

# There's No Way You're Getting Past the Secretary



Ahh, domain names. The person who first decided to get [www.a.com](http://www.a.com) must think they're a genius. And they wouldn't be wrong, just maybe a little arrogant. Have you ever tried it, you know, going through the whole alphabet? a.com, b.com, etc., and then getting crazy with .net, .org, .gov, .edu, and the whole family of .dots. What you find is the companies who happened to employ some tech savvy geek at the time when the internet was just starting to get ridiculous. Most of these internet nerds have done their part as essentially all single, double, and now triple letter domain names are taken. You still can get some 3 letter ones, but they all fall under the category of undesirable, like, -a\_.com, which is just stupid. We at the **Harvard Satyrical Press** would never choose such a dumb domain name.

## The Editorator

As it is, it's fun to sit down with the internet and try and guess in advance who got certain domains. Most are not obvious, but they do make sense after you see them – for example e.com, owned by E! the entertainment channel, and g.com, now owned by Google's G-Mail. Presumably Google had to strong arm the previous owner, (one or both of Isaac Newton or Snoop Dogg? Sheeeiiiit!), since G-Mail and their 1GB of conveniently searchable, privacy-violating e-mail storage is a new thing. Others are less obvious. For example, p.com, which I stumbled upon by virtue of some (but not many) accidental keystrokes, links to sloan.org and is owned by the Alfred P. Sloan foundation, a trust that supports outstanding scientific and technical research. Evidently, whoever bought p.com was either clever enough to go with the subtle choice of the late Mr. Sloan's middle name (which is a bit of a stretch), or more likely this is just what Alfred et al. settled for, mumbling violently under their breath, as they discovered that aps.com was already taken by some stupid corporation that was much less important than them. For the record, aps.com is owned by a run of the mill power plant company based in the Southwestern United States, called, as you might have guessed, APS, which, as far as I can tell doesn't even stand for some acronym. I would have preferred **American Power Superheroes** or something like that, but that's just my opinion.

But anyway, I think you all can see where this is leading. In addition to our fabulous print issues, we at the **Harvard Satyrical Press** take great pride in our website, which is, as many of you know, where we began, as a Scientists/Nerd tribute to the Onion, ([www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com)), brilliantly called the Sci-Onion in a remarkable fit of creative inspiration – a line we have repeated in print many times in several equally remarkable fits of creative inspiration. Since our URL on the Harvard Computer Society server: <http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hsp/index.html> is a mouthful by anyone's standards, we originally decided to make things easier for our readers to find us by registering the wonderfully concise domain names [www.harvardstatoricalpress.com](http://www.harvardstatoricalpress.com) and [www.harvardsatiricalpress.com](http://www.harvardsatiricalpress.com) (Both spellings! Aren't we clever!) in addition to all the .net and .org variations. Although this is undoubtedly an improvement, and easy enough to remember, you still have to type 21 characters, not including the www or .com. As such, we took it upon ourselves this year to get serious with our domain names, and viola, we are now the new and improved [www.harvardsp.com](http://www.harvardsp.com) (not to mention .org, .net, and .info).



Our famed HSP door logo, chiseled from solid steel with a supersonic water jet doped with carbon dust, courtesy of "the Man" and the MIT Media Lab.

On the subject of .info domain names, it's worth a small sidebar. Recently, several domain registration sites all simultaneously began offering this free promotion of up to 25 free .info domain names if you were willing to sign up with them. The nature of the promotion tells us something about the product. Let's get serious. Nobody wants a fucking .info domain name. If you say, hey check out [harvardsp.info](http://harvardsp.info) (which, for the record, we did get, but it didn't work at first), the first thing that jumps into people's minds is, hey, I guess you couldn't get the .com one. People use to think the same thing about .net, but now, .info makes .net look like it's some kind of super pimp.

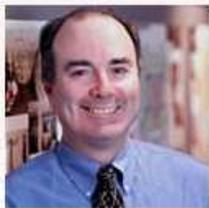
That stuff aside, although [harvardsp.com](http://harvardsp.com) is certainly a step up, there is one name we at the **Harvard Satyrical Press** covet. One name to rule them all. We covet the shit out of [hsp.com](http://hsp.com). And this is where the story gets interesting...

**Those .info domain names are pretty ghetto, dude. They totally .suck**

A simple web search nearly crushed our hopes outright. [hsp.com](http://hsp.com) had been legitimately purchased at some earlier date by **Hoskins, Scott, and Partners**, some sort of health facilities architecture firm. A wave of potential joy, however, coursed gingerly through my spine as I found that [hsp.com](http://hsp.com) quickly redirected me to another site, smma.com. As fate, and corporate machinations, would have it, Hoskins, Scott, and Partners are now **Symmes Maini & McKee** – a.k.a. SMMA/Hoskins Scott (the **A** is somehow unaccounted for). Would it be possible that [hsp.com](http://hsp.com) was no longer needed by them? Would they, out of the goodness of their corporate hearts, grace us with the care of their old, nay obsolete, domain name? Not being able to find a clear contact for their PR person or webmaster on their site, HSP decided to go straight to the CEO.



