health and social work activities	4.00%
Financial and insurance activities	3.90%
Education	3.80%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3.40%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3.20%
Information and communication activities (including telecommunications, software development, computer programming, consultancy, cloud infrastructure, and other IT services)	2.70%
Accommodation and food service activities	2.10%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	2.00%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1.60%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.50%
Administrative and support service activities	1.30%
Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use	1.30%
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1.20%
Real estate activities	1.20%
Mining and quarrying	1.00%
Publishing, broadcasting and content production/distribution activities	1.00%
Extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.50%

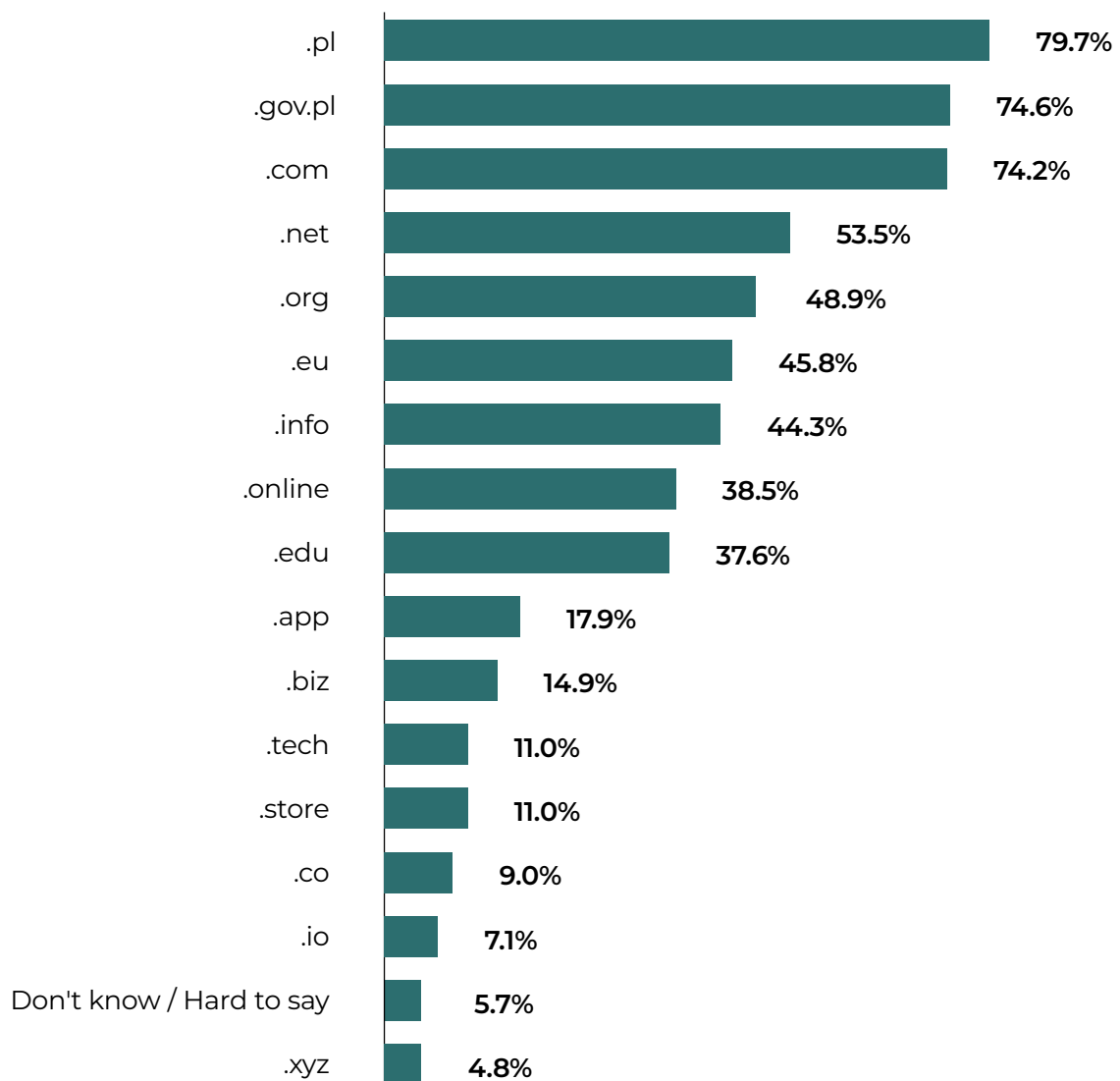


Awareness and Knowledge of Internet Domains

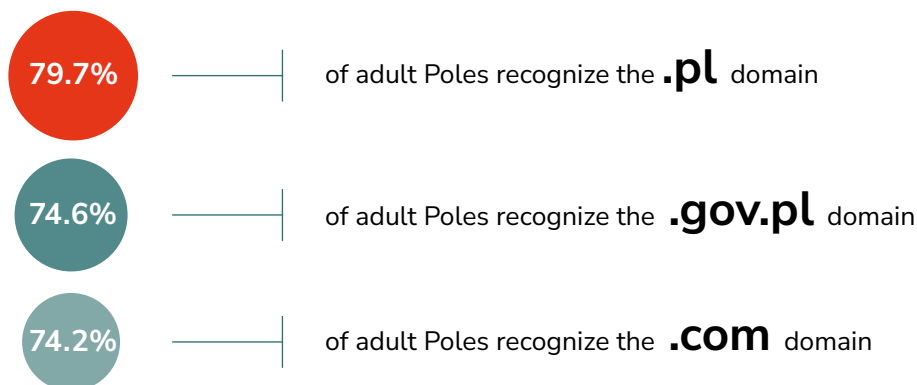
To what extent do internet users recognize different types of domain names, and what meanings, associations, and levels of trust do they attribute to them?

Which of the Following Domain Extensions Do You Recognize? (Multiple responses permitted)

Liczebność próby: N=1,000



The findings reveal a clear dominance of country-code and generic domain extensions, while awareness of newer or more niche top-level domains (TLDs) remains considerably lower.



Copyright by NASK

The .pl domain enjoys by far the highest level of recognition among respondents (79.7%), confirming the strong integration of Poland's national domain into everyday internet use. Recognition levels for .gov.pl (74.6%) and .com (74.2%) are similarly high, reflecting both citizens' frequent exposure to online public administration services and the global prominence of commercial websites operating under the .com extension. It should be noted, however, that despite the relatively high recognition of .gov.pl, the actual use of public e-government services in Poland remains comparatively limited. Slightly lower, though still substantial, recognition rates - reported by nearly half of respondents - were observed for .net, .org, .eu, and .info. These domain extensions have been established on the internet for many years and are commonly associated with specific types of organizations or activities. Nevertheless, they remain significantly less recognizable than the most established extensions, namely .pl, .gov.pl, and .com.

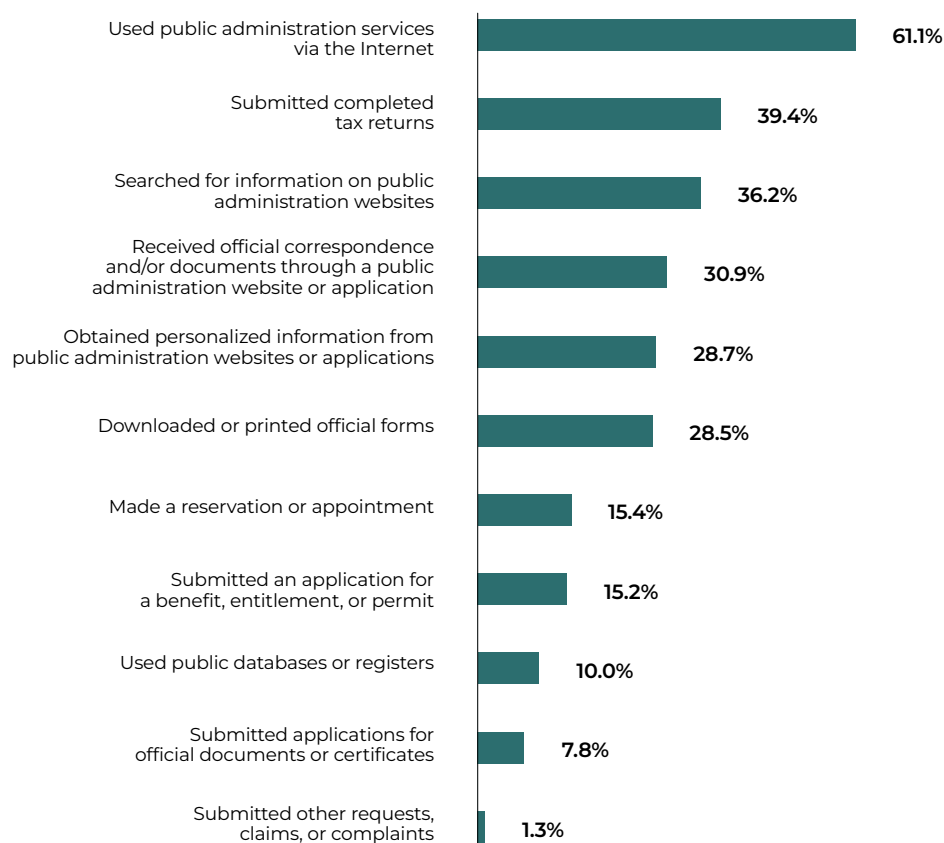
Considerably lower recognition levels were recorded for newer generic top-level domains such as .online, .app, .store, and .tech. Their results, generally below 20%, with the exception of .online, recognized by 38.5% of respondents, suggest that despite growing marketing efforts and increasing registration volumes, these extensions have not yet become firmly embedded in the awareness of the broader internet-using population. Even lower levels of recognition were reported for extensions such as .co, .io, and .xyz, which tend to be popular primarily within startup and technology communities rather than among the general public.

The relatively small proportion of "don't know / difficult to say" responses indicates that most respondents possess a moderately high level of familiarity with the basic elements of internet infrastructure. Overall, the findings demonstrate a clear advantage for traditional and institutionally established domain extensions over newer and more specialized alternatives. This suggests that internet users remain strongly attached to familiar domain extensions and that domain recognition may play an important role in fostering trust in websites. The exceptionally high recognition rate of the .pl domain further confirms its strong and well-established position in public awareness, as well as its clear advantage over competing domain extensions.



According to data published by the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) in 2025, 61.1% of individuals aged 16–74 reported having used public administration services online during the previous 12 months. The use of e-government services was more widespread among urban residents, with 66.6% declaring such activity - 13.6 percentage points higher than among residents of rural areas. The most common activities carried out through websites or mobile applications of public administration bodies included: submitting completed tax returns electronically, searching for information on public administration websites, receiving official correspondence or administrative documents through a user account on a government website or application, downloading or printing official forms and administrative documents.

Individuals aged 16–74 who used public administration services online in the last 12 months, by purpose (2025)

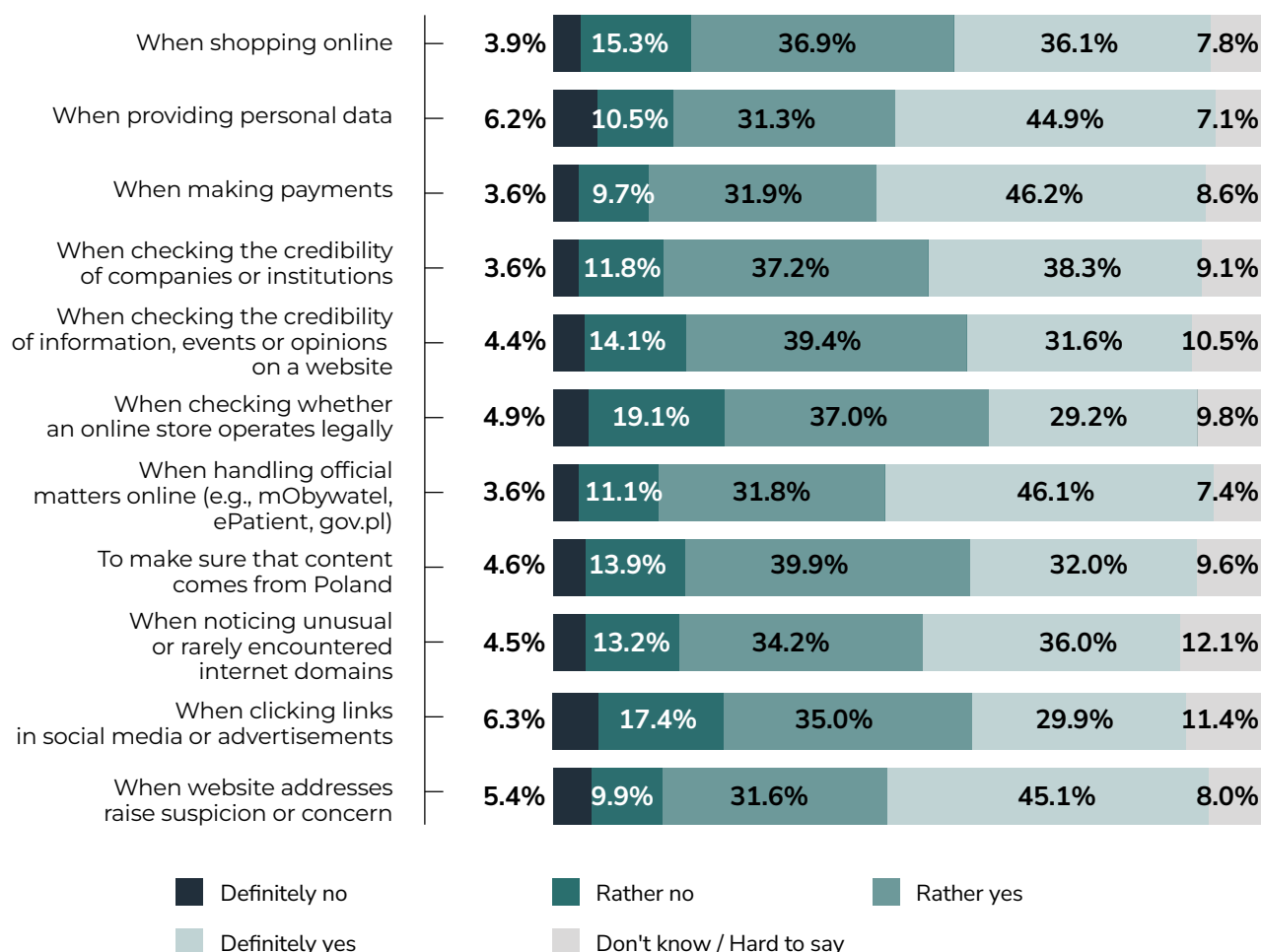


Source: Statistics Poland (GUS) (2025).

An analysis of regional data on the use of public administration services reveals notable differences across Poland's voivodeships. The highest levels of e-government usage were recorded among residents of the following regions: Silesian Voivodeship – 70.4%, Masovian Voivodeship – 69.5%, and Lower Silesian Voivodeship – 67.4%. In contrast, the lowest level of usage was observed in the Warmian–Masurian Voivodeship, where 50.0% of residents reported using online public administration services.

Do You Pay Attention to a Website's Domain Extension in Various Internet-Use Scenarios, Such as Online Shopping, Providing Personal Data, Making Payments, Verifying the Credibility of a Company or Information Source, Handling Official Administrative Matters, or Clicking Links on Social Media?

Sample size: N = 1,000



The chart presents situations in which respondents report paying attention to a website's address and domain extension, treating them as potential indicators of security, legitimacy, and trustworthiness. Across all analyzed contexts, the predominant responses are "rather yes" and "definitely yes," indicating that a website's address constitutes an important evaluation criterion in many everyday online activities. The importance of a domain extension is most pronounced in higher-risk situations, such as providing personal information, making online payments, and accessing public e-government services. In these contexts, the share of positive responses ranges from 76.2% to 78.1%, demonstrating that users frequently rely on domain-related cues when assessing the safety and credibility of online interactions. A similarly high level of vigilance is observed when a website address itself appears suspicious. More than 76% of respondents declare that they pay attention to a website's address when it raises concerns or appears unusual. This suggests that Polish internet users have developed a degree of cybersecurity awareness and precautionary behavior. Unfamiliar or potentially alarming web addresses tend to trigger caution and prompt additional verification before users proceed. Such behavior is likely influenced, among other factors, by public awareness and educational campaigns conducted in Poland, which

have likely contributed to strengthening users' sensitivity to online threats and their ability to recognize potential warning signs.

Somewhat less frequently, though still commonly (66.2%–75.5% positive responses), respondents take domain extensions into account when assessing the credibility of information, institutions, or online retailers, as well as when verifying whether online content originates from Poland. In these contexts, the dominant response is “rather yes,” while the proportion of respondents expressing strong vigilance is lower than in situations involving online payments or the disclosure of personal data. This may suggest that some users perceive a website address as only one of several indicators of credibility, alongside factors such as website design, brand reputation, and recommendations from other users. A comparatively higher level of uncertainty and negative responses emerges in relation to clicking links on social media platforms and evaluating unusual or rarely encountered domain extensions. Nearly one in four respondents (23.7%) admits that they “rather do not” or “definitely do not” pay attention to the domain in such situations. These scenarios are characterized by a higher proportion of individuals who either attach limited importance to domain names or are unable to provide a clear assessment.

