



## The Domain is the Key

**Overview:** The Domain is no longer just a nice to have attribute for a B2B record. It's a must have. Profound asserts that the domain has emerged as *the single most important B2B attribute*. Because the domain is not just an attribute. It's a primary key. It's the key to the digital kingdom. This document references Profound's solution to comprehensively and accurately map domain to business records, but the purpose is not to tout our solution, but to convey the value and critical importance of mapping the domain to your B2B profiles enterprise wide.

**Problem:** Many large scale B2B databases do not have strong domain coverage. And those that do seldom have a way to verify that the domain is correctly mapped to their business records. Great expense has been poured into matching business records by company name and location, while very few resources have been committed to matching to domain.

**Solution:** Profound developed the leading enterprise grade domain appending solution: **DomainAppend**, a proprietary platform detailed here: [https://www.profound.net/files/dbi\\_ref.pdf](https://www.profound.net/files/dbi_ref.pdf)

**Definition:** First, let's properly define "domain" and distinguish it from other terms that are often used in it's place. When a business or an organization requires an Internet presence, they register an available domain with a domain registrar. A domain is the website or Internet location stripped of all HTML and markup attributes. Here are some examples of well known domains:

cisco.com  
microsoft.com  
nytimes.com

Domains are not to be confused with "URLs", "websites", "homepages", or "links". Here are some examples of Cisco URLs:

<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/index.html>  
<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/enterprise-networks/index.html>  
<https://partnersuccess.cisco.com/becomeapartner>  
<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/enterprise-networks/>

Homepages, websites, and links also include these:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/>  
<https://www.nytimes.com/section/world>

A URL refers to a specific page on a website and it is variable. The website [www.cisco.com](http://www.cisco.com) has tens of thousands of cisco.com URLs contained within it. Each unique page has it's own unique URL. Some websites with dynamic page generation can produce nearly infinite numbers of URLs. When looking at

all of the internal URLs, that is, those URLs pointing internally to cisco.com and not to some other external website, every URL contains precisely one **domain** that does not change: [cisco.com](https://www.cisco.com).

The domain, when mapped comprehensively and accurately across the enterprise's B2B data assets, enables the following benefits:

**Primary Digital Key:** The domain is a robust organizational level match key. While there are e.g. many ways to spell IBM, including: I.B.M, International Business Machines, IBM Inc., etc, there is only one [ibm.com](https://www.ibm.com). Matching B2B records in two or more separate databases using [ibm.com](https://www.ibm.com) produces a precise match. No match confidence scores are required when matching with keys such as the domain. These are exact irrefutable matches. Match confidence scores are required when matching by company name and address because the matching logic is "fuzzy" and there are numerous permutations of a company name and address.

**Self identifying:** Unlike other organizational identifiers made up of an integer or alpha numeric string, the domain conveys clear organizational level information without reference to another resource. In some cases, the domain conveys more precise organizational level information than the company name itself. Consider e.g. "ACME Manufacturing". [acmemfg.com](https://www.acmemfg.com) conveys more precision as a business identifier than the company name "ACME Manufacturing" because, in this case, there are many companies that share the same name, but only one of these companies owns the domain: [acmemfg.com](https://www.acmemfg.com).

**Open:** Domains are non-proprietary. No single company or organization controls the use and ownership of domains. While some top level domains, such as those ending in .gov, .mil, and .edu have restrictions, organizations are generally free to register any available domain for their use for a nominal fee (trademarks should be respected of course).

**Mitigate Vendor Lock-In:** Putting the substantial value of some proprietary numbering systems aside for a moment, once an organization deploys a proprietary business numbering system, it becomes increasingly difficult to extricate oneself from that system. Leveraging the domain across the enterprise provides a viable alternative to an organizational level identifier such as the Global Ultimate DUNS Number, as one example.

