



BRANDED USERNAME

WWW.BUILTBYPRO.COM

When it comes to having a successful brand online, the most important step is the first step.

Successful brands almost always starts with a great website, and a great website starts with a great domain.

Now, as someone who has over 20 years of experience building websites, I can tell you that you will never launch a website without a domain.

I'm sure you already know you need a domain but I want to save you from making one of the biggest mistakes you can make when creating a website.

Most people will have an idea and run to register the domain.

But, if you are building a brand, and this website and brand are important to you, please don't make that mistake.

Yeah, you need to go through and find a good domain. And don't worry, we will go over some of what makes a good domain in a little bit.

But if you skip the step to find your BU, **you're starting on the wrong foot.**

I know... what's a BU?

A BU is your Branded Username

A proper Branded Username is when all of your social media usernames, handles, and URLs are uniform and the same goes with your domain and email address

As a personal brand, my branded username is CJ@CJHALLOCK.COM

Now, you may say “That’s just your email” ... You’re right, it is my email but let me break down what makes it more than just my email ...

A Branded Username contains all parts of your public brand.

This includes the following:

Your Name

Your Social Media Handles/Username

Your Domain

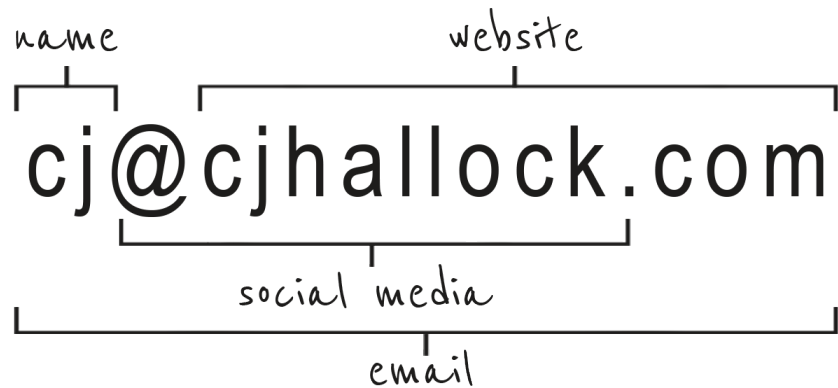
Your Email

If you look at it in that order, your BU starts with your name. This is where the importance of your own branded email address comes in. So it starts with your name... in this example it’s my initials which is what I go by ... CJ

Then as it goes into the Social Media handles and usernames you see that my social media is @cjhallock

Then, when you take away the @ sign, you see my domain is cjhallock.com

When you put it all together, you not only get your email, but you also get your Branded Username.



In this example, the "BASE" for the Branded Username is "cjhallowck". It is the main part of your domain and everything you're going to do online.

Your domain is important but you also have to have your URLs, handles, and usernames for social media and other digital platforms.

When it comes to creating your "base" B.U. this process can take some time. It's easy to get frustrated and use something that someone else is using but without finishing this step in its entirety, a business can fail before starting.

So be sure to take your time in this process and remember that your "base" can be whatever you would like it to be.

When you start finding what your base will be, **DO NOT FORGET THIS...**

K.I.S.S. - Keep It Short & Simple

Ideally the shorter the better but keep your character limit to under 15.

Some social media platforms will limit the length of a username to 15 characters so make sure you are under that.

If you have multiple words in your BU think about writing it out with pen and paper as well as typing it out and think about the process of telling people about it.

Is it easy to spell?

Is it easy to remember?

Think about those Jingles you heard growing up on the radio or tv as well as the taglines or slogans from those big companies that stick in your brain. I know there's a difference but you can use them as great examples for simplicity.

The next two tips may sound weird but over 20 years I have personally registered probably over 1000 different domains and found these two tips to be gold almost every time.

1. If your branded username has multiple words in it, do your best to not have the last letter of a word be the same as the first letter in the next. It normally isn't an issue in writing something up, but with usernames and domains, you can't have spaces so it can result in people going to the wrong website. It also can cause a tongue twister which isn't good for a brand.