This pattern may indicate that users are less accustomed to verifying website addresses during routine internet use, where decisions are often made more rapidly and with less deliberation. Notably, this represents the lowest level of domain-related vigilance across all surveyed situations, even though it involves a high-risk environment, particularly with regard to phishing attacks, fraudulent advertisements, and other forms of online deception. The findings therefore point to a gap in digital security practices, especially in the context of social media usage. Overall, the study demonstrates that Polish internet users regard domain names as an important indicator of security primarily in situations involving financial transactions, interactions with public institutions, and the protection of personal privacy. By contrast, online vigilance tends to be weaker and less consistent during social media use and other routine online activities.

From a research perspective, these findings suggest the existence of a selective caution strategy. From a research perspective, this suggests the existence of a specific selective caution strategy. Internet users do not always analyse website addresses in the same way; rather, they activate heightened scrutiny when the potential consequences of an error appear particularly severe.

Situations in Which Poles Are Most Likely to Pay Attention to Domain Extensions

- 1. High-Risk Activities (Personal Data, Financial Transactions, and Public Administration)**
 - When making online payments – **78.1%**,
 - When accessing public administration services (e.g., gov.pl, mObywatel, etc.) – **77.9%**,
 - When providing personal data – **76.2%**,
 - When a website address raises suspicion or concern – **76.7%**.

2. Online Shopping and Source Credibility Assessment

- When verifying the credibility of a company or institution – **75.5%**,
- When making online purchases – **73.0%**,
- When assessing the credibility of information presented online – **71.0%**,
- When checking whether an online store operates locally – **66.2%**.

3. Content Origin and Unusual Domain Extensions

- When ensuring that content originates from Poland – **71.9%**,
- When noticing an unusual or rarely encountered domain extension – **70.2%**.

4. Social Media and Online Advertisements – The Lowest Level of Vigilance

- When clicking links on social media platforms or in online advertisements – **64.9%**.

What Associations Do You Have with the .pl Domain? (Open-ended question)

Sample size: N = 1,000

Respondents were asked to describe their associations with the .pl domain.

1. Strong National Identification – Predominant Association with Poland

The strongest and most clearly dominant category of associations relates to the identification of the .pl domain with Poland and Polish identity. The most frequently mentioned responses included: “Poland” (11.8%), “Polish domain” (2.4%), “Polish” (2.0%), “Polish website” (1.8%), as well as numerous linguistic variants and synonymous expressions, such as: “ours”, “national”, “from Poland”, “Polish companies”, “Polish websites”, “the Polish market”, “the Polish language.” Taken together, these responses account for 49.9% of all answers. These findings indicate that the .pl domain functions in public perception as a powerful marker of national identity. It is not viewed merely as a technical designation within the domain name system, but rather as a symbolic identifier of affiliation with the Polish nation, domestic businesses, and the national digital marketplace.

In the case of the .pl domain, it is possible to identify:

- a high degree of cultural embeddedness,
- an automatic association between the domain and the Polish origin of the entity operating under it, and
- the perception of .pl as the default online space for Poland.

The identity-related character of the .pl domain constitutes its most significant reputational and brand asset.

2. Credibility, Security, and Trust

A second prominent category of associations relates to security, credibility, and trust, accounting for 12.3% of all responses. Respondents frequently used terms such as “security,” “credibility,” “verified,” “trustworthy,” “legitimate source,” and “secure domain.” Importantly, perceptions of security were often directly linked to the fact that the domain is Polish, with some respondents suggesting that this provides a “100% guarantee of security.”

The image of the .pl domain is therefore strongly grounded in mechanisms of institutional and national trust. This perception may be explained by several underlying cognitive and perceptual processes, including:

- the association of local presence with greater oversight, accountability, and legal regulation;
- the belief that entities operating under a Polish domain are more easily verifiable and more firmly embedded within the national legal framework; and
- a security heuristic – a cognitive shortcut whereby users assume that “if it is a Polish domain, it must be safe.”



The study indicates that the .pl domain inspires a high level of public trust, extending well beyond its purely technical characteristics.

3. Neutral and Functional Associations

Some respondents demonstrate a purely technical and descriptive approach to the domain. The responses provided included, among others, “website address”, “website”, “e-mail”, “address suffix”, and “just a domain” (9.8% of responses in total). For this group of respondents, .pl has no symbolic or emotional significance - it is a standard element of internet infrastructure. This is likely related to a high level of familiarity with technology within this group, the perception of the domain as a neutral standard, or the absence of a need to attribute additional meanings to it. This attitude indicates a segment of pragmatic users for whom a domain is solely a functional tool.

4. Associations with Major Portals and Brands

A significant category of responses (4.4% of responses) consists of references to the largest internet services, such as: WP (wp.pl), Onet.pl, Interia.pl, Google.pl, Allegro.pl, and Gazeta.pl. This is related to the fact that perceptions of the .pl domain are shaped to a significant extent by users' experiences with the largest and most recognizable online brands. This mechanism can be explained by the “halo effect”, whereby the reputation of major brands is transferred to the domain extension itself. Also important in this context is the building of trust through association with market leaders and the reinforcement of .pl as the “mainstream” standard of the internet in Poland. This means that the image of the domain is strengthened by the strength of the brands that use it.



The halo effect refers to a phenomenon in which the evaluation of one attribute of a brand or product influences the way consumers perceive and evaluate its other characteristics.¹

5. Lack of Associations – An Area of Indifference

Interestingly, a sizeable group of respondents declared having no associations with the .pl domain (numerous variants including: “I don’t know”, “I don’t have any”, “None”, “No associations”). Taken together, this constitutes a noticeable segment of respondents - 19.1%. This may indicate a low level of reflection regarding digital infrastructure, where domains are treated as an obvious and invisible element of the internet, or a low level of

¹ Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., 2016, *Marketing Management*, 15th ed., Harlow, Pearson Education Limited.

cognitive engagement with technical issues. For this group of respondents, the .pl domain is part of the “digital background” and does not evoke any emotions or evaluations.

6. Negative Associations – A Marginal Phenomenon

Negatively charged responses constitute a marginal share (0.8%) and include such terms as: “fraud”, “viruses”, “low quality”, and “distrust”. Although a negative image of the .pl domain does exist, it is incomparably weaker than its positive and neutral dimensions. It does not form a coherent or dominant narrative; rather, it is incidental in nature. It can therefore be concluded that individual negative user experiences do not translate into a systemic lack of trust, and the overall image of the .pl domain remains decidedly positive.

- The .pl domain possesses strong identity capital - it is unequivocally associated with Poland and Polishness.
- A high level of trust constitutes the second pillar of its image, and security is often implied by its local character.
- Some users perceive .pl neutrally, as a technical standard.
- There is a significant segment of indifference. For many users, the .pl domain is part of the “invisible infrastructure” of the internet.
- The image of Poland's national domain is strengthened by the country's largest online portals and brands.
- Negative associations are marginal in nature and do not undermine the overall positive image of the Polish national domain.

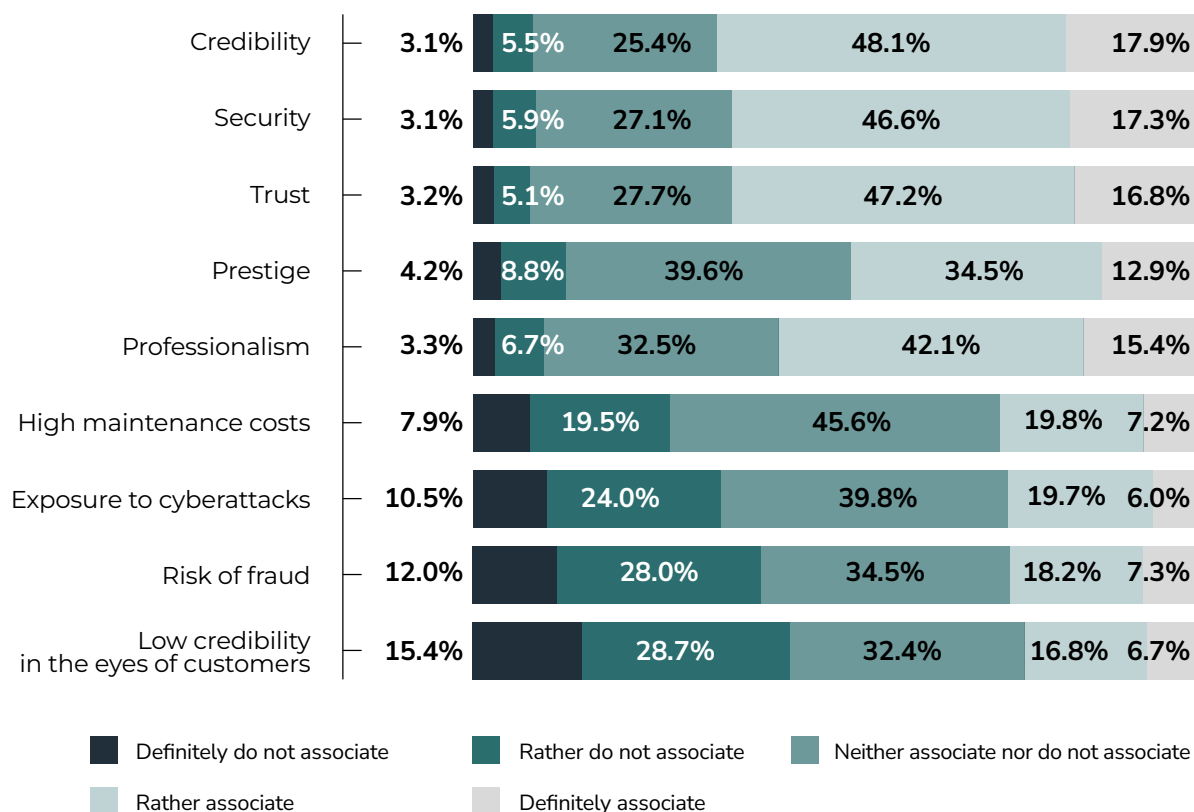
To What Extent Do You Associate Such Characteristics as Credibility, Security, Trust, Prestige, Professionalism, Maintenance Costs, Exposure to Cyberattacks, Risk of Fraud, and Low Credibility in the Eyes of Customers with .pl, .eu, and .com Domains?

Sample size: N = 1,000

Credibility, security, trust, prestige, professionalism, maintenance costs, exposure to cyberattacks, risk of fraud, and low credibility in the eyes of customers are very important factors influencing how internet users perceive and select domain names. These factors play a significant role both in building a brand's image online and in shaping the level of trust among users visiting a given website. Furthermore, they influence users' decisions regarding the use of online services, as well as their assessment of a website's credibility and security. They also determine how audiences perceive a company's reliability and competitiveness in the digital marketplace. Consequently, these factors affect the effectiveness of marketing activities and the development of long-term customer relationships. For this reason, the careful analysis and selection of an appropriate domain name, aligned with the nature of the business and users' expectations, is of particular importance.

To What Extent Do You Associate the Following Characteristics with the .pl Domain?

N = 1,000.



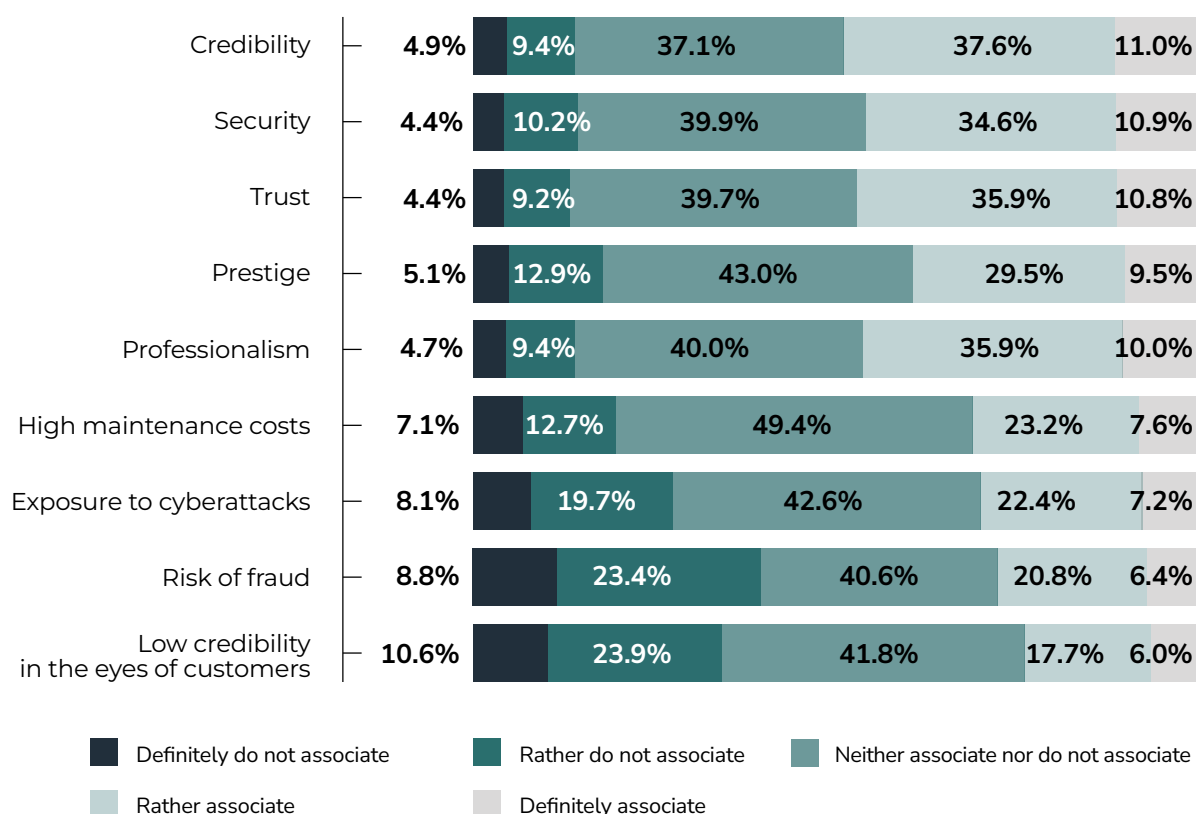
The .pl domain has a clearly positive and well-established image among respondents. It is primarily associated with “credibility” (66.0%), “trust” (64.0%), “security” (63.9%), “professionalism” (57.5%), and “prestige” (47.4%). This means that the national domain is perceived as solid, stable, and trustworthy, which constitutes a key reputational asset in the digital environment. It is also associated with entities that operate in an organised and formal manner. The somewhat lower, though still relatively high, result for “prestige” (47.4%) indicates that the domain is perceived more as a symbol of security and credibility than as a symbol of status or exclusivity.

Negative associations also appear in the image of the national domain, but they do not constitute a dominant element of the perception of the .pl domain. These include “high maintenance costs” (27.0%), “exposure to cyberattacks” (25.7%), “risk of fraud” (25.5%), and “low credibility in the eyes of customers” (23.5%). However, in every case, the percentage of negative indications is clearly lower than the percentage of positive indications for the key attributes. Importantly, in the case of negative attributes, a significant proportion of respondents selected the neutral response (“neither associated nor not associated”). This means that the negative aspects of the image of the .pl domain do not constitute an established stereotype, do not define the image of the domain, and appear rather as potential concerns than as strong convictions.

It can therefore be concluded that the .pl domain serves as a safe, proven, and professional choice, particularly for entities seeking to build trust in the domestic market. From a strategic perspective, its development potential lies primarily in further strengthening the prestige component and in communicatively reducing concerns related to cybersecurity.

To What Extent Do You Associate the Following Characteristics with the .eu Domain?

N = 1,000.

