



Urban Outfitters leverages Safenames Domain Portfolio management and Mark Protect services to manage rapid global expansion



Customer Challenge

When Keary McNew, Director of IT, joined Urban Outfitters in 2006, the organization had a very small domain portfolio and only three international domains. “Europe was identified as an area of growth, and we were going to need to register and manage hundreds of additional international domains,” said McNew. In light of this projection, he decided to stop managing domains in-house and contract a domain registrar to help with the international expansion.

By 2008, Urban Outfitters realized that the international domain registrar they had chosen was not meeting their needs—mainly because that company “lacked the level of personalized service required and billing was a disaster”. Additionally, McNew said, “we were beginning to have problems with international domains. The number of cease and desist orders was multiplying, the time to manage domains was increasing exponentially, and the legal fees were becoming too costly.”

At that point McNew and his colleagues decided it was time to hire a new partner for international domain management—one that could provide a wider range of services. McNew explained, “What we knew we needed at that point was a trusted advisor to help us manage all things domain related.”

Why Urban Outfitters selected Safenames

The Urban Outfitters team evaluated several potential partners. Whichever company they chose would have to be able to provide the breadth and quality of services required to handle all aspects of managing their international domain portfolio. Additionally, they had to offer an online portal to simplify the domain management process, and working in partnership with Urban Outfitters to meet specific business needs would be imperative. According to McNew, “international domain management is a three-way relationship between our marketing, technical, and legal teams. Our partner has to sit in the middle of that triangle, and it can be quite complex. We wanted to be sure we hired the right partner to work with us this time because we didn’t want to go through the process again.” The partner would have to understand our business requirements, our technical needs, and possess the experience and expertise to hit the ground running and make our lives easier. We found that in Safenames.”

“We would not have met our aggressive international expansion goals without Safenames. Just trying to get one international domain registered before partnering with Safenames could take weeks or months. Now, with Safenames we are able to register hundreds of domains at once and much faster.”

Keary McNew – Director of IT, Urban Outfitters

About Urban Outfitters

Urban Outfitters is a specialty apparel retailer operating five brands: Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie, Free People, Terrain and BHLDN.

Manage a separate online, direct-to-consumer channel for each brand

Own and operate more than 350 physical stores throughout North America and Europe

Maintain 300 international domains as part of global, online sales and marketing channel

17,000 employees worldwide

The Safenames Solution

From the onset Urban Outfitters knew that Safenames was the right fit given that they specialize in corporate domain portfolio management and online trademark infringement protection services. The comprehensive suite of customizable web based products and services, coupled with elite expert sales and customer support teams, empowers legal, operations and marketing departments to efficiently manage and protect domain names, trademarks, and online brand identity.

Urban Outfitters has also recently started using the Safenames Mark Protect service to address trademark infringement activities, and McNew is “very excited about this.” Mark Protect includes trademark infringement defense and recovery tools along with domain dispute consultation.

From the beginning Safenames worked closely with Urban Outfitters to ensure a smooth transition. Setting up their account in the IDP, transferring all of their existing domains, and registering additional domains was a painless process. “Everything went very quickly and smoothly,” said McNew. “I expected 10%–15% of this to fall through the cracks, but nothing did. That is a testament to the Safenames team.”

Safenames worked with Urban Outfitters to tailor a solution, which included:

- ✓ Registration services—acquisition, registration, and renewal
- ✓ Local Contact (Agency) Services
- ✓ Domain Recovery services (UDRPs)
- ✓ International Domain Management Portal (IDP)
- ✓ Acquisition of Secondary Market Domains
- ✓ Online Brand Monitoring
- ✓ SSL Certificate Purchases and Renewal Management

Value

Partnering with Safenames enabled Urban Outfitters to expand their global online presence and helped them create a process for ongoing, efficient domain management and execution of new brand launches. Safenames also provided guidance to ensure that Urban Outfitters’ brand protection domains were directed to the proper site to maximize web traffic.



Streamlined operations—Prior to partnering with Safenames the process of registering and managing international domains was cumbersome. By outsourcing this work to Safenames, the level of effort required by Urban Outfitters’ employees has decreased significantly, freeing them up to work on other critical projects. “Streamlining operations was a big win, not just for me but for our legal team as well. Registering an international domain can take up to six weeks, and our domains were scattered across multiple registrars. It was a huge mess. And, brand managers now have better visibility into all of their domains. Now we’re armed with more accurate and timely information, which makes running the business much easier.”



Reduced internal costs—Inherent to streamlining operations is reduced operational costs. “Managing domains properly takes a dedicated team of professionals. Using Safenames—essentially as an extension of our organization—has reduced operational overhead costs for both the IT and legal departments, especially legal costs.”



Faster time to-market—The IT organization is now much more nimble and better positioned to support the company’s international growth strategy by ensuring that the proper domains are available at all times. “We used to find out only a couple of weeks before launching in a new country, and then scrambled to register the necessary domains in time, which was often a challenge. Now we have an international domain registration strategy and go after the right domains well in advance, and proactively. This process also includes legal efforts that allow us to reclaim cyber squatted domains. Safenames helped us define this strategy, and it is has worked out very well.”



Brand protection—Urban Outfitters relies heavily on Safenames to protect their online brand and reputation. Safenames uses all available technical and legal means to combat cyber squatting, inappropriate redirects, and trademark infringements. “There are cases of web traffic being diverted and other piracy activities. Eliminating these threats is hugely beneficial to us and our channel partners. We don’t want the wrong messaging or brand image being presented to our customers, and Safenames keeps this from happening. It’s been a win-win for us.”