2. Try not to use any words that are often misspelled or confused. For example, I wouldn't use your/you're or there/their/they're in your branded username. I would also try to stay away from anything like that.

When you are ready to start building your brand, you already know your domain is important but you also have to have your URLs, Handles, and usernames for social media.

In order to claim your Branded Username, the first thing you need to do is check availability for three key items.

Trademark Availability - This is a kill switch if it is taken. Don't play around with trademarks.

Domain Availability - I only recommend .com domains so if you can't get the dot com domain, move on & start over.

Social Media Availability - We're going to check multiple platforms but for now we'll lump all of them under social media.

And one more bonus. It's not 100% needed, but it is helpful if you have the Gmail address for your Branded Username as well ... for example, my base is cjhallock, so my Gmail is cjhallock@gmail.com.

There are some other reasons why it's good to have a Gmail account but we'll cover that in other trainings in the future.

When it comes to checking availability for the main three key items, you will need to spend some time on it.

A quick reminder before we move forward. You don't have to have your business name in your Branded Username. Legally, you do have to do certain things depending on your location, local laws and what you are doing on your website.

With that being said, here is a disclaimer, I am not an attorney and shouldn't be listened to for legal or financial advice, so please, when it comes to legal issues, trademarks, taxes, or anything like that, **ALWAYS SEEK PROFESSIONAL LEGAL COUNSEL**. Now that that's out of the way, remember that you can break down the brand to something easier to remember, and don't forget to try using abbreviations.

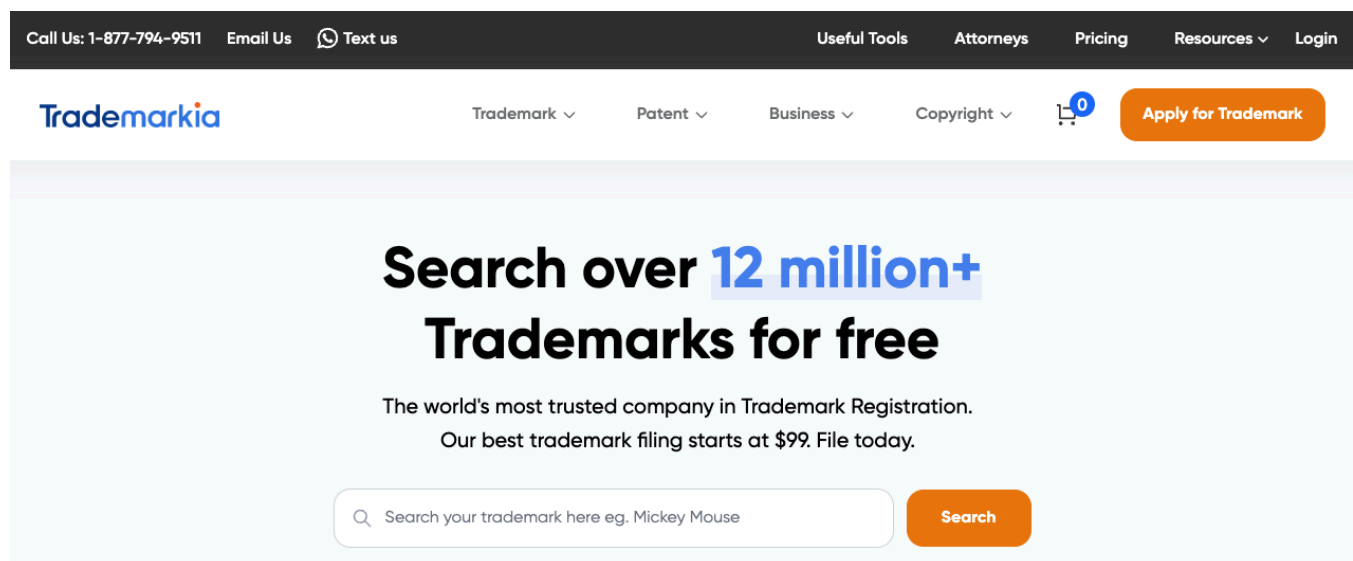
I recommend that you check everything in order of importance.