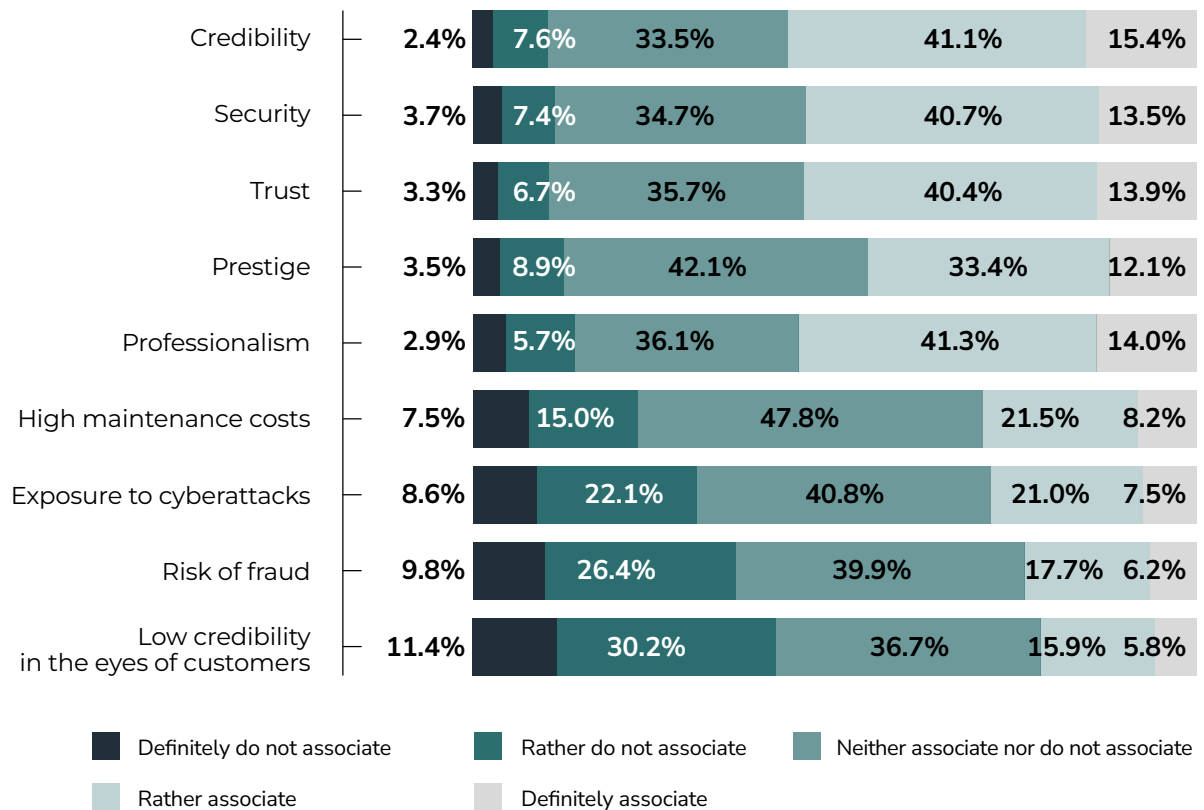


The .eu domain has an overall positive image across the key reputational dimensions; however, it is clearly weaker than that of the .pl domain. It is also associated with “credibility” (48.6%), “trust” (46.7%), “professionalism” (45.9%), “security” (45.5%), and “prestige” (39.0%). However, all key indicators remain below the 50% level. The strongest attribute of this domain is “credibility” (48.6%), although the proportion of neutral responses is nearly as high, suggesting that the image of the .eu domain is less clear-cut and less firmly established than that of .pl. Relatively, the weakest element of the positive image of .eu is “prestige” (39.0%), which may indicate that the European domain is not clearly perceived in Poland as a symbol of status or exclusivity.

Respondents also indicate the presence of negative associations related to “high maintenance costs” (30.8%), “exposure to cyberattacks” (29.6%), “risk of fraud” (27.2%), and “low credibility in the eyes of customers” (23.7%). However, compared with the .pl domain, the level of these indications is slightly higher, particularly in the context of costs and exposure to cyberattacks. At the same time, similarly to the national domain, a substantial proportion of responses remain neutral, which means that the negative aspects are not strongly established beliefs but rather reflect uncertainty or the absence of a clear opinion.

To What Extent Do You Associate the Following Characteristics with the .com Domain?

N = 1,000.



The .com domain has a clearly positive and relatively strong image, positioning it between the .pl domain (the strongest) and the .eu domain (the weakest among the three). The .com domain is associated with “credibility” (56.5%), “professionalism” (55.3%), “trust” (54.3%), “security” (54.2%), and “prestige” (45.5%). All key positive indicators (with the exception of prestige) exceed the 50% threshold, indicating a well-established and unequivocally positive perception of this extension. The strongest association is credibility, closely followed by professionalism, trust, and security. This means that the .com domain is perceived as stable, global, and business-oriented, inspiring trust among users. “Prestige” (45.5%) remains below half of all indications, but is higher than in the case of the .eu domain, which may result from its international character and long-standing presence in the market.

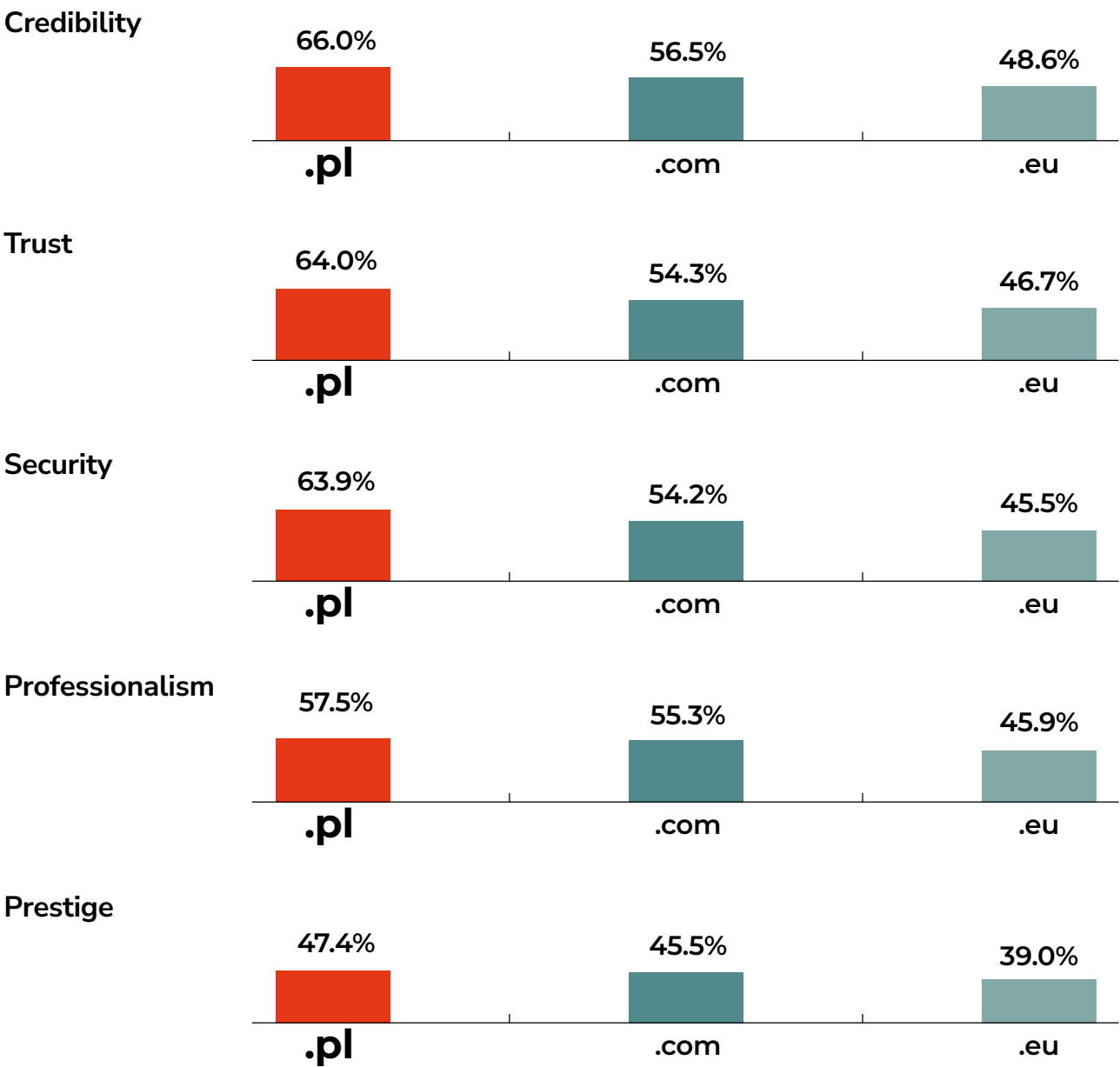
Respondents also indicate a certain level of negative associations, such as “high maintenance costs” (29.7%), “exposure to cyberattacks” (28.5%), “risk of fraud” (23.9%), and “low credibility in the eyes of customers” (21.7%). However, the level of these indications is moderate and, as with the other domains, does not constitute a dominant perception. Importantly, in the case of .com, the negative associations related to low credibility or the risk of fraud are relatively lower than for .eu and are comparable to those recorded for the .pl domain. At the same time, the high proportion of neutral responses indicates that some respondents do not hold a clearly negative opinion.

Comparison of domain images: .pl vs .com vs .eu

Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that the three analysed domains differ in the strength and clarity of their image. The perception structure of the most popular domains in Poland is clear. The image leader is .pl, second place is occupied by .com as a strong international brand, while the weakest image profile in the comparison belongs to the .eu domain.

The .pl domain simultaneously enjoys the highest reputation among the analysed extensions, outperforming .com, which achieves moderate results, and .eu, which records the highest levels of concern across most categories. At the same time, in all cases a significant proportion of responses are neutral, which means that negative associations are not strongly established.

Positive Attributes – Hierarchy of Trust



Negative Associations – Level of Concern

Negative Attribute	.eu	.com	.pl
High maintenance costs	30.8%	29.7%	27.0%
Exposure to cyberattacks	29.6%	28.5%	25.7%
Risk of fraud	27.2%	23.9%	25.5%
Low credibility	23.7%	21.7%	23.5%

Overall Image Position of the Most Popular Domains in Poland



.pl – the strongest local brand

- the highest levels of credibility, trust, and security;
- the lowest levels of concern;
- a stable and unequivocally positive image;
- strong rootedness in the domestic market.

.com – a strong global brand

- high levels of professionalism and credibility;
- slightly weaker than .pl, but clearly stronger than .eu;
- perceived as international, business-oriented, and mature.

.eu – a positive brand in the market

- a positive but less distinctive image;
- the highest proportion of neutral responses;
- higher levels of concerns related to costs and security;
- the absence of a strong and clearly defined emotional differentiator.

In Your Opinion, Does the .pl Domain Extension Mean That a Website Is Registered in Poland?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



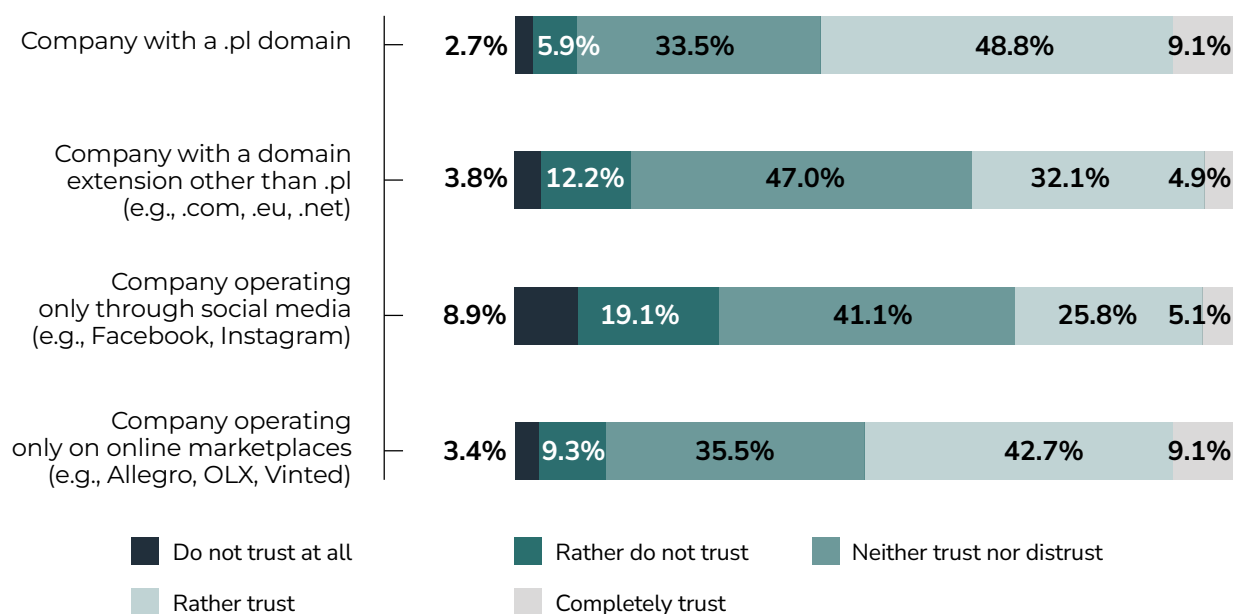
83.2% of respondents believe that the .pl domain extension means that a website is registered in Poland.

Only 5.8% of respondents hold the opposite view.

To What Extent Do You Trust Companies Using a .pl Domain, Companies Using Other Domain Extensions, Companies Operating Exclusively Through Social Media Platforms, and Companies Operating Exclusively on Online Auction Platforms?

Sample size: N = 1,000.

Strong Rootedness of the .pl Domain in National Awareness



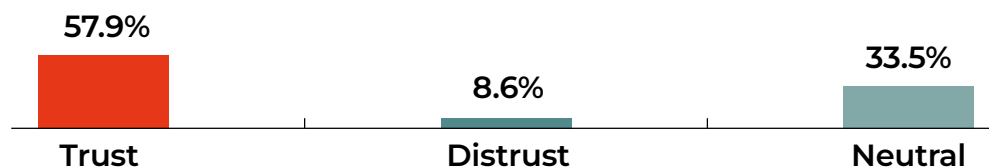
As many as 83.2% of respondents believe that the .pl domain extension means that a website is registered in Poland. Only 5.8% of respondents hold the opposite view. This means that, for respondents, the .pl domain performs not only a technical function but also a **symbolic and identity-related one**. In users' perception, it serves as a clear signal of local presence, which may strengthen the sense of greater operational transparency, easier enforcement of rights, closer contact with a company, or greater transactional security.

In addition, the survey results show clear differences in the level of trust depending on where and how a company operates online. Companies using a .pl domain enjoy the highest level of trust (57.9%) while at the same time recording a low level of distrust (8.6%). **This confirms the earlier conclusions regarding the strong reputational capital**

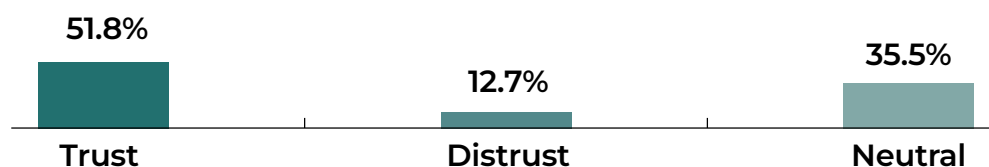
and reputation of the national domain. Companies using domain extensions other than .pl (e.g., .com, .eu, .net) inspire significantly less trust (37%) than companies using the national domain. The level of distrust is almost twice as high (16%) as in the case of .pl. This may result from the absence of a clear signal of local presence, greater anonymity, or a lower sense of legal oversight.

Companies operating on online auction platforms achieved slightly weaker results than companies using a .pl domain. Nevertheless, presence on platforms such as Allegro, OLX, or Vinted continues to inspire a relatively high level of trust (51.8%). This may be explained by the existence of rating and review systems on these platforms, platform regulations, and a sense of oversight and intermediation. In this case, trust is built through the intermediary institution rather than directly through the company itself. The lowest level of trust is attributed to companies operating exclusively through social media platforms (30.9%). This is the only form of online presence in which the levels of trust and distrust are nearly equal. This means that companies operating solely through Facebook or Instagram are perceived as less formal, less stable, and potentially more risky. The absence of a dedicated domain may be perceived as a lack of business professionalisation. The study clearly demonstrates that, in consumers' perception, the structure and formalisation of a company's online presence translate directly into the level of trust placed in that company.

Highest trust – Companies with a .pl domain



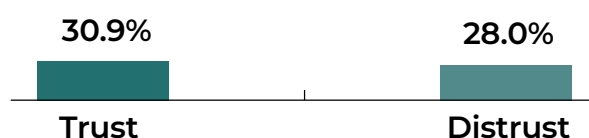
Companies operating on online marketplaces



Lower trust – Companies using non-.pl domain extensions



Lowest trust – Companies operating exclusively through social media



- The .pl domain is a strong signal of local presence and credibility.
- A dedicated website using a national domain builds greater trust than a presence exclusively on social media platforms.
- Online auction platforms constitute an effective “trust substitute” thanks to their control and review mechanisms.
- The absence of a domain name or the use of foreign domain extensions weakens perceptions of credibility.

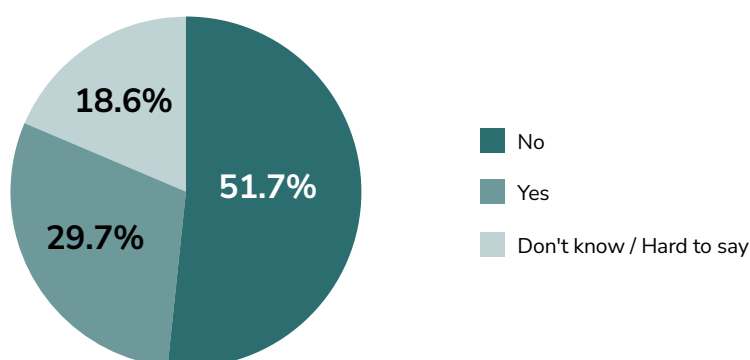
Do You Know How a .pl Domain Can Be Registered?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



29.7% of respondents know how a .pl domain can be registered.

More than half (51.7%) do not know, while 18.6% selected “difficult to say.”



Respondents were asked whether they know how a .pl domain can be registered. The survey results reveal a clear knowledge gap regarding this process. Only 29.7% of respondents declare that they know how a .pl domain can be registered, 51.7% do not know what such a process looks like, and 18.6% selected the response “difficult to say.” There may be several reasons for this.

Low Operational Knowledge Among Respondents

Although the .pl domain enjoys a strong and positive image, practical knowledge concerning its registration remains limited. In fact, only slightly fewer than one-third of respondents declare familiarity with this process. This means that, for the majority of society, the domain registration process is not self-evident, does not form part of basic digital knowledge, and may be perceived as specialised or technical.

Dominance of Lack of Knowledge

In total, as many as 70.3% of respondents (51.7% “no” and 18.6% “difficult to say”) are not certain how to register a .pl domain. This indicates a low level of procedural awareness, a potential barrier to entry for individuals considering their own online activity, but also an area for educational and communication efforts.