**Digital Transformation:** The domain is crucial for digital transformation data initiatives. The domain bridges digital data assets with traditional firmographics. Several use cases include:

- **Web Visitor ID:** Visitors to your website that do not register or log in leave their IP addresses in your server log files. These IP addresses can be mapped to domain and then linked to your domainified B2B database.
- **Web Form Intelligence:** Match email domains captured via webforms to your business records. The email domain can be used as the match key to fill in many fields in online webforms dramatically reducing the required fields a prospect or customer needs to fill in. Proven to increase form completions and online sales.
- **ABM:** Account Based Marketing combines digital advertising with B2B CRM solutions to create powerful ways to reach many employees of your target accounts.
- **MDM:** For Master Data Management initiatives, the domain has proven very useful as an account linkage key. In cases where fuzzy logic failed to identify two records of the same

company, the domain can be used to merge those records successfully under the same account.

**Enrichment:** The domain enables new levels of data enrichment to increase the value of your B2B database. Most B2B intent databases rely on the domain as the match key. As do technographic databases that can add significant value and insights into your existing customer and prospect profiles.

**Data maintenance:** Profound has developed methods to validate the company name and address in your database to the published locations on their websites and to track address and telephone number changes. Leveraging this capability, the domain (and the corresponding website) becomes an integral part of B2B data integrity operations. We call this Domaintenance™.

**Digital Risk Profiling:** Leverage the domain to Identify when a company is struggling or goes out of business because the website now returns a 404 or some other error. Profound tracks the health of the domains globally including numerous Cyber Signals mapped to hundreds of millions of domains for Cybersecurity Risk applications.

**Website Redirects:** Track when a website redirects to another site due to a merger or acquisition or a company name and domain name change. E.g. Before the ink was dry on Oracle's acquisition of Sun, [sun.com](http://sun.com) redirected to [oracle.com](http://oracle.com). Profound tracks redirects on an Internet scale basis.

**Prospecting Use Case:** Put on your sales rep hat for a moment. These companies responded to a direct mail campaign and marketing tasked you with qualifying the leads, and to set up appointments. Put aside for the moment that you have an incredible CRM system. What would you rather be presented with as a lead:

Acme Manufacturing	-or-	<a href="http://acmemfgco.com">acmemfgco.com</a>
4661 Monaco Street		
Denver, Colorado 80216		

In the first case, you will most likely run a search to find the domain to begin a quick bit of research. You plug in “acme manufacturing” into your favorite search engine and get multiple results. You click on the first result and look at the “contact us” page and try to visually confirm that the postal address matches your input record. You repeat this process until you find the correct domain. After reviewing three websites, you find the correct website, now you can review the site and call the prospect.

In the second case, you already have the domain, click on it and you know you are at the right company because the domain that marketing gave you is unique. No requirement to waste time searching for the correct website. The “contact us” page gives you all the information you need to reach out to this prospect. With just the domain provided as a lead, valuable time was saved.

Profound is not suggesting that the company name and location are unimportant. The location is vital for geographic segmentation, direct marketing, firmographic enrichment, matching to back end systems, and so on. In the ideal scenario, you have both the company name and address **and** the domain included in the business record, at a minimum.

**Domain branding:** Unless your business relies exclusively on foot traffic or you service an exclusive list of customers, you will have an online presence. Some companies choose to sell their product or service on Facebook, Amazon, eBay, Alibaba or some other platform. Everyone else will register a unique domain and build a website showcasing the business. Your unique domain becomes an essential brand and your website the business destination for your prospects and customers. To reinforce this brand, your company will assign email addresses to all of your employees using the same domain as the website.

**Sales reps require the prospect's domain:**

Professional sales reps that are reaching out to a business will review the website to qualify the business as a prospective lead and to gain insight into what the business does, their locations, the team, and other vital details. Providing your sales reps with business leads that do not contain the domain forces them to do an online search every single time. What if the business does not have a domain or it cannot be found? The sales rep will likely dismiss that lead as unqualified. If too many “leads” are discovered to have no website at all, the sales team may become discouraged with the entire lead generation process.

**Partner with Profound Networks for best in class domain coverage**

Profound Networks built the industry's leading Domain enrichment platform: **Domain Append**. Domain Append has been battle tested and trusted for over 7 years by numerous Fortune 50 enterprises including 6 of the Fortune 10 technology companies processing billions of B2B records. We have been repeatedly told by our clients that our **DomainAppend** platform provides the highest quality domain matching service both from an accuracy and coverage perspective and that it has been instrumental for solving numerous challenges. We look forward to working with you.