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Michael K. Powers, PE  
President, CEO

[m\\_powers@smma.com](mailto:m_powers@smma.com)

Mike's business philosophy is simple: focus on clients and insist on quality products and processes. His enthusiasm, team attitude, and inclusive leadership style complement his management and technical abilities perfectly.

Although, "Mike's business philosophy is simple: focus on clients", he certainly didn't focus on us as our e-mail (text below) drifted off into the abyss. To be fair, we're not exactly a client, since we have no plans to commission any new biomedical research facilities (at least not right now), and in all likelihood, our e-mail probably just got eaten by Mike's SPAM blocker.

Date: Sat, 4 Sep 2004 22:01:30 -0400 (EDT)  
From: The Harvard Satyrical Press <[hsp@hcs.harvard.edu](mailto:hsp@hcs.harvard.edu)>  
To: [m\\_powers@smma.com](mailto:m_powers@smma.com)  
Subject: [hsp.com](http://www.hsp.com)

Dear CEO Powers,

This is a somewhat strange request and may be better addressed by your public relations/web staff, but I was inquiring about the availability of the domain name [hsp.com](http://www.hsp.com) now that your firm has changed its name to SMMA and taken the smma.com domain name. I am the editor in chief of a newly formed student organization at Harvard University, the Harvard Satyrical Press (a comedy magazine, now at <http://www.harvardsatyricalpress.com>), hence our interest in [hsp.com](http://www.hsp.com). We are a poor student organization and could not offer much in terms of a financial transaction, however, your donation of the domain name to us could be a somewhat interesting public relations move on your part...donating a domain name you no longer need to a Harvard student group. Although not a high traffic site as of yet, we would also list you on our sponsors page. Of course, you may wish to keep [hsp.com](http://www.hsp.com) to redirect old traffic that has no longer adjusted to the name change. In any case, I simply wanted to look into the possibility. Please forward this to the relevant department of your company if it has arrived at the wrong inbox. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely, Andrew Friedman  
Editor in Chief, Harvard Satyrical Press  
[hsp@hcs.harvard.edu](mailto:hsp@hcs.harvard.edu)  
<http://www.harvardsatyricalpress.com>

As expected, we didn't get past the secretary, and maybe not even that far (SPAM blocker?). At this point, here's how we felt like our phantom conversation had gone, left to right, in graphical form. To be fair, the woman on the right is technically the Director of Human Resources, not the Secretary, but that's not important right now. In any case, we certainly hadn't gotten past her or anyone else.

Ahh, but the plot thickens! As geographic fate would have it, SMMA/Hoskins Scott's headquarters are located just down the street, on 1000 Massachusetts Avenue! We decided quickly that this serendipitously local coincidence would necessitate a face to face secretary-confronting field trip in the near future. As it happened, this journey did take place. 1000 Mass. Ave., a standard modern office structure is home to several corporate headquarters. For the record, this does not include the police headquarters, a possibility which was of some concern. The security guard made us sign in but was friendly enough. The sign in the lobby had indicated SMMA's 2<sup>nd</sup> floor location, but as we trekked around, finding only Cambridge College classrooms and seemingly abandoned doors with obscure corporate logos, we were beginning to consider the possibility that SMMA was really a front for some shady offshore corporation. Turns out they were just on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

Upon exiting the elevator, it was hard to miss the "are you sure you're on the right floor" looks, as some of these people probably hadn't seen kids up there in 30 years. And then it happened. We found the secretary. Turns out it was some guy, fairly young, and surprisingly, unbelievably nice. We told him our story and to our utmost surprise, he made a couple of quick calls as we stood there, and ultimately suggested we just talk to one of the partners! I don't know about you, but most of us had never even seen a partner, let alone met one. Two minutes later, the man who comes down is none other than Mr. Scott himself. We were astounded, flabbergasted, and shocked (although one smartass later suggested they had been set on talking to Mr. Hoskins). After hearing us out, Mr. Scott calmly and assuredly gave us his answer - **no** - but he was so nice about it, it's almost as if he said yes. As we suspected, 3 years after the merge, they still need [hsp.com](http://www.hsp.com) to redirect web traffic and match up with old printed material. Shot down! But somehow it still felt like a small victory.

In the end, although we did somehow manage to get past the secretary, and much farther up the corporate ladder than anyone would have guessed, our quest for [hsp.com](http://www.hsp.com) did not end with our coveted prize. For the foreseeable future, it now looks like we're just going to have to settle for [harvardsp.com](http://www.harvardsp.com). Even so, our consolation prize does have a certain charm when you sound out the letters. As our critics (and supporters) might argue, the web moniker is quite fitting.

-Sincerely, Andrew Friedman, Editor in Chief/Warrior King of Zamunda, [The Harvard Satyrical Press](http://www.harvardsp.com)

**HSP Please  
can we have  
HSP.com?**



**NO!**