We are therefore dealing with an interesting disparity. On the one hand, there is a high level of trust in and a positive image of the .pl domain; on the other hand, there is a low level of knowledge about how to register it. This means that the domain’s reputational capital is strong, but it does not fully translate into the operational awareness of Poles. From a market perspective, this may represent an opportunity. Simplifying communication about the registration process and increasing its visibility may enhance entrepreneurial activity and the number of new domain registrations.

For most users, domains are therefore an element of the everyday digital landscape, but rather as ready-made infrastructure than as an area in which they actively engage. This suggests the existence of a clear boundary between consumer competences related to using the internet and assessing the credibility of websites, and the technical and organisational competences associated with creating one’s own presence online. In the context of digital and educational policies, this may be interpreted as evidence of the need for further dissemination of knowledge about the basic mechanisms underlying the functioning of the internet. This applies particularly to individuals who could potentially conduct business activities or other initiatives online. At the same time, the fact that nearly one in five respondents is unable to answer this question may indicate a low level of reflection on this issue or a lack of practical experience with the domain registration process.

How to Register a .pl Domain?

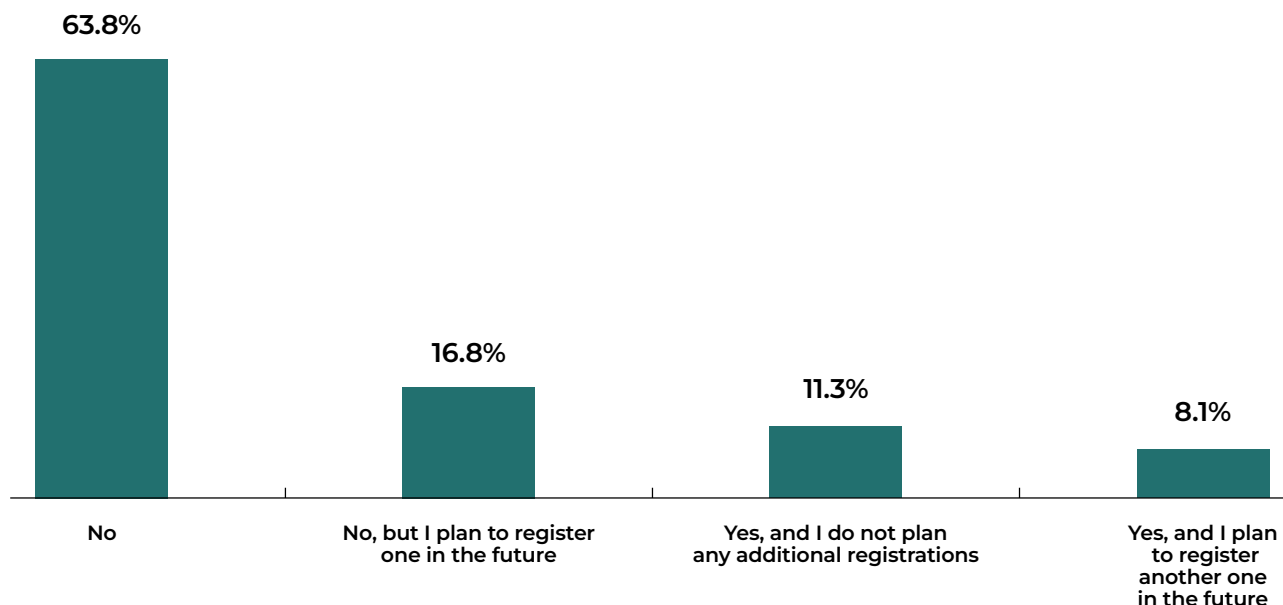


The domain registration process may vary between registrars; however, the procedure is usually similar. A full list of .pl domain registrars that have entered into an appropriate cooperation agreement with NASK in this area can be found on the .pl Registry website at www.dns.pl. The list also includes information on the additional services they offer, including security-related services such as DNSSEC, .pl Registry Lock, and the provision of authinfo codes directly through the customer panel.

- After selecting a registrar, visit its website.
- Check whether your chosen domain name is available for registration.
- If it is available, log in to an existing customer account or create a new account in the registrar’s customer panel.
- Register the domain by providing the required information, accepting the applicable terms and conditions, and paying the registration fee for the selected registration period.

Do You Own a Website (e.g. for a Business, Project, or Blog)?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The survey results show that owning a website is still not a standard practice in Poland; however, there is noticeable growth potential.

Current Level of Website Ownership

19.4% of respondents own a website, including:

- 12.6% who own one website,
- 4.4% who own two websites,
- 1.4% who own three websites,
- 1.0% who own four or more websites.

In addition, 8.1% of website owners plan to create another website in the future. This indicates the existence of an active and growth-oriented group of internet users. These are individuals who are already present online and are considering further expansion on the internet. It is therefore possible to speak of a relatively small but dynamic group of digital entrepreneurs and content creators.

Lack of a Personal Website

80.6% of respondents do not own a website. However, within this group, as many as 16.8% declare an intention to create one in the future. This indicates the existence of untapped market potential.

Market Growth Potential

In total, **24.9% of respondents plan to create a new website**. Within this group, 16.8% are individuals who do not yet have their own website, while 8.1% are individuals who already own a website and plan to create another one.

This means that the potential demand for new domains and services related to online presence includes one in four respondents.

From a research perspective, these data reveal a strong asymmetry between the intensity of internet use and the level of formal online presence as a website owner. The internet appears primarily as a space for consumption and communication, and to a lesser extent as an area for content creation or business activity.

At the same time, the existence of a distinct group of individuals planning to create a website indicates the potential for further growth in individual and micro-enterprise online activity.

- Having a personal website is still not standard practice. Fewer than one in five adult Poles own a website.
- There is, however, clear growth potential. Nearly 25% of respondents declare plans to create a new website.
- The most digitally active group consists of current website owners. They demonstrate a tendency toward further development.
- A key barrier may be the lack of procedural knowledge. This conclusion is consistent with the earlier finding regarding the low level of knowledge about how to register a domain name.

The survey results indicate that the market for domain names and associated websites is at a stage of moderate penetration, but with clear growth potential. Opportunities to increase the pace of market development include activating individuals who plan to create a website, providing educational support that simplifies the registration process, and offering development-oriented solutions for current website owners (additional projects, brands, and business activities). The study shows that although most Poles do not yet own a website, there is a real and measurable opportunity for increased online activity.



Expert Commentary

Marcin Niemczyk

ADVISOR TO THE MANAGEMENT BOARD OF POLSKIE BADANIA INTERNETU

Internet users' behavior online has evolved significantly over recent years. While in the early days of widespread internet adoption in Poland the foundation was a trusted website - most often a portal from which users began their online activity - today, services available on mobile devices increasingly determine what we do online. Data from the Mediapanel study conducted by Gemius on behalf of Polskie Badania Internetu show that direct visits to websites account for 44% of traffic to those websites (all data refer to September 2025). A further 19% of page views are generated by referring websites, meaning that, in most cases, they are likely transitions between websites belonging to the same media group. Therefore, more than one-third of internet traffic originates from other sources - search engines, social media platforms, and increasingly popular content aggregators. The latter are beginning to replace traditional portals, becoming a popular starting point for users searching for content online.

An even greater disparity can be observed in the case of websites operating under the .pl domain. Here, as much as 44% of traffic originates from external sources. However, while users can be confident that content recommended by a trusted portal has been reviewed by an editorial team, in the case of sources such as search engines, social media platforms, or aggregators, the only moderator is an algorithm, which often presents users with content that is not necessarily reliable but is emotionally engaging and therefore likely to attract clicks. A separate issue is the growing popularity of AI solutions, where users have no control whatsoever over the content contained in the responses. I believe that expanding future surveys to include questions about verifying the sources on which LLMs are based could yield very interesting results.

I read NASK's report from the nationwide survey of adult Poles regarding the national .pl domain with great interest. My attention was drawn particularly to the findings in the section "Awareness and Knowledge of Internet Domains", which show that clicking links posted on social media platforms is associated with the lowest level of user vigilance regarding the domain from which those links originate. As many as one-quarter of respondents admit that they "rather do not" or "definitely do not" pay attention to the domain from which the links they click originate.

Therefore, while as a society we have learned to monitor the places online where we provide personal data or make payments, we attach less importance to verifying the credibility of the sources from which we obtain information, including information on social and political issues. Such behaviour may lead to serious threats, such as phishing, malware, or ransomware attacks. Moreover, it may facilitate the spread of disinformation and manipulation in social and political matters, affecting public opinion and destabilising society.

How can we combat this phenomenon? Above all, through education - of internet users, website creators, and also by promoting website addresses rather than social media profiles. By directing potential customers to a social media profile, website owners legitimise these platforms as trusted environments, thereby contributing to the deepening of the phenomenon described above. The absence of a dedicated website in the case of service providers and businesses also exposes them to complete dependence on algorithms and the risk of a sudden loss of visibility, and consequently, loss of contact with potential customers.

aid.pl mail.pl com.pl
auto.pl
agro.pl atm.pl edu.pl
gmina.pl info.pl biz.pl
targi.pl waw.pl gsm.pl
miasta.pl media.pl
realestate.pl shop.pl
net.pl kolobrzeg.pl
nieruchomosci.pl
szkola.pl org.pl
sklep.pl sos.pl
travel.pl gniezno.pl
nom.pl turystyka.pl



Experiences of Website Owners

To What Extent Do Experiences Related to Operating a Personal Website Encourage Further Development of One's Online Presence?

(Questions addressed to respondents who own a website)

How Many Websites Do You Own?

Sample size: N = 1,000

Owning a website is still not a common practice in Poland, although there is clear growth potential in this area. The data show that **19.4% of respondents own a website**, and some of them plan to further develop their online presence. Within this group, 8.1% of respondents declare an intention to create another website in the future, which may be characteristic of more advanced internet users. These are likely entrepreneurs, content creators, or individuals managing multiple digital projects simultaneously.

The distribution of the number of websites owned shows that the most common situation is ownership of a single website (12.6%), while a considerably smaller group of respondents owns two (4.4%), three (1.4%), or four or more websites (1.0%). This means that, in most cases, online presence takes the form of a single project rather than an extensive portfolio of websites.

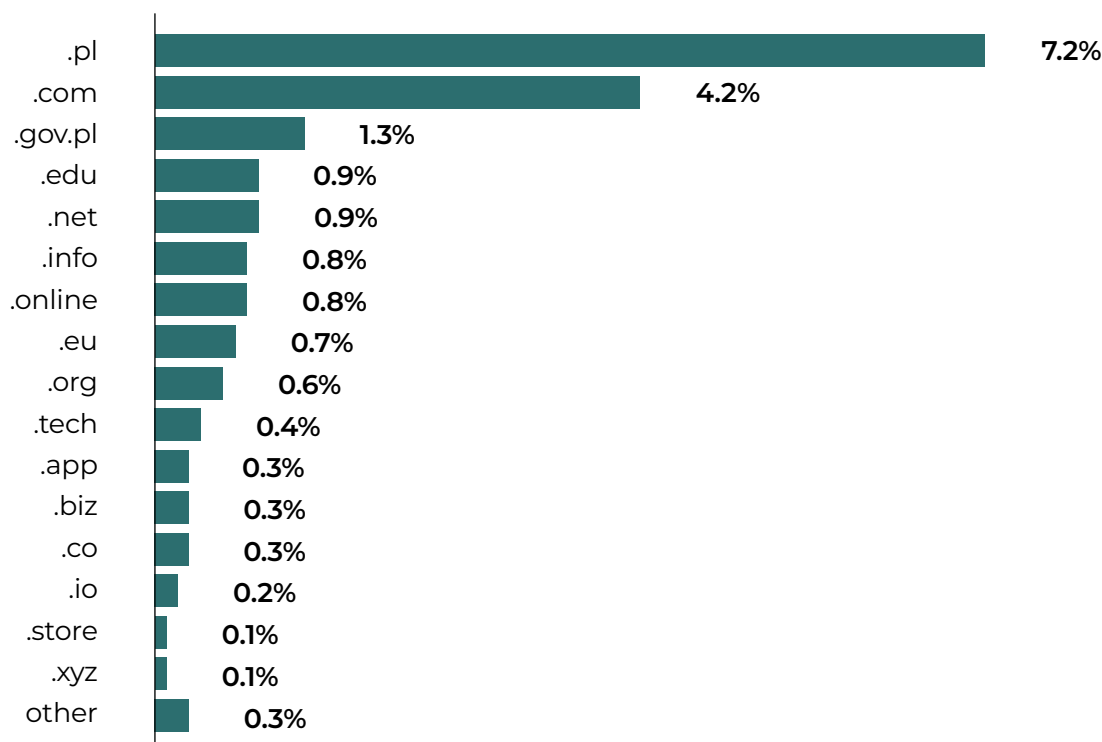
The vast majority of respondents (80.6%) do not own a website. However, it is significant that 16.8% of this group declare an intention to create one in the future. This means that, in total, 24.9% of respondents are considering creating a new website, indicating noticeable growth potential for the domain name and hosting services market.

From a research perspective, these findings suggest that for most users, the internet remains primarily a space for consuming content and services, and to a lesser extent an environment for their own creative or business activity.

At the same time, there is a relatively large group of individuals planning to create a website. This means that, together with the development of digital entrepreneurship, personal projects, and activities on social media, the number of users choosing to establish their own independent online presence may gradually increase.

Which Domain Extension Is Used by Your Website? If You Own Multiple Websites, Please Indicate the Most Recently Registered Domain.

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The above responses relate to the 19.4% of respondents who declared owning a website. The data confirm the strong position of the .pl domain as the default and most trusted choice among respondents. Although the market offers a wide range of alternative domain extensions, their actual use remains limited. This means that the national domain brand enjoys advantages in both scale and recognition, while new domain extensions function more as a complement than as genuine competition. Furthermore, it can be concluded that users' domain selection decisions are largely based on the recognition of and trust in traditional domain extensions.

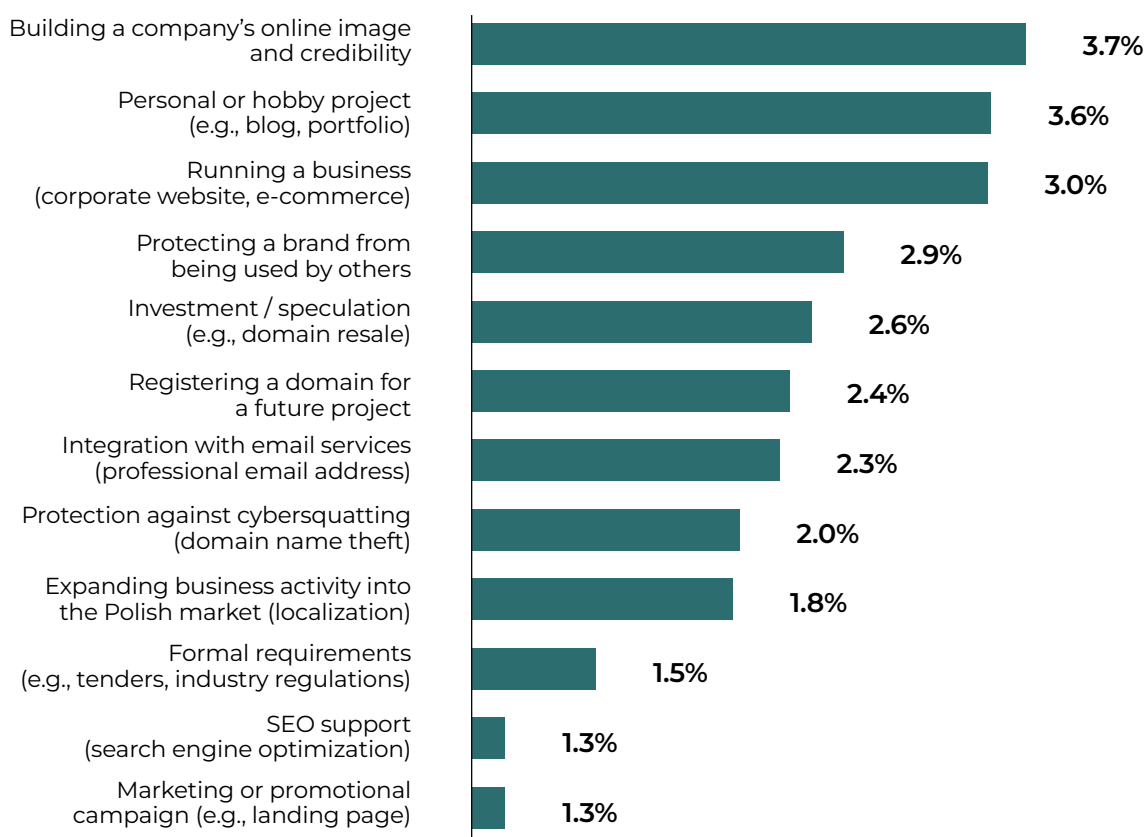
- 1. A clear market leader – the .pl domain (7.2%).** The national domain is by far the most frequently indicated extension. Its share is nearly twice as high as that of the second-ranked .com domain. This confirms earlier conclusions regarding the strong trust capital and local rootedness of the .pl domain.
- 2. A strong position of global domains:** .com (4.2%), .edu (0.9%), .net (0.9%), .org (0.6%), as well as the European .eu domain. The .com domain ranks second in the comparison, indicating its stable international position.
- 3. Fragmentation of the new gTLD market.** The remaining extensions receive only isolated and very low numbers of indications. This shows that the market for alternative and new domain extensions remains highly niche and fragmented. None of them reaches a market share of 1%.
- 4.** The relatively high number of indications for the .gov.pl domain is particularly noteworthy. As many as 1.3% of respondents declared that they own a website using this domain extension. Given that, in Poland, domains ending in .gov.pl may be used exclusively by public institutions associated with state administration, such a high number of declarations of ownership of websites using this extension is surprising.