The first thing we are going to check is the **TRADEMARK AVAILABILITY**. We are going to use a free tool from **TRADEMARKIA** to search and make sure the base we want isn't already registered.

I recommend that you use TRADEMARKIA exclusively because it's really easy to do a trademark search.

If you want to do a full search, you can go to the **United States Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO)** and do searches there as well.

To search and see if your trademark is available, all you have to do is type in your base into the search field on their website.

The image shows the top section of the Trademarkia website. At the top is a dark navigation bar with links for 'Call Us: 1-877-794-9511', 'Email Us', 'Text us', 'Useful Tools', 'Attorneys', 'Pricing', 'Resources', and 'Login'. Below this is a white header with the 'Trademarkia' logo on the left and a navigation menu with 'Trademark', 'Patent', 'Business', and 'Copyright' on the right. A blue shopping cart icon with a '0' is next to the menu. An orange button labeled 'Apply for Trademark' is on the far right. The main content area has a light blue background with the text 'Search over 12 million+ Trademarks for free'. Below this is a sub-header: 'The world's most trusted company in Trademark Registration. Our best trademark filing starts at \$99. File today.' At the bottom is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search your trademark here eg. Mickey Mouse' and an orange 'Search' button.

Once you type in the base for your desired BU, click on search and from there you should see a list of any active trademarks.



In the following example, I searched for “Mickey Mouse” and you can tell by the screen shot that it is an “active trademark”.

Searches you might want to try: [Mickey Mouse*](#) [Mick*](#) [*use](#) [Mi*se](#)

Results for "Mickey Mouse"

1,773 Results Found



Mark	Details	Status	Class/Description
	MICKEY MOUSE Disney Enterprises, Inc. 87983586 13 Jun 2017	Live/Registered on 09 Feb 2021 14 Mar 2030	Cake decorations made of candy; candy; cookies; crackers; frozen meals...  Class 30

Please note the "Status" section. If it says "Live/Registered" then it's best to move on.

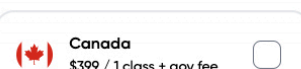
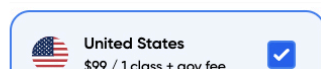
If the search doesn't bring back any "Live/Registered" trademarks, then it will let you know it may be available. If that is the case you should be able to move forward. That doesn't mean it's 100%. That means that as of the time of the search it's not pulling up. So you still will need to eventually get your BU base trademarked and make sure there isn't someone else in the early stages of building their brand and just haven't been given the trademark yet.

The example below will show you an example page on Trademarkia when it doesn't have anything showing in the search.

Searches you might want to try: [\[redacted\]](#) [\[redacted\]](#) [\[redacted\]](#)

The "[redacted]" Trademark may be available

Select the countries you want to protect this "[redacted]" trademark in



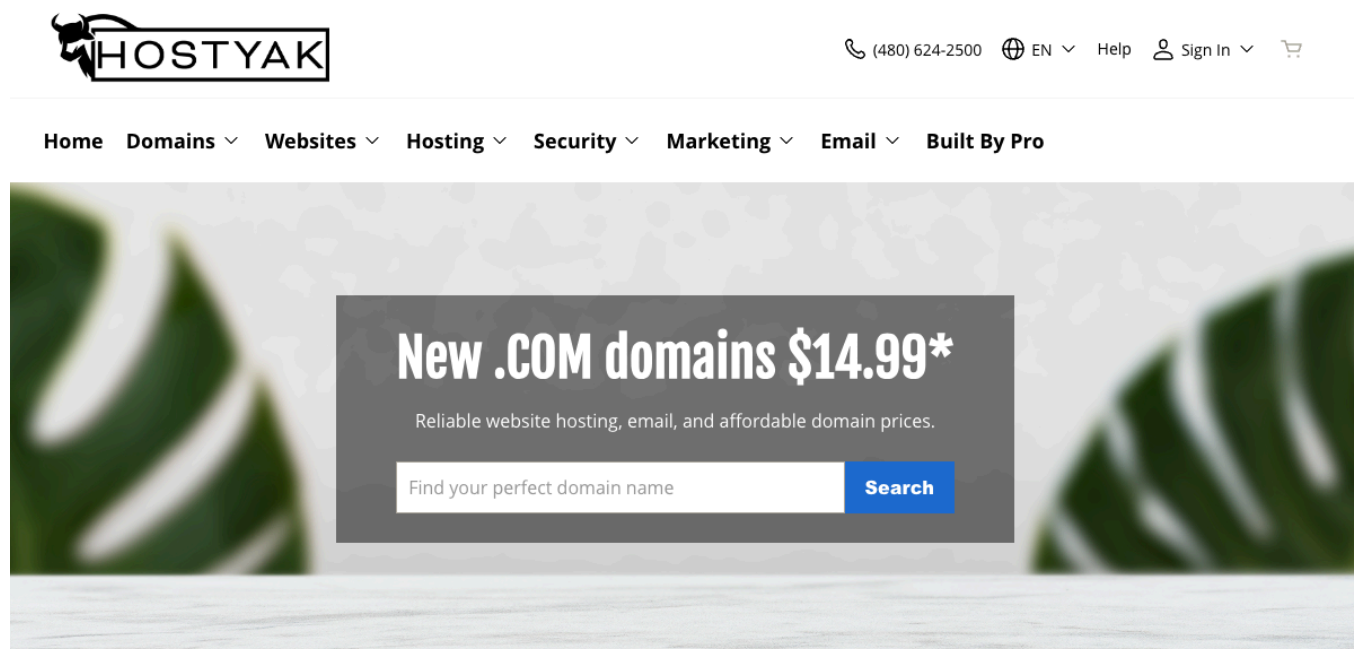
Once you finish your basic trademark search, and your desired “Brand” is not trademarked, you’re going to move forward & check the domain availability.

For this step, we are going to be using HostYak.

HostYak is a BuiltByPro brand. With the infrastructure of GoDaddy, we’ve been able to launch a competitor for the consumer to register domains at one of the lowest prices available online. Domains (.com) through HostYak can be registered for \$14.99.

To get started checking availability of our desired domain, we are going to start by going to HostYak.

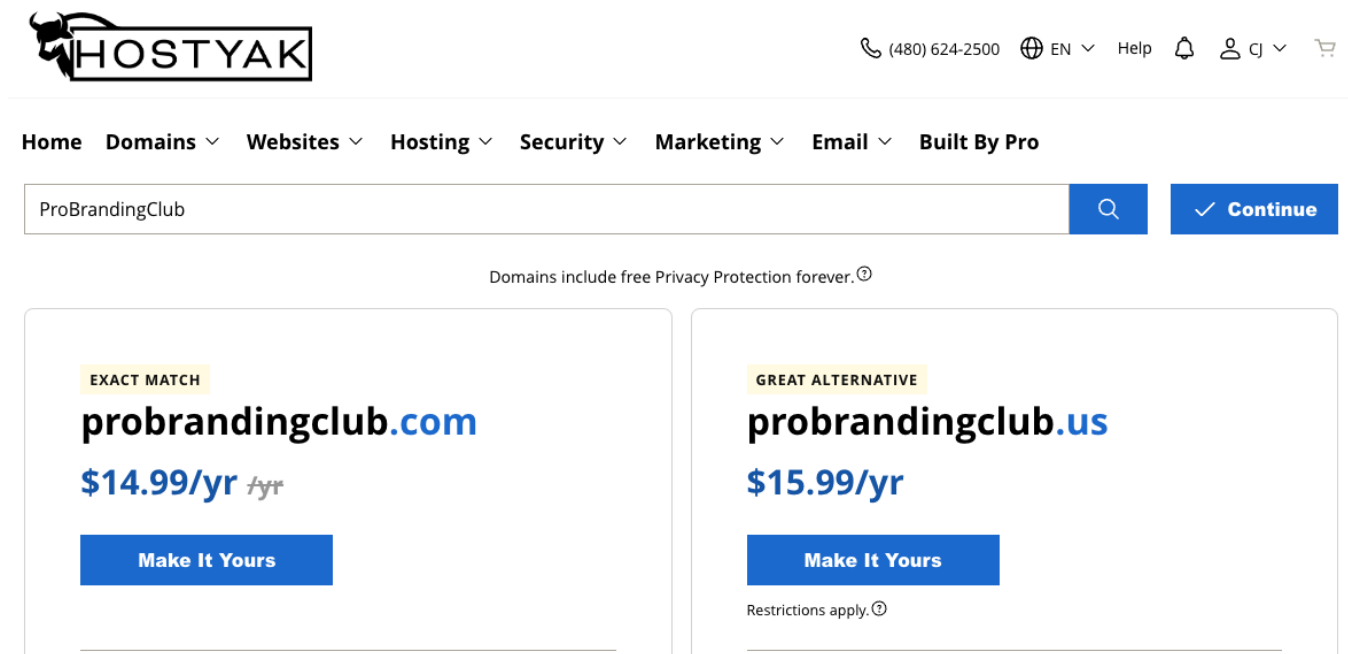
Similar to the trademark search on Trademarkia, once you land on HostYak, you will be able to type in your base on the homepage and search for your domain.