- The market is highly concentrated around the .pl domain, which remains the natural choice for users in Poland.
- The .com domain serves as an international alternative, but clearly trails the national domain.
- New and specialised extensions (e.g., .tech, .app, .io) have a marginal market share and remain the choice of narrow groups of users.
- The market structure indicates a conservative approach to domain extension selection. Users prefer familiar and well-recognised extensions.

It should be noted that the values presented in the table refer to the entire sample (N = 1,000), rather than only to respondents who own a website. This means that the actual share of individual domain extensions among website owners themselves is relatively higher, although the hierarchical structure remains unchanged. The .pl and .com domains clearly dominate, followed by a long tail of infrequently selected alternative domain extensions. This confirms the conclusion drawn from the earlier data. Polish internet users, even when actively creating their own online projects, prefer traditional and socially familiar solutions, while treating new domain extensions more as a curiosity than as a standard they wish to use.

What Were the Main Reasons for Registering Your Most Recently Registered Domain? (Multiple responses permitted)

Sample size: N = 1,000.



As in the previous table, the low individual percentages in this set of results stem from the fact that the survey covers the entire population (N = 1,000), while only a portion of respondents declare that they have actually registered a domain. The data show that motivations for domain registration are diverse. However, image-related, business-related, and security-related objectives clearly dominate. The structure of responses indicates the predominance of rational and strategic motivations over purely technical ones. These motivations can be divided into three groups, within which the patterns of motivation are quite distinct.

1. Image- and Business-Related Motivations – Professionalisation and Business Activity

The most frequently indicated reasons for registering a domain include:

- building a company's image and credibility on the internet – 3.7%,
- a hobby or personal project (blog, portfolio) – 3.6%,
- conducting business activity (corporate website, e-commerce) – 3.0%.

This means that, for Poles, a domain is primarily a tool for building a professional image, pursuing personal initiatives, and conducting commercial activity. Image and credibility therefore constitute the most common impetus for domain registration. This confirms the strong importance of a domain as an element of online reputation.

2. Strategic and Protective Motivations – Brand and Name Protection

An important group of motivations relates to brand protection and strategy. These include:

- protecting a brand from use by others – 2.9%,
- protection against cybersquatting – 2.0%,
- registration for a future project – 2.4%,
- investment/speculation (domain resale) – 2.6%.

This group of motivations indicates that a domain is perceived not only as a strategic asset, but also as an element of intellectual property protection and a potential investment area. Interestingly, registering a domain does not always mean its immediate use. It is often a preventive measure.

3. Operational and Marketing Motivations – E-mail, SEO, and Campaigns

This group consists of motivations related to practical applications. It includes:

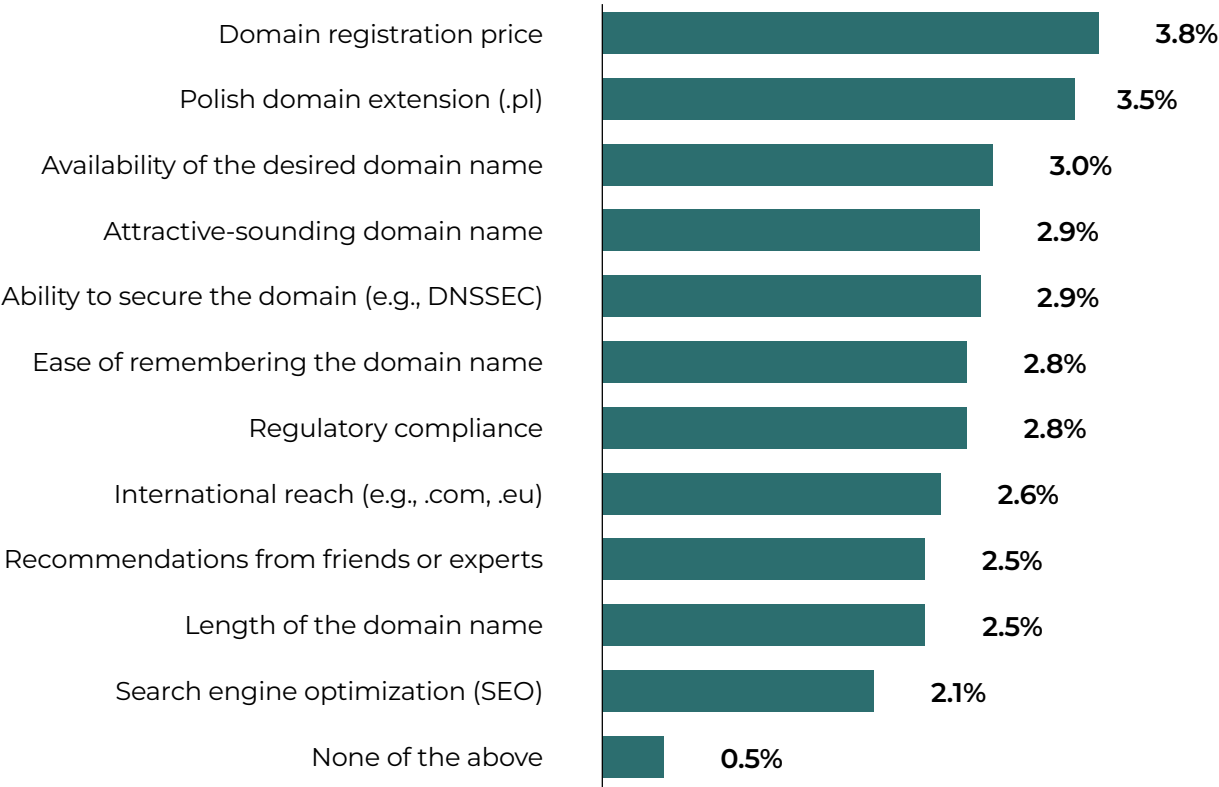
- integration with e-mail services (professional e-mail address) – 2.3%,
- creation of SEO support infrastructure – 1.3%,
- marketing campaign / landing page – 1.3%,
- formal requirements (e.g., public tenders) – 1.5%,
- expansion of business activity into the Polish market – 1.8%.

This indicates that a domain also serves as a marketing tool, an element of communication infrastructure, and, in some sectors, a means of fulfilling formal requirements.

The survey results show that domain registration is a deliberate and purposeful activity. The strongest motivation for registration is building credibility and a professional image, which confirms earlier observations regarding the high importance of domains in the context of trust. A domain is not merely a technical address; it constitutes an element of a brand, a business protection tool, a strategic component, and a foundation of digital presence.

Which Factors Were Most Important to You When Choosing Your Most Recently Registered Domain? (Multiple responses permitted)

Sample size: N = 1,000



The analysis of the above responses shows that the decision to choose a domain is primarily rational and identity-based in nature. **The Polish domain extension is the most frequently selected extension. This result confirms observations from earlier stages of the study, which indicated the strong embeddedness of the .pl extension in users’ awareness, its strong associations with reliability and security, and its perception as the primary and “natural” choice.**

Respondents' answers can be divided into several groups:

1. Economic Factors and the Local Identity of the Domain

Respondents most frequently cited the cost of domain registration (3.8%) and the Polish domain extension (3.5%). Price is the most important factor indicated by respondents. This confirms the high cost sensitivity of internet users in Poland. Almost equally important is the .pl domain extension. This reflects the strong local rootedness of .pl and its importance for the identity of the domain name.

2. Availability Factors

Availability of the domain name was indicated by 3.0% of respondents. This means that the choice of a domain name is often a compromise between expectations and the actual possibility of registering a particular name.

3. Image and Functionality of the Domain Name

The next group of factors relates to the quality of the domain name itself. These include an attractive sound (2.9%), ease of memorisation (2.8%), and length of the name (2.5%). This confirms the view that a domain is perceived as an element of branding and communication. Simplicity, memorability, and marketing usefulness are important considerations.

4. Security and Regulatory Compliance

Technical and regulatory aspects also rank highly among the selected factors. These include the possibility of securing the domain, e.g. through DNSSEC (2.9%), and compliance with regulations (2.8%). This indicates growing user awareness of the importance of security and formal regulatory compliance. This is particularly important in the context of conducting business activities.

5. The Role of Recommendations and SEO

For some respondents who had recently registered a domain, recommendations from friends or specialists (2.5%) and search engine optimisation (SEO) (2.1%) were also important. Interestingly, SEO is important but not a key factor at the domain selection stage. This suggests that users are less likely to choose a domain solely on the basis of its potential search engine positioning benefits.

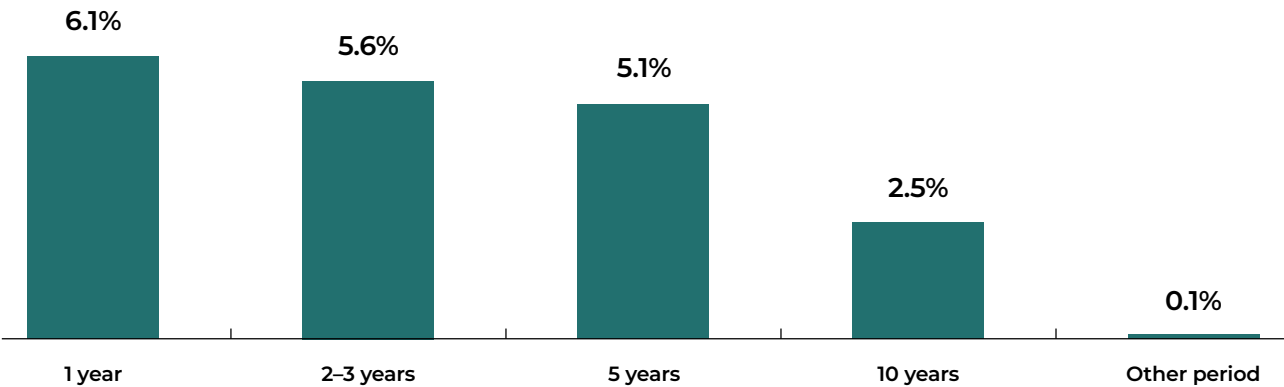


Internet users in Poland choose domain names primarily in a pragmatic manner. The starting points in the selection process are price and a .pl domain address. This means that the national and image-related factor carries almost the same weight as the economic factor. At the same time, the importance of security and the quality of the domain name as part of a brand's image is increasing.

For registrars and domain operators, it will therefore be crucial to maintain a competitive pricing policy, communicate security features (DNSSEC, .pl Registry Lock, the "Safe Domain" programme, which focuses on preventing abuse, including phishing attacks, and domain scanning conducted by CERT), and emphasise branding benefits and the simplicity of the domain name.

For What Period Do You Usually Register a Domain Name?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



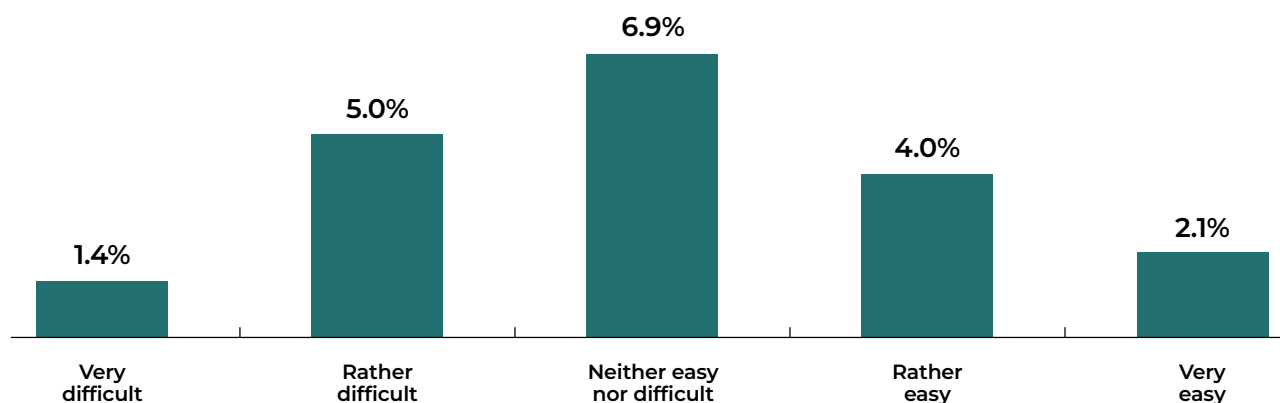
The data show that decisions regarding the length of the domain registration period vary, although short- and medium-term registration periods predominate. The largest group of respondents declares registering a domain for one year (6.1% of the survey sample who declared that they own a website). This suggests a cautious approach and flexibility, allowing for changes in decision-making or limiting initial costs. Annual registration may be characteristic of new projects, trial ventures, or initiatives with an uncertain time horizon.

In second place are medium-term registrations for 2–3 years (5.6%) or 5 years (5.1%). This indicates a growing tendency among some users toward longer-term planning and building a lasting online presence. Registration for several years may signify a stable business model, but it may also reflect an investment in a brand or concerns about the risk of losing the domain. A long-term approach to domain registration remains the least common. Only 2.5% of all respondents, both those who own websites and those who do not, choose to register a domain for 10 years. Long-term domain protection is therefore not a common practice and is probably reserved for entities strongly convinced of the long-term viability of their brand or those treating the domain as a key strategic asset. This may result from financial constraints among registrants or from a preference for maintaining greater flexibility. It may also reflect a lack of awareness of the benefits associated with registering a domain for a longer period.

From a research perspective, these findings indicate the dominance of a pragmatic, short-term approach to domain management within the general population. Respondents are more likely to choose solutions that preserve freedom of decision-making and minimise risk than strategies aimed at maximising domain protection over a long time horizon. Combined with earlier findings showing that only a small proportion of respondents own a website, these results reinforce the view of the domain as a tool used rather occasionally and on a project basis, rather than as a long-term strategic asset in the everyday lives of most users. The predominance of annual registrations implies high turnover and the need for continuous communication with customers. This creates an opportunity for registrars to promote the benefits of longer registration periods, increase awareness of the risks associated with domain loss, and offer attractive multi-year registration packages.

How Do You Assess the Level of Difficulty in Maintaining Control Over a Domain Name (e.g. Keeping Registrant Information Up to Date, Making Timely Payments)?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The results show that maintaining control over a domain is most commonly perceived as a neutral or moderately easy process, although there is also a group of users who perceive certain difficulties. For a total of 6.1% of respondents (out of the 19.4% who own websites), a domain is a relatively easy asset to manage. This means that some users possess the appropriate technical knowledge, use intuitive administrative panels, and have experience in domain management. At the same time, a total of 6.4% of respondents consider domain management to be difficult. This level is comparable to the positive assessments, indicating a clear polarisation of experiences. For some users, maintaining control over a domain is intuitive, while for others it represents a significant challenge. Among all respondents who own a domain, neutral responses (6.9%) predominate. This indicates that domain management is not perceived as a serious problem, but neither is it regarded as entirely trouble-free. The perceived level of difficulty likely depends on the user's level of digital competence.

Three user segments can be distinguished:

- **Competent and experienced users** – for whom domain management is easy.
- **Moderate users** – who perceive domain management as a neutral process.
- **Less technically advanced users** – who experience difficulty and perceive domain management as a potential barrier.

Maintaining control over a domain is therefore not perceived as a serious systemic barrier, but neither is it a fully intuitive process for all users. From a market perspective, this indicates a need for further simplification of management panels, greater automation of key processes (e.g. security measures), and enhanced education regarding domain security and administration. In the context of the earlier survey findings concerning limited knowledge about domain registration, it is evident that users' domain management competences constitute an important area for further support and educational communication efforts.



Expert Commentary

Dr hab. Grzegorz Adamczyk

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT GFK – AN NIQ COMPANY

The results of the survey on perceptions of the .pl internet domain provide a lens through which to view the state of development of the digital society in Poland. The authors of the study undertook an analysis of website creation and management practices, which constitute one of the empirical indicators of the degree to which post-industrial society is transforming into a digital society. Approximately one-fifth of adult residents of Poland own a website. This group increases to one-quarter of the population when those who intend to launch a website in the future are also taken into account. Like any statistic, this figure requires interpretation: are we dealing with a phenomenon of limited scope, or, on the contrary, does it indicate profound transformation? Personally, I lean toward the latter interpretation. If website creation is regarded solely as an indicator of possessing specific technical competences, then its social reach among one-quarter of the population could be assessed as relatively unimpressive. However, a different picture emerges when we realise that this quarter of adult Poles who own or intend to establish a website are not merely individuals with the technical skills to do so, but, above all, individuals who have understood the essence of the digital society, namely the nature of communication. Its digitalisation creates such far-reaching possibilities for influence that, to paraphrase Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, eminent sociologists, we are able to construct reality digitally. In this context, it should also be remembered that this quarter of the population, acting as digital creators, initiates communication that is subsequently processed by a much larger proportion of its recipients.