When you do a search for a domain there are two different ways a domain can be “available”. The first way, is that it is just available and you can move forward. The second way is if the domain is a premium domain. These “premium” domains can cost upwards of thousands of dollars and likely to have social media accounts which will

make the next step complicated, so if it is a premium domain, start over with a new base.

When you make the search and it is available to register at regular cost, you will see a page similar to the following example.



The screenshot shows the Hostyak website header with the logo and navigation links: Home, Domains, Websites, Hosting, Security, Marketing, Email, and Built By Pro. A search bar contains the text 'ProBrandingClub' with a search icon and a 'Continue' button. Below the search bar, a note states 'Domains include free Privacy Protection forever.' Two search results are displayed:

Result Type	Domain Name	Price	Action
EXACT MATCH	probrandingclub.com	\$14.99/yr <small>tyr</small>	Make It Yours
GREAT ALTERNATIVE	probrandingclub.us	\$15.99/yr	Make It Yours <small>Restrictions apply. ⓘ</small>

When you get this result with the desired base, you can “Make It Yours”. Then move forward with the social media section and check your base.

The way we’re going to search for social media username availability is by first going to a new tab, then go into the address bar and typing out the social media platform that you want to check.

For example, we'll start with facebook, so I'll type in <https://facebook.com> then after the .com add a forward slash then type in your desired username.

So I'll type it in as <https://facebook.com/yourbrandsname>

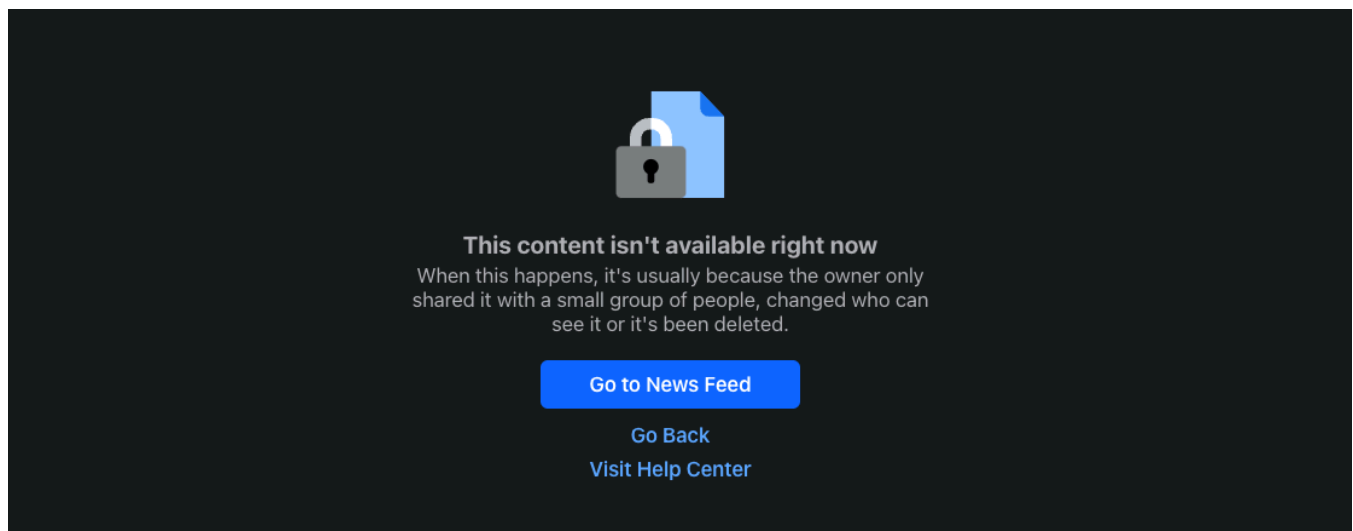
If you land on an actual Facebook page for another brand, scratch that name and start over.