The data on the main reasons for domain registration confirm the above conclusions. The top two positions in the ranking are occupied by purely communication-related arguments – building a company's image and credibility, and pursuing a hobby or personal project. This demonstrates website owners' deep understanding of the influence this tool can exert on their social environment. The survey also provides interesting data on preferred domain extensions. In first place, by a considerable margin, is the .pl extension. On the one hand, this may be interpreted as a result of the specific characteristics of Polish society, which to some extent resists globalisation trends. Consequently, some website owners wish to be identified territorially. On the other hand, it may once again indicate an understanding of the influence of digital communication – perhaps some website owners choose the .pl extension so that their message is not ignored due to the lack of clear territorial identification.

Do the data presented in the report describe the trend referred to by Jean Baudrillard, philosopher and sociologist, as the digital revolution? Undoubtedly they do, but this is evidenced not only by the very fact of using a digital description of social reality in place of its analogue version. Above all, it is evidenced by the conviction among digital creators, such as website owners, regarding the power and influence of digital communication.



Attitudes Toward Domain Registration

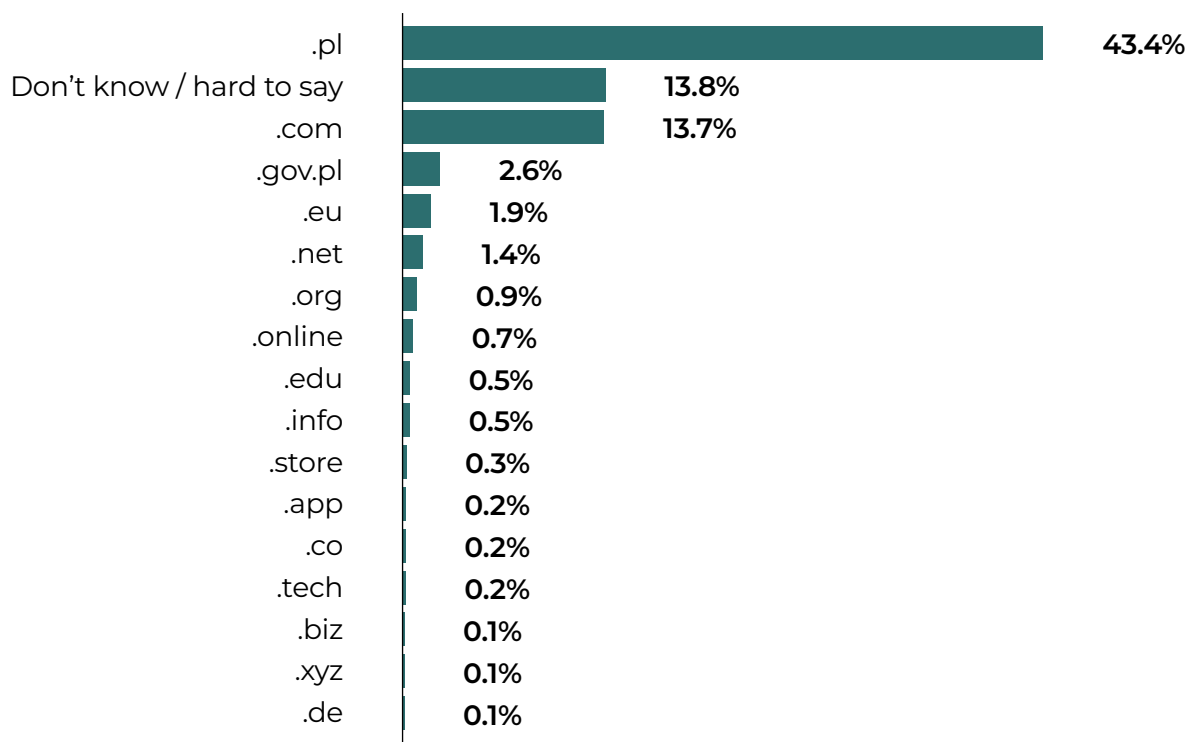
(Respondents Who Do Not Own a Website)

What Influences the Decision Not to Create a Website?

(Questions addressed to respondents who do not own a website)

If You Were to Create a Website, Which Domain Extension Would You Choose?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



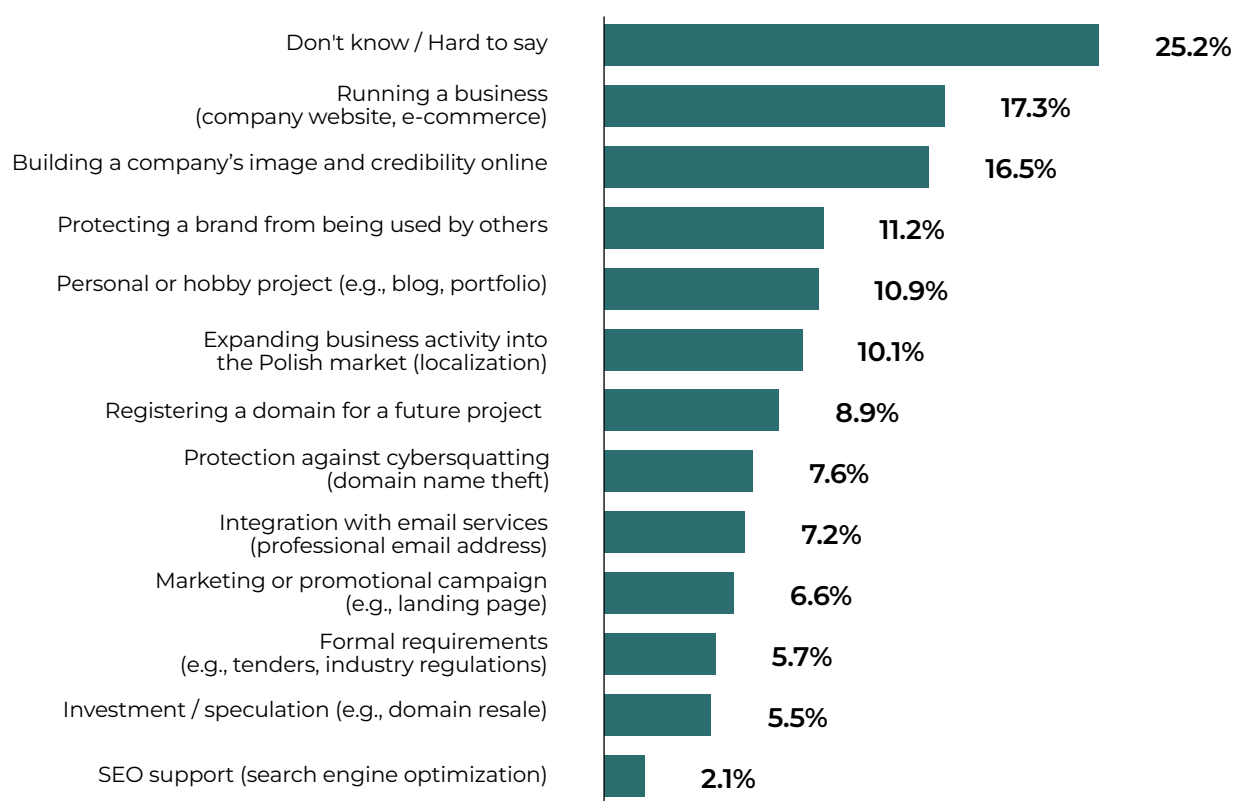
The national domain is by far the most frequently selected choice when creating a website, with 43.4% of responses. This means that nearly one in two respondents, when planning to create a website, would intuitively choose the .pl extension. This confirms the earlier findings of the study, including the strong embeddedness of .pl in users' awareness, the strong associations of this domain with credibility and security, and its perception as the default and "natural" option in the Polish market.

The global .com domain, with a result of 13.7%, ranks second; however, its score is more than three times lower than that of .pl. This means that although .com is recognised and attractive in an international context, it is not the first choice for the majority of respondents. Particularly interesting is the high level of indecision among some users. As many as 33.2% of respondents (“No response” – 19.4% and “Don’t know / difficult to say” – 13.8%, combined) do not indicate a clear preference. This is a highly significant result. It shows that one in three respondents does not have well-established knowledge or beliefs regarding the choice of a domain extension.

This may result from a number of factors, including a lack of experience in creating websites, limited awareness of the differences between domain extensions, or the absence of clearly defined business plans. The remaining domain extensions presented in the survey received only marginal numbers of indications, which may suggest that new and alternative extensions have very limited appeal in the eyes of respondents. In the context of the earlier survey findings (high trust in .pl and its perception as a local domain), it can be concluded that declarative preferences are consistent with the domain’s image. The reputation of the .pl domain translates directly into users’ selection intentions.

What Could Encourage You to Register Your Own Domain? (Multiple responses permitted)

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The survey results show that motivations for domain registration are primarily business- and image-related in nature, while at the same time there is a high level of inability to identify a clear reason for making such a decision (“Don’t know / difficult to say” – 25.2%). As many as one in four respondents is unable to identify a factor that would encourage them to register a domain. This means that a significant portion of the market does not actively

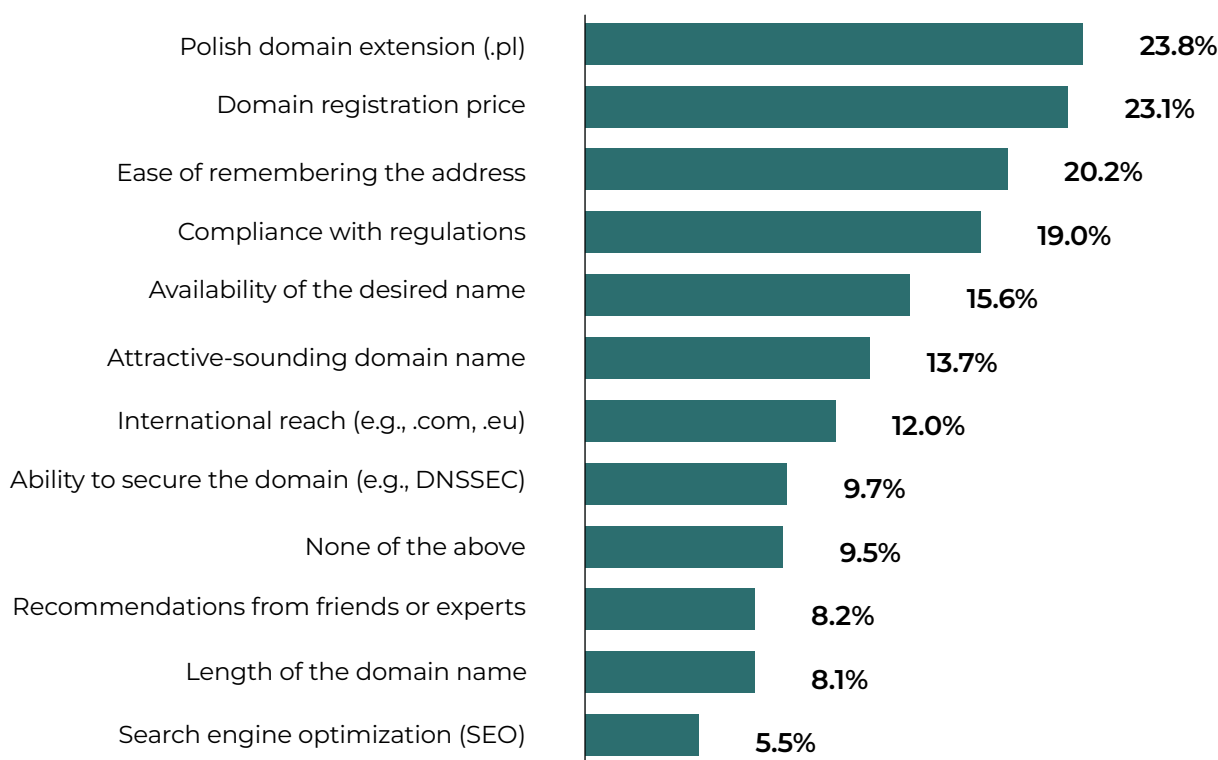
consider such a need or may be unaware of the benefits associated with owning a domain. As a result, the decision to register a domain is made more situationally than strategically.

Among the most important factors encouraging domain registration are “Conducting business activity” (17.3%) and “Building a company’s image and credibility” (16.5%). This means that a domain is primarily perceived as a business tool, an element of professionalisation, and a foundation of market presence. The image-related motive almost equals the operational motive of conducting business activity, which confirms the strong importance of online reputation identified in earlier findings of this study. Factors related to security also play an important role for respondents, including “Brand protection” (11.2%), “Protection against cybersquatting” (7.6%), and “Registration for a future project” (8.9%). This demonstrates growing awareness of the domain as a strategic asset and an element of intellectual property protection.

Development- and expansion-related motivations are somewhat less important to respondents (“Hobby/personal project” – 10.9%, “Expansion of business activity into the Polish market” – 10.1%, “Marketing campaign” – 6.6%, “E-mail integration” – 7.2%), as are investment-related and technical motivations (“Investment/speculation” – 5.5%, “Formal requirements” – 5.7%, “Creation of SEO support infrastructure” – 2.1%). Interestingly, SEO received the lowest level of indications, confirming that advanced internet marketing strategies are characteristic of only a small segment of the population. At the same time, this suggests that for most respondents, a domain is not primarily perceived as a tool for technical optimisation, but rather as an element of image and a foundation for business activity.

Which Factors Would Be Most Important to You When Choosing a Domain? (Multiple responses permitted)

Sample size: N = 1,000.



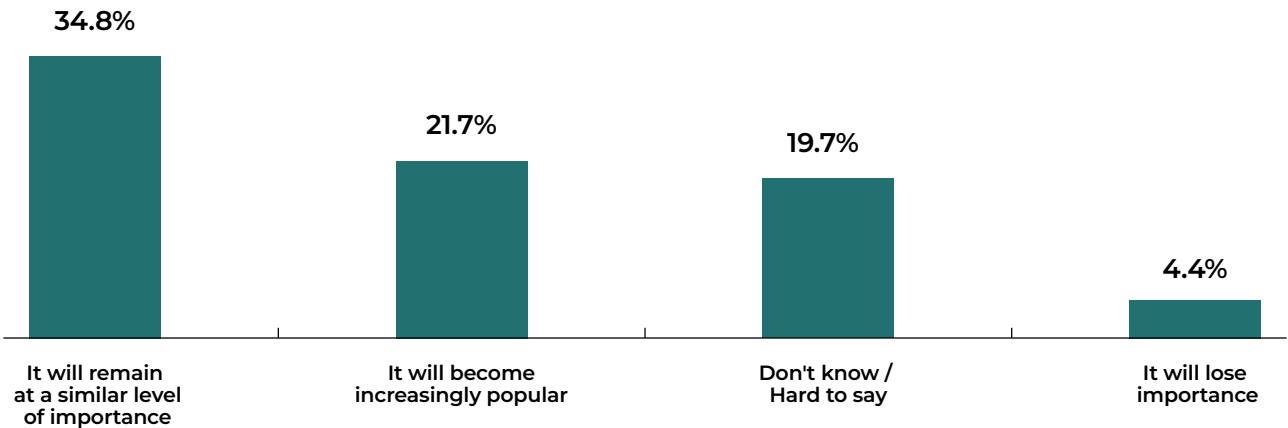
When making a hypothetical domain choice, respondents would be guided primarily by national-economic and functional factors. In contrast to the previous table (concerning a domain actually registered in the recent past), the importance of the Polish domain extension is more clearly visible here. 23.8% of respondents would choose a domain with a Polish extension (.pl), while for 23.1%, the deciding factor would be the cost of domain registration. This is a highly significant result. **For Polish internet users, a domain with the .pl extension is more important than the cost of registering it.** This means that the national and image-related factor is more important than the economic aspect. For 20.2%, the ease of remembering the domain name is important, as are compliance with regulations (19.0%) and availability of the name (15.6%). This indicates that users think of a domain as a communication tool (easy to remember), but also as an element of formal business compliance and as an asset whose availability determines the final choice. For 13.7% of respondents, the attractiveness of the domain name and its international reach (.com, .eu) (12.0%) are important. This is an important finding, showing that international reach matters to Polish users, but is clearly less important than a Polish domain extension. This demonstrates that, when choosing a domain, users tend to think more locally than globally.

Nearly 10% of respondents indicated that the possibility of implementing security measures (e.g. DNSSEC) is important, while 8.2% pointed to recommendations from friends or specialists. For 8.1%, the length of the domain name is important.

Once again, SEO is the least important factor. Search engine optimisation (SEO) was indicated by only 5.5% of respondents and represents the lowest result in the ranking. This confirms earlier observations: SEO is not a primary factor in domain selection in the awareness of Polish users. Overall, these findings paint a picture of the potential domain user as a pragmatic and cautious individual for whom local identification, cost, and the functionality of the domain name are the primary considerations, while more specialised technical or marketing issues are secondary. This fits into the broader narrative of the entire study. The domain appears here primarily as a practical and image-building tool, rather than as an advanced strategic instrument in the digital economy.

What role do you think the .pl domain will play in the future?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The survey results show that the .pl domain is perceived as a stable and enduring element of the digital market, with a clearly low risk of losing its significance. The largest group of respondents believes that the importance of the .pl domain will remain stable ("It will remain at a similar level" – 34.8%). This means that the national domain is perceived as well established, resilient to technological change, and permanently embedded in the Polish internet.