The exact results we want when doing a hard search will be different on the different platforms.

The page you want to land on is a “Broken Link” style of page.

So as we go through each platform we’ll cover what you want to see.

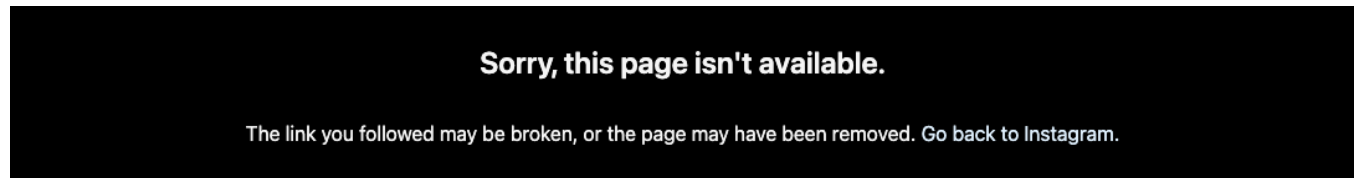
For **Facebook**, if the page is available, you will see something like this ...



Once you verify that Facebook is available, you’ll move on to the next platform.

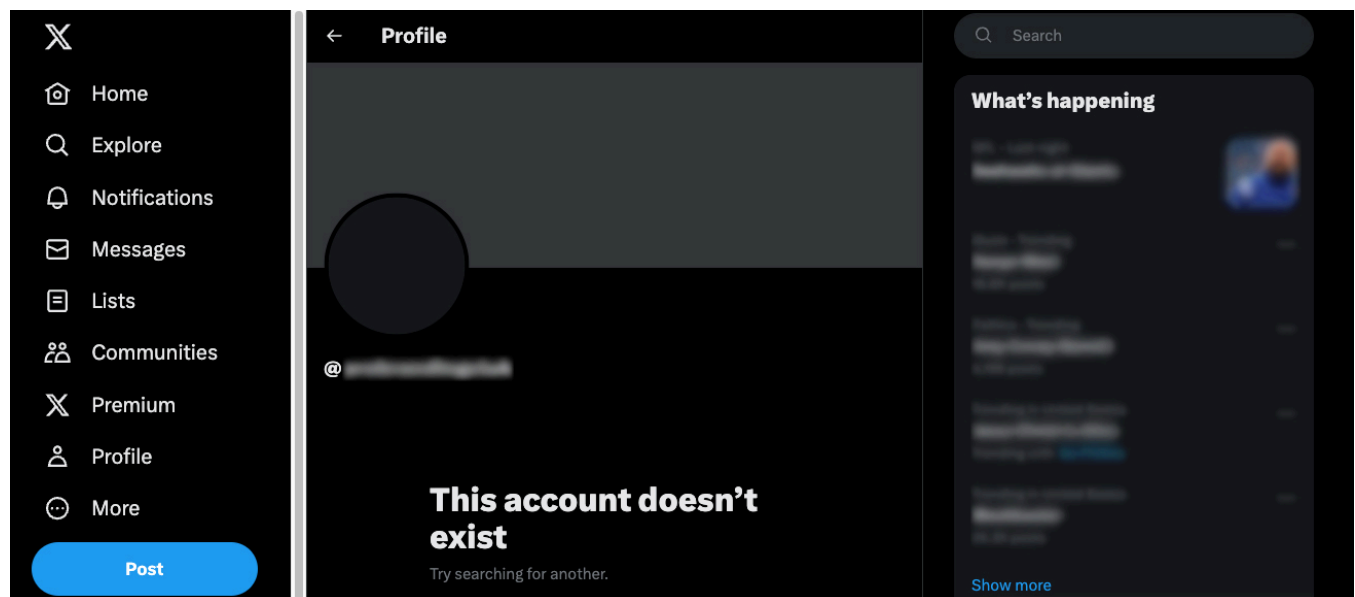
Since Facebook and Instagram are both under the Meta Umbrella, we’ll check Instagram next. At this point, since everything is already in the address bar, we’re just going to delete Facebook and type “Instagram” in its place, so that it now is <https://instagram.com/yourbrandsname>, then hit enter.