Nearly 22% of respondents forecast a growth scenario for the domain ("It will become increasingly popular" – 21.7%). This means that one in five respondents expects the importance of the .pl domain to increase. Combined with the responses indicating that its position will be maintained, this means that 56.5% of respondents anticipate either stability or growth in the importance of the national domain. This constitutes a strong signal of a positive market outlook for the .pl domain. The proportion of respondents forecasting a decline in importance is very low (4.4%). This means that a scenario involving a weakening of the .pl domain's position is not perceived as a realistic threat in public awareness.

At the same time, however, a relatively high level of uncertainty can be observed. 19.7% of respondents do not formulate a clear forecast. This may result from respondents' lack of knowledge about market trends, limited interest in domain-related issues, or the perception that this topic is of little personal relevance.

Overall, the chart presents a picture of cautious stability. The .pl domain is perceived as a durable foundation of Poland's online presence, with moderate growth prospects and very limited concerns about a loss of significance. From a research perspective, this is consistent with earlier findings showing strong trust in this extension and its dominance in hypothetical domain selection preferences. It confirms the central position of the .pl domain within Poland's digital landscape.



Expert Commentary

Andrzej Dulka

PRESIDENT OF THE POLISH CHAMBER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Polish Chamber of Information Technology and Telecommunications (PIIT), representing key entities in the ICT sector, regards the .pl Domain Registry as one of the most important infrastructural assets of the state. In an era of rapidly accelerating digital transformation, the national country-code top-level domain (ccTLD) has ceased to be merely a technical internet address. It has become a foundation of national identity in the digital space and an important component of the country's economic security.

First – Building Trust and Credibility in Economic Activity

Today, the Polish domain constitutes a brand in its own right. Data published by NASK in the "Annual Report 2025" clearly indicate that Polish internet users place the highest level of trust in the .pl extension. For businesses, particularly those from the SME sector, having a presence under this domain serves as a signal of stability, affiliation with the domestic market, and legal transparency.

In the era of global e-commerce platforms, the .pl domain remains an important symbol of authenticity for Polish companies, enabling them to build lasting relationships with customers. As the report indicates, the national domain is the most frequently chosen option in 43.4% of cases.

Second – Technical Security and Digital Sovereignty

The stable operation of the Registry, based on modern DNS infrastructure and technologies such as DNSSEC, is of critical importance for the continuity of both public and commercial services. As the Registry operator, NASK sets standards in the area of cyber-threat protection, directly influencing the resilience of the entire Polish internet ecosystem.

For PIIT members - from telecommunications operators to cloud service providers - the reliability of the national Registry constitutes a fundamental condition for the development of innovative digital services. As the report emphasises, for people potentially interested in creating a website, the .pl domain is more important than the cost of registration itself.

Third – A Model of Market Cooperation

Poland has developed one of the most transparent and efficient models of cooperation with domain registrars. The competitiveness of this market, supported by reliable analytical data provided by NASK, fosters the development of the IT industry and encourages businesses to digitise their assets and operations. In the opinion of the Polish Chamber of Information Technology and Telecommunications, the continued stable development of the .pl Domain Registry is essential for maintaining the growth momentum of Poland's digital economy and the contribution of this sector to GDP.

Investing in the quality, security, and promotion of the national domain is simultaneously an investment in a secure future for Polish citizens and businesses within the global digital environment. The .pl Domain Registry is not merely a database - it is a digital window to the world through which Poland presents its modernity, credibility, and professionalism.

Summary

- Respondents most frequently recognise national domains, followed by government domains, and then long-established global domains. The most recognised extensions are: .pl (79.7%), .gov.pl (74.6%), .com (74.2%), .net (53.5%), and .org (48.9%).
- The .eu and .edu domains are known to some users, but their recognition is not widespread. Despite their marketing visibility, .online and .info have not yet entered the awareness of the majority of respondents. It can be assumed that these extensions are often recognised visually but are not always consciously identified as distinct domain types.
- New and industry-specific domains (e.g. .tech, .io, .app) remain poorly recognised, despite their popularity within startup and IT communities. The lowest level of recognition concerns the .xyz domain, which may be perceived as exotic or untrustworthy. The low awareness of the .co extension means that it is often mistaken for a typographical variation of .com or is not recognised at all.
- For most users, a domain extension serves as an important indicator of security, particularly in situations that require trust. The highest levels of vigilance are declared when making payments, providing personal data, and using public services. Social media remains a weak link in cybersecurity, as domain verification is performed least frequently in this environment. Unusual domain extensions are more likely to arouse suspicion than to be perceived neutrally. The findings indicate a need for continued user education regarding domain recognition, particularly in the context of advertising and social media.
- The .pl extension is strongly and unequivocally associated with Poland. For many users, the national domain is synonymous with trust, and its local character strengthens the perception of security. At the same time, a lack of deeper reflection is evident among some respondents, as domains are often treated as a standard feature rather than a distinguishing element. The image of .pl is reinforced by major Polish internet portals (WP, Onet, Interia, etc.), which support its reputation. Critical opinions appear only occasionally and are not consistent.
- The .pl domain has a clearly positive image. It is most commonly associated with credibility, security, trust, and professionalism. Positive attribute ratings range from 47.4% to 66.0%.
- The image of the .com domain is also positive, although somewhat weaker than that of .pl. Positive associations range from 45.5% to 56.5%.
- The .eu domain is perceived more positively than negatively; however, its image remains weaker than that of both .pl and .com. Positive associations range from 39.0% to 48.6%.

- 83.2% of respondents believe that the .pl extension means that a website is registered in Poland.
- More than half of respondents declare trust in companies using a .pl domain and in companies operating through online marketplace platforms (e.g. Allegro, OLX, Vinted). Significantly lower levels of trust apply to companies operating exclusively through social media or using a domain other than .pl. In these cases, the percentage of positive responses does not exceed 30.9%–37.0%.
- 29.7% of respondents declare knowledge of the .pl domain registration process, while the majority do not possess such knowledge.
- 19.4% of respondents own a website, most commonly using the .pl or .com extension. The main motivations for domain registration include building a company's image and credibility online, pursuing hobby or personal projects (e.g. a blog or portfolio), conducting business activities (corporate websites and e-commerce), brand protection, investment/speculation (e.g. domain resale), and reserving a name for a future project.
- The most important factors when selecting the most recently registered domain are price and the Polish extension (.pl), followed by domain name availability, an attractive-sounding address, the ability to secure the domain (e.g. DNSSEC), ease of memorisation, and regulatory compliance.
- Domains are most commonly registered for one year, less frequently for 2–3 years or 5 years.
- The level of difficulty associated with domain registration is most often assessed as moderate - neither easy nor difficult. Similar proportions of respondents describe the process as easy and as difficult.
- 24.9% of respondents plan to create a new website. The most frequently indicated extension is .pl, followed by .com, and, somewhat surprisingly, .gov.pl also appears among the responses.
- The factors most likely to encourage respondents to register their own domain are conducting business activities, building a company's image and credibility online, brand protection, pursuing a hobby or personal project, and expanding business operations into the Polish market.
- The most important factors in domain selection are the Polish extension, price, ease of remembering the address, regulatory compliance, and availability of the name.
- More than one-third of respondents predict that the importance of the .pl domain will remain at its current level. 21.7% believe its importance will increase, while only 4.4% forecast a decline in its significance.

aid.pl mail.pl com.pl
agro.pl atm.pl edu.pl
gmina.pl info.pl biz.pl
targi.pl waw.pl gsm.pl
miasta.pl media.pl
realestate.pl shop.pl
net.pl kolobrzeg.pl
nieruchomosci.pl
szkola.pl org.pl
sklep.pl sos.pl
travel.pl gniezno.pl
nom.pl turystyka.pl

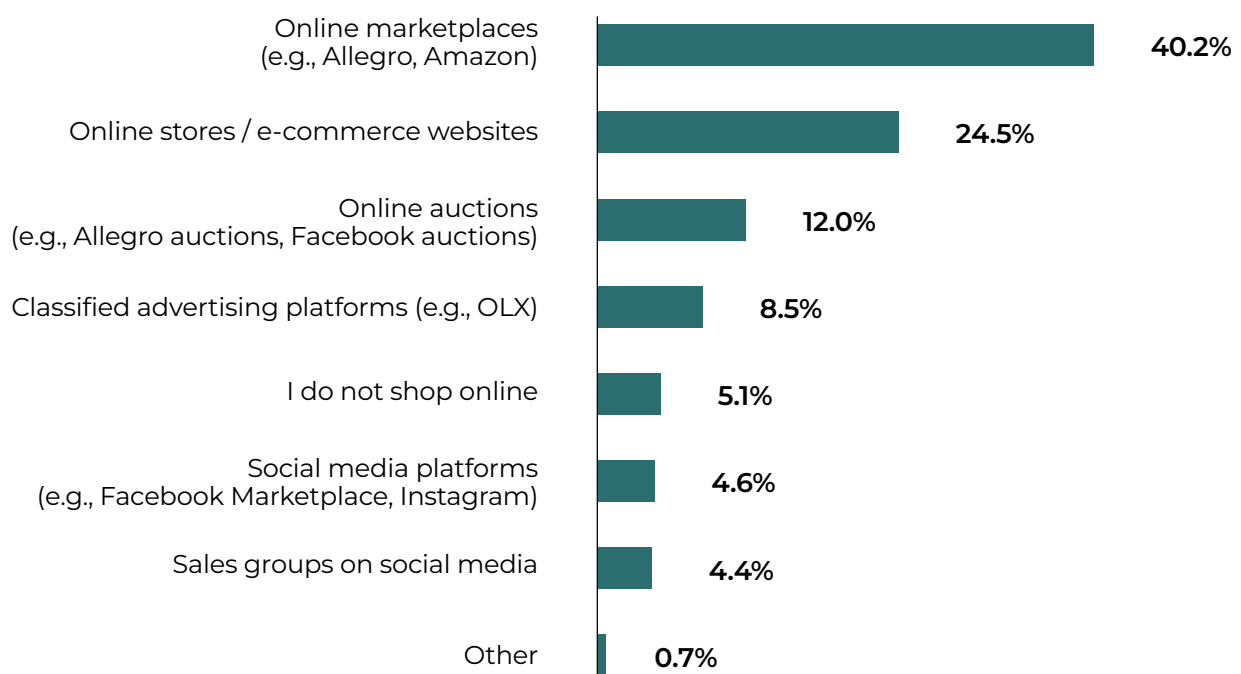


Online Shopping and Consumer Preferences

Which Factors Have the Greatest Influence on the Choice of an Online Store or Platform?

Where Do You Most Prefer to Purchase Products or Services Online?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



Structure of Online Shopping Channels

The most frequently indicated place for making online purchases is online marketplaces (40.2%). This result clearly dominates all other categories. The next most frequently selected channels are:

- online stores of individual brands – 24.5%,
- online auctions – 12.0%,
- classified advertisement platforms – 8.5%,
- social media platforms – 4.6%,
- sales groups – 4.4%,
- people who do not shop online – 5.1%,
- other – 0.7%.

Dominance of the Platform-Based Model

The online shopping market, in consumers' minds, is clearly dominated by large platforms. Services such as Amazon and Allegro serve as the primary online shopping environment. This reflects a high level of trust in large, centralised entities and a preference for solutions that aggregate offers from multiple sellers. It points to the enormous importance of convenience, standardisation, and buyer-protection mechanisms. This finding confirms the central role of large intermediaries in Polish e-commerce. They offer a wide selection of products, buyer-protection mechanisms, and extensive rating systems, all of which provide consumers with a sense of transaction security.

Strong but Secondary Position of Brand-Owned Online Stores

Purchasing directly from individual brand websites is the second most common choice among respondents (24.5%), but the gap compared with online platforms, almost 16 percentage points, is substantial. This may indicate that individual brands still retain significant importance, but no longer dominate the online shopping market. Consumers increasingly prefer the ability to compare offers and access them in a single place. This can be interpreted as a transfer of trust toward institutional intermediaries. Consumers are willing to purchase directly from online stores, but they even more frequently rely on the infrastructure of large platforms, which reduce risk and simplify the purchasing process.

Marginalisation of Social and Classified Models

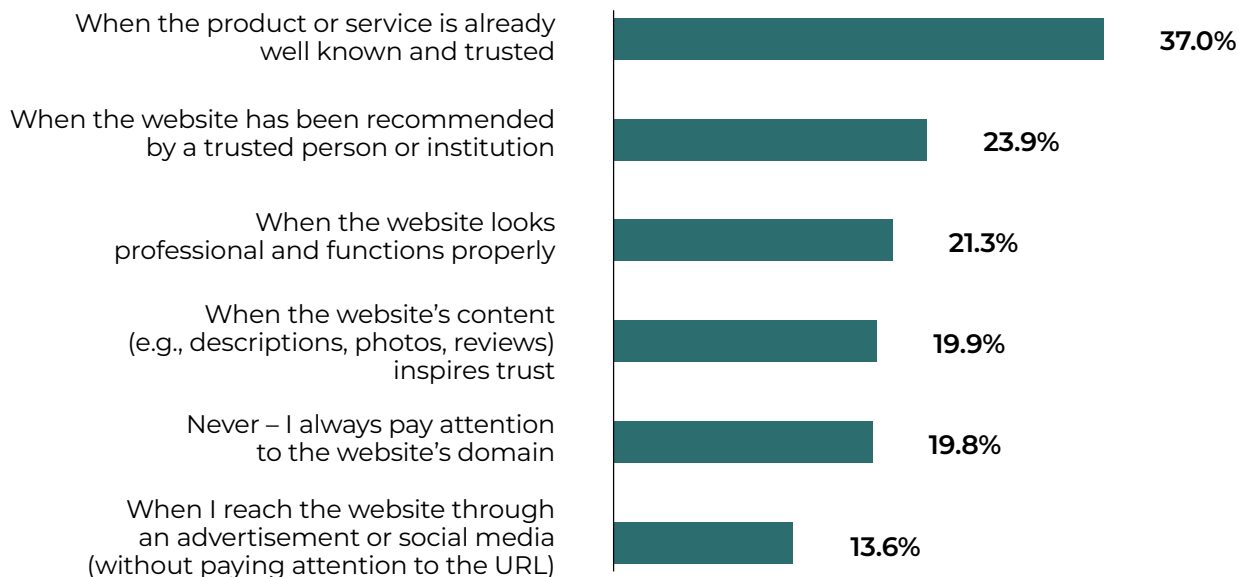
Respondents report shopping considerably less frequently through online auctions (12.0%) and classified advertisement platforms such as OLX (8.5%). Because these channels are often associated with transactions between private individuals, they may be perceived as less predictable or as requiring greater caution than purchases made through stores or large platforms. Only a marginal share of respondents identifies social media as their primary shopping channel (marketplaces and sales groups combined: 9.0%). This may reflect limited trust in such channels or a perception that they serve as a supplement to traditional forms of e-commerce rather than as a primary shopping environment.

Low Level of Online Shopping Exclusion

Only 5.1% of respondents declare that they do not shop online. This indicates a high level of e-commerce adoption within the surveyed population and demonstrates how widespread online shopping has become among Polish consumers. Overall, the findings portray a digital consumer who prefers stable, institutionalised shopping environments such as large platforms and online stores. At the same time, consumers approach transactions conducted through social media or peer-to-peer classified platforms with considerably greater caution. This is consistent with earlier findings regarding trust in different forms of online business presence and the importance of domain names as signals of credibility in purchasing situations.

In Which Situations, When Making Online Purchases, Do You Not Pay Attention to the Website's Domain Extension? (Multiple responses permitted)

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The survey results show that vigilance toward a website's address is largely situational and depends on other trust-building factors, such as product reputation, recommendations, or the appearance of the website. The most frequently indicated situation in which respondents do not pay attention to the domain is when purchasing a product or service that is already well known and trusted (37.0%). This means that brand recognition and previous experience effectively replace domain analysis as a security indicator. A similar mechanism can be observed in the case of recommendations. Nearly one-quarter of respondents (23.9%) admit that they do not pay attention to the domain extension when a website has been recommended by a trusted person or institution. In such situations, social and reputational capital assumes the role of a security filter, although not always effectively.

The visual and functional aspects of a website also play an important role. The survey shows that 21.3% of respondents stop analysing the domain if the website appears professional and functions properly. Similarly, 19.9% do not check the website address when the published content, descriptions, or reviews inspire trust. This indicates that users are strongly influenced by aesthetics, usability, and so-called social signals, which reduce their vigilance toward the technical aspects of a website. This may create a significant security gap, particularly in the case of fraudulent websites impersonating legitimate services such as banks. It is noteworthy, however, that nearly one-fifth of respondents (19.8%) declare that they never omit checking the domain when shopping online. This group represents a strategy of consistent caution, in which the website address remains a constant element of risk assessment regardless of context.

The least frequently indicated situation in which respondents do not pay attention to the domain is when they arrive at a website through an advertisement or social media (13.6%). This suggests that although some users ignore the domain in such cases, for the majority this method of access triggers a need to verify the website address.

One possible reason is that advertisements and social media are socially perceived as potentially higher-risk environments.

Overall, these findings show that a domain extension functions as one of many heuristic indicators of trust. Its importance decreases when stronger reputational signals are present, such as a well-known brand, a recommendation, or a professional-looking website. From a research perspective, this confirms the existence of an “attention economy” in online consumer decision-making. Users do not always analyse every aspect of security; instead, they selectively rely on those signals that appear most convincing to them at a given moment.



The attention economy assumes that people’s attention is a limited resource that must be managed efficiently, much like other economic resources.²

- Online shopping is heavily dominated by large e-commerce platforms; the marketplace model has become the primary market standard.
- Brand-owned online stores remain important, but they operate in the shadow of major online platforms.
- Social commerce and sales conducted through social media play a supplementary role.
- The importance of a domain name in the decision-making process is context-dependent - its role decreases as familiarity with the brand, recommendations, and the professionalism of the website increase.
- A domain remains an element of brand image and a signal of security, but it is not the primary factor in situations where trust is already high.

Overall, the findings show that the modern consumer operates within a model of “relational and brand-based trust,” in which the domain extension becomes important mainly in situations of uncertainty or during the first interaction with a seller.

To What Extent Do You Agree with the Following Statements Regarding the Impact of Having a Website, the Type of Domain, and Social Media Presence on a Company’s Professionalism and Credibility?

Sample size: N = 1,000.

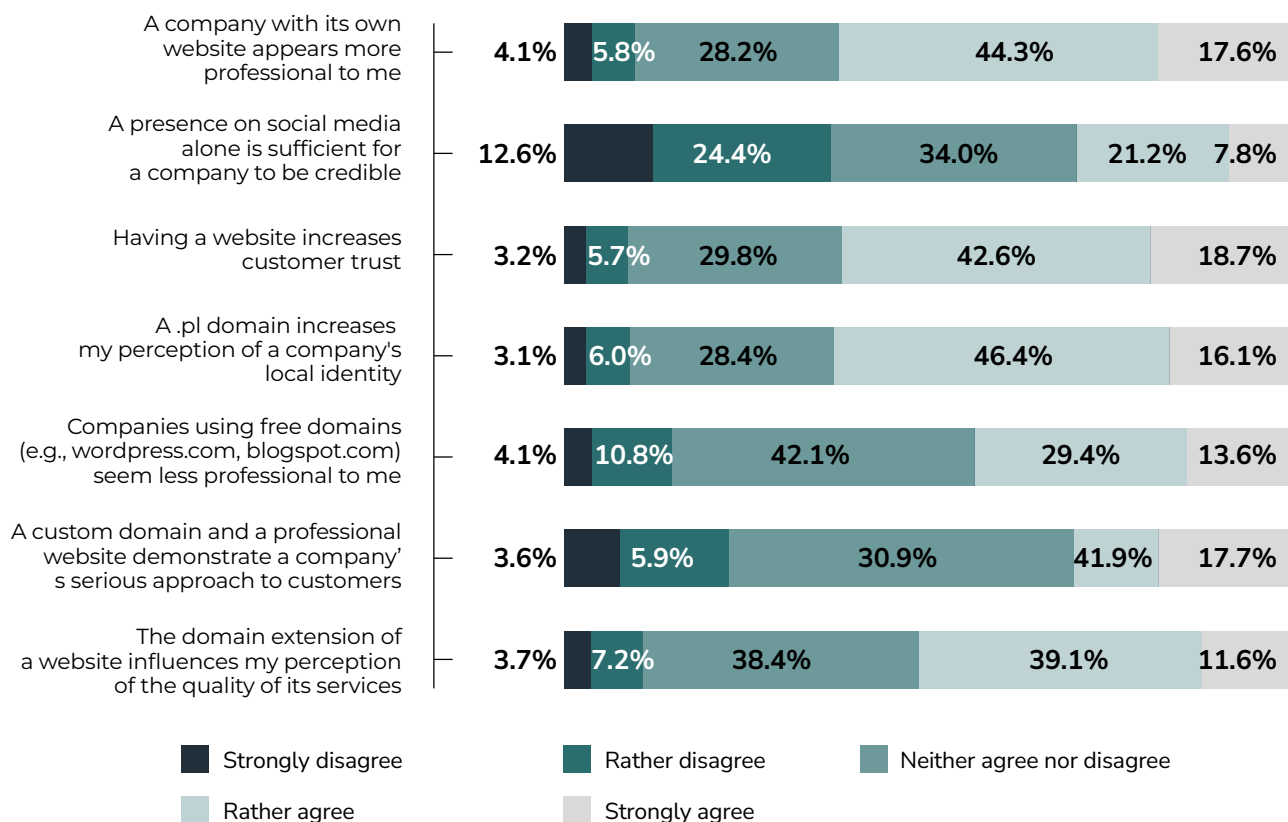
- 61.9% of respondents believe that a company that has its own website appears more professional.
- 62.5% of respondents believe that a .pl domain increases the perception of a company’s local identity.

² Davenport, T. H., Beck, J. C. (2001). *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

- 61.3% of respondents believe that having a website increases customer trust.
- 59.6% are of the opinion that having a dedicated domain name and a professional website demonstrates a company's serious approach to its customers.
- 50.7% believe that the domain extension in a website address influences perceptions of service quality.
- 43.0% believe that companies using free domains (e.g. .wordpress.com, .blogspot.com) appear less professional.
- 29.0% of respondents believe that a presence on social media alone is sufficient for a company to be considered credible.

To What Extent Do You Agree with the Following Statements?

Sample size: N = 1,000.



The survey results clearly show that, in public perception, having a dedicated website and an appropriate domain extension are regarded as important signals of professionalism, trustworthiness, and market presence. The strongest level of agreement concerns the statements that a company with its own website appears more professional and that having a website increases customer trust. In both cases, the combined share of “rather agree” and “strongly agree” responses exceeds 60%, while disagreement remains marginal. Similarly high levels of agreement are observed for the statement that a .pl domain strengthens the perception of a company's local identity. Respondents overwhelmingly recognise the symbolic significance of the national domain extension in communicating a company's connection to the domestic market.

Strong support is also observed for the belief that having a dedicated domain and a professional website reflects a serious approach to business. This confirms that a formal online presence is regarded as an important reputational asset. Respondents were more likely to agree than disagree with the statement that a domain extension influences the perception of a website, although in this case the proportion of neutral responses is noticeably higher. The results are almost identical to those concerning perceptions of professionalism, indicating a strong connection between these two concepts in respondents' minds. A website is viewed not only as an element of corporate image but also as a factor that reduces perceived risk.

More ambivalent attitudes are observed toward the belief that a company's presence on social media alone is sufficient to establish credibility. The majority of respondents do not consider social media presence by itself to be an adequate condition for credibility. This means that profiles on platforms such as Facebook or Instagram are not seen as substitutes for a formal website.

Similarly moderate, although generally positive, are opinions regarding companies that use free subdomains such as wordpress.com or blogspot.com. The high proportion of neutral responses indicates that respondents do not hold strong views on this issue. However, the greater level of agreement than disagreement suggests that such solutions do not automatically disqualify a company. They are, nevertheless, perceived as a weaker indicator of professionalism than having a dedicated domain.

These findings reveal a distinctive set of cultural norms operating within the digital sphere. A dedicated website and domain are treated as important symbols of seriousness, stability, and business credibility, whereas businesses relying exclusively on social media tend to generate greater scepticism. From a research perspective, these results confirm that a website address - and particularly its domain extension - serves not only a technical function but also a communicative and symbolic one in the way internet users evaluate companies.

- A dedicated website is a strong and unambiguous indicator of professionalism and an important factor in building trust.
- A presence on social media alone is not considered sufficient for a company to be regarded as credible.
- A .pl domain strengthens the perception of a company's local character and national identity.
- Free subdomains reduce perceptions of professionalism, although a significant proportion of respondents remain neutral on this issue.
- The domain extension influences perceptions of service quality for approximately half of respondents.

The survey results indicate that an internet domain, and in particular a dedicated national domain, constitutes an important element of a company's reputational capital and functions as a symbol of stability, professionalism, and market rootedness.

Summary

Online Shopping Preferences

Online shopping has become a permanent and widespread part of everyday life in Poland. As e-commerce continues to grow, demand for internet domains is increasing, as they help ensure credibility, strengthen brand recognition, and improve visibility in search engine results. As a result, the e-commerce sector is a significant driver of growth in the domain market.

- The largest share of respondents make purchases through online marketplaces such as Allegro and Amazon (40.2%). This indicates that consumers value convenience, a broad product selection, and trust in well-established platform brands.
- Online stores operated directly by brands are the second most popular sales channel (24.5%). This result highlights the importance of direct interaction with the manufacturer or seller.
- Purchases made through online auctions (12.0%) and classified advertisement platforms (8.5%) are considerably less common. Shopping via social media also accounts for only a small share (4.6%–4.4%).
- Only 5.1% of respondents declare that they do not shop online, indicating that the overwhelming majority of the surveyed population uses online channels at least to some extent.

Awareness of Internet Domains

- Domain extensions are most often ignored when the product is already well known and previously tested (37.0%). Recommendations from a trusted person or institution (23.9%) are another important factor reducing attention paid to the domain.
- Trust is also influenced by the appearance of a website and its content (descriptions, images, reviews), although to a lesser extent than product familiarity (21.3% and 19.9%, respectively).
- 19.8% of respondents declare that they always pay attention to the domain extension, indicating that for some users the website address is a key element in assessing credibility.

Perceptions of Professionalism and Credibility

- Having a dedicated website is clearly perceived as a sign of professionalism and a factor that increases trust. Around 60% of respondents agree or rather agree with this statement.
- The .pl domain is strongly associated with local identity: 62.5% of respondents agree or rather agree with this perception.
- Companies using free domains are viewed by a substantial proportion of respondents as less professional (43% agree or rather agree).
- A presence on social media alone is not considered sufficient to establish a company's credibility.
- The domain extension influences perceptions of service quality, although its impact is smaller than that of simply having a professional website.



Expert Commentary

Beata Orkwiszewska

BUSINESS UNIT MANAGING PARTNER AT HAVAS MEDIA

The results of this study landed on my desk at the perfect moment - I am just finishing work on a digital strategy for an FMCG brand, where exactly these issues are the subject of intense discussion. Therefore, I will admit honestly: I rarely read reports with such interest. The data are not only interesting in themselves, but above all have very practical implications for what I advise my clients every day.

I will start with the result that makes the greatest impression: more than 60% of respondents believe that a company with its own website appears more professional and inspires greater trust. This is not an abstract declaration - it is real information about how consumers perceive brands in the digital space. At a media agency, I often hear clients ask: "Is it worth investing in our own product website if we mainly sell through Allegro or Amazon?" The answer is always yes, and this study provides excellent justification for that answer. Presence on platforms is a necessity today - as confirmed by the data showing that as many as 40.2% of Poles prefer to shop there. But having your own website is an entirely different category: it is image, trust, and a signal of business seriousness.

I find the data concerning the role of the .pl domain particularly interesting. 62.5% of respondents indicate that the national extension strengthens the perception of a company's local identity. In my work with brands that want to build a position as a "Polish company with values," this result is simply invaluable. The .pl domain is not merely a technical address - it is an element of brand identity communication that consumers interpret intuitively. This is a rare case in which a decision that appears purely technical turns out to have a profound strategic dimension.

I also cannot overlook the issue of social media. Only 29% of respondents believe that a presence on social media alone is sufficient for a company to be considered credible - and although this result may surprise many managers who see the reach of their Instagram profiles, it does not surprise me. Social media profiles are excellent at generating traffic, engagement, and sales within a social commerce model, but if they are not supported by a solid website under a dedicated domain, the brand has a lower ceiling of trust, particularly in higher-risk categories such as finance, healthcare, and specialised services. At the same time, the marginal share of purchases made directly through social media demonstrates that, for most users, these platforms remain channels for inspiration, recommendations, and remarketing rather than the primary place where purchases are made. It is worth noting that an increasing number of social platforms now enable direct sales, and this channel will continue to grow. However, the data clearly show that even in social commerce, consumers expect a brand to have a "real" address on the internet.

One finding from the study particularly intrigues me: 37% of Poles admit that they do not pay attention to a domain extension when the brand is already well known to them. At first glance, this may seem like an innocent result, but it carries an important lesson for marketers. It means that investment in brand awareness effectively "releases" consumers from the need for detailed verification - trust in the brand transfers to trust in the website. In practice, this translates into a specific recommendation: build your brand consistently, maintain coherence across all communication channels, and digital credibility will follow as part of the package.

In conclusion, the study confirms what I have been telling clients for years, while providing additional hard evidence to support these arguments. A dedicated product website with a strong domain is not a cost - it is an investment in brand image that generates returns across every sales channel, both online and offline. And although shopping platforms will continue to dominate in terms of transaction volume, it is a brand's own online presence that determines whether consumers trust the brand or merely use its products and services.

Key Findings

1. Awareness and Importance of Internet Domains

- The majority of respondents consciously pay attention to a domain extension as an element in assessing a website's security and credibility. Depending on the situation, from 64.9% to more than 78% of respondents declare that they pay attention to the domain extension.
- Unusual domain extensions are more likely to arouse suspicion than to be perceived neutrally. The findings indicate a need for further user education in the area of digital security - particularly in the context of advertising and social media, where vigilance toward domains is at its lowest.

A domain extension functions as a signal of security, especially in situations that require trust (payments, personal data, and public services).

2. Image and Strength of the .pl Domain

- The .pl domain is unequivocally associated with Poland (83.2% of respondents) and enjoys a clearly positive image. It is most commonly associated with credibility, security, professionalism, and trust.
- The strong association with local identity enhances users' sense of security. The image of .pl is further reinforced by the presence of the largest internet portals, which contribute to building its reputation in a systematic way.
- Compared with .pl, the .com and .eu domains are also viewed positively, but their image is weaker.
- More than one-third of respondents expect the current importance of the .pl domain to remain unchanged, while more respondents anticipate an increase in its popularity than a decline.

The .pl domain is a strong national brand in the digital space, enjoying a high level of trust and representing genuine reputational capital for companies operating in the Polish market.

3. Professionalism and Corporate Credibility

- Having a dedicated website is clearly perceived as a sign of professionalism (approximately 60% of responses). Companies using free domains are regarded as less professional, and a presence on social media alone does not guarantee credibility.
- The domain extension influences perceptions of service quality, although its importance is lower than that of simply having a professional website.

A dedicated domain constitutes an important element in building image, trust, and the long-term credibility of a brand.

4. Online Shopping Behaviour

- Online shopping has become the norm - only 5.1% of respondents declare that they do not shop online. Large online marketplaces remain the dominant sales channel (40.2%), indicating the strong importance of convenience, a wide product assortment, and trust in well-known intermediary brands.
- Online stores operated by individual brands rank second (24.5%), demonstrating that a direct relationship with the manufacturer or seller remains important. Online auctions and classified advertisement platforms are less popular, while sales through social media account for only a marginal share.

Trust in a website and its recognisability play a key role in purchasing decisions. Presence within a professional and credible sales environment increases consumers' willingness to make a purchase.

5. Key Business and Communication Implications

- .pl as a trust-building tool – its strong association with local identity and security provides a competitive advantage in the domestic market.
- A professional domain instead of free solutions – investing in a dedicated domain strengthens perceptions of a company as stable and trustworthy.
- Education in digital security – there is scope to increase users' awareness of the role domains play in assessing the credibility of websites.
- A multichannel presence strategy – social media should support, rather than replace, a professional website.

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About the Publisher of the Report

NASK – National Research Institute (NASK – PIB) is a state research institute supervised by the Ministry of Digital Affairs. The Institute currently conducts multidimensional activities at the intersection of science, business, and public administration. One of NASK – NRI's principal areas of activity is ensuring a safe internet and protecting its users.

Under the provisions of the Act on the National Cybersecurity System, the Institute hosts CSIRT NASK - the Computer Security Incident Response Team - which is one of Poland's three national-level CSIRT teams. As part of its responsibilities, it receives, analyses, responds to, and coordinates reactions to incidents affecting the security of Poland's civilian cyberspace. These incidents are reported by operators of essential services, digital service providers, local government authorities, and private individuals. The team also handles incidents related to illegal content published online that threatens children's safety. In addition, it is responsible for monitoring online threats and the state of cybersecurity at both sectoral and national levels. NASK – NRI also contributes to the analytical and research-and-development foundations of the National Cybersecurity System.

The Institute conducts research and development activities aimed at creating solutions that increase the efficiency, reliability, and security of ICT networks and other complex networked systems. What distinguishes NASK – NRI from strictly commercial enterprises is its approach to developing solutions for the current and future needs of its clients. At NASK – NRI, researchers frame commercial problems within a scientific context and use scientific methods - often broader and more abstract - to achieve results that are not only satisfactory but also innovative. The Institute's main research focus is cybersecurity, understood as the detection of incidents, early warning, incident response, data acquisition, analysis, processing, and transfer, as well as the study of complex network systems, including IoT systems and mobile ad hoc networks. Research on biometric identity verification methods for secure services also occupies an important place in the Institute's activities.

NASK – NRI also operates the .pl Domain Registry and, as a telecommunications operator, provides innovative ICT solutions to financial institutions, businesses, public administration, and the scientific community. An important element of the Institute's mission is user education and the promotion of the information society, particularly with regard to protecting children and young people from risks associated with the use of new technologies. The Institute also implements projects that are crucial to Poland's digital transformation, including the National Educational Network (OSE) and the Electronic Document Management System (EZD RP).

NASK