This is going to automatically do the same type of check. With Instagram, if the username you want is available, you will see something like this...



Moving forward we'll check X (Formerly known as Twitter) by doing the same thing, delete Instagram and type X in its place so it will now be <https://X.com/yourbrandsname>.

The result that you want to get when searching on "X" is the following.



Of course, there are a lot more social media platforms than four, but the only other platform we are going to check right now is TikTok.

I wanted to use TikTok because it is a great example of the URL being structured differently than other platforms. What I mean by that is, that the link to your profile includes the @ sign after the forward slash before your desired username. So the link in the address bar will be <https://tiktok.com/@yourbrandsname>.

With TikTok, the page you will land on if your username is available will be something like this ...



Couldn't find this account

Looking for videos? Try browsing our trending creators, hashtags, and sounds.

Now, if there are other platforms that you would like to check, just go to the platform and look at some profiles or pages and see what the link structure looks like. Most of the time, you can see how the links work by browsing the different social media platforms from a desktop computer.

Once you've done a hard check on the social media platforms, the next check is Gmail.

I've been part of the almost 2,000 people monthly trying to find a Gmail availability checker, and as of this moment, the best resource to do this is Emails Verified -> emailsverified.com/gmail-availability-checker/.

This tool is very easy to use.

Once you're there, type in your desired Branded Username and click "Check Availability"

The screenshot shows the EmailsVerified website's Gmail Username Availability Checker. The header includes the EmailsVerified logo and navigation links: Home, Free Tools, Articles, Reviews, and a green Contact us button. The main heading is "Gmail Username Availability Checker" in red. Below it, a text block explains the tool's purpose. A list of rules for Gmail usernames is provided in a light purple box. At the bottom, there is a text input field labeled "Username" and a green "Check Availability" button. A small Privacy - Terms link is visible in the bottom right corner.

EmailsVerified

Home Free Tools Articles Reviews Contact us

Gmail Username Availability Checker

Use our free tool to check if a gmail username is available for registration. Enter the username you would like to check and click the green button.

Gmail usernames must follow these rules:

- 6 characters minimum
- 30 characters maximum
- Allowed characters: Letters (a-z), numbers (0-9)
- Usernames with dots are treated the same as without them ⓘ

Username

[Privacy - Terms](#)

If it's available you'll get this success message that says "Username is available".

This screenshot shows the success message displayed after a username is found to be available. It features a green bar with the text "Username is available". Above this bar is a text input field containing a blurred username and a green "Check Availability" button.

Username is available

At this point, if you have found a Branded Username "Base" that DOES NOT HAVE AN ACTIVE TRADEMARK, IS AVAILABLE AS THE .COM DOMAIN, IS AVAILABLE ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS YOU PLAN TO USE, AND IS AVAILABLE AS A GMAIL ADDRESS, you can move forward with your Branded Username!

I hope this has been helpful.

Talk Soon,
CJ


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