

**INTERNET BRANDING: EDUCAUSE AND THE DOMAIN NAME SYSTEM**

from research conducted for the dissertation

**SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST? THE REBRANDING  
OF WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION**

*this section was eliminated from the final version of Chapter 4*

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# **INTERNET BRANDING: EDUCAUSE AND THE DOMAIN NAME SYSTEM**

## **The .Edu Top-Level Domain**

When the Domain Name System (DNS) was introduced in 1984, no one expected its effect as a marketing tool for commercial ventures let alone for the institutions that helped originate the system. The idea behind the DNS was to allow connectivity to computers with an easy to remember name that was translated by a computer called a domain name server into a specific Internet Protocol (IP) address (e.g. 204.126.254.3) that uniquely pointed to one specific computer.

IP address are constructed of four series of numbers each separated by a period. Each series (called an octet) has a possible range from 0 to 255; however, 0 and 255 are not used as these numbers are reserved. Therefore, each octet has 254 possibilities and therefore over 4.16 billion possible combinations (Cisco, 1997). Johnson (2002) compared IP address to telephone numbers or street addresses that are difficult to remember. Reducing the IP address to a recognizable name allowed for easy name recognition along a series of predetermined top-level domains (TLDs) that included .edu for educational institutions (Salamon, 2007; Zakon, 2006).

The first registered domain name (symbolics.com) occurred on March 15, 1985 and was within the commercial TLD sector (.com). Within six weeks, educational institutions followed suit. Initial registration of educational domains occurred on April 24, 1985 and included the following institutions: Carnegie Mellon University (cmu.edu), Purdue University (purdue.edu), Rice University (rice.edu), Rutgers University (rutgers.edu), University of California at Berkeley (berkeley.edu), and University of

California at Los Angeles (ucla.edu). Within a month, Massachusetts Institute of Technology registered mit.edu on May 23, 1985 (Zakon, 2006).

During the early days of the system and prior to the introduction of the World Wide Web in 1989, Internet usage was largely functioned in the realm of file transfer protocol (FTP), email, bulletin board services, and USENET news groups. Other popular protocols in the pre and early World Wide Web days included GOPHER, TELNET, Wide Area Information Service (WAIS), Internet Relay Chat (IRC), and several near extinct search mechanisms (Archie for FTP, and Veronica and Jughead for GOPHER). Although still available to a limited extent, these protocols and activities are largely a distant memory or completely unknown for most of today's Internet users (Owen, Owston, and Dickie, 1995; Zeltser, 1995). Educators were largely responsible for creating and managing many of these early protocols and services.

With the development of the World Wide Web and the related technologies of hypertext mark-up language (HTML) and the graphical user interface (GUI) or web browser, the common practice was to name the web server as "www" so to distinguish it ("www.school.edu") from the entity's GOPHER server "gopher.school.edu," mail server "mail.school.edu," and other machines with access to the Internet. The "www" naming schema for the primary web server, while not required, is a practice that has continued to the present (Brain, 2007). Commercial activity via the World Wide Web began in 1992 (Johnson, 2002).

As registrations occurred, many types of institutions began choosing the .edu top-level domain. By 1993, it became obvious that as high schools, community colleges, technical schools, and foreign educational institutions registered .edu domains,

management of the TLD was becoming difficult. It was decided to limit the .edu domain to accredited four-year and graduate colleges and universities in the United States. Institutions were to have only one .edu domain. The only exception to this rule was separately governed branch campuses that could qualify for their own domain name. All other U.S. educational institutions were to be registered in the .us domain and entities outside the U.S. were registered by the top-level domain of their country of origin (Cooper & Postel, 1993).

Table 1  
*Non-qualifying grandfathered .edu domain names.*

<b>Type of Entity*</b>	<b>Number</b>
Academies	Over 100**
Networks	40
Public Schools (Elementary, Middle, Jr. High, & High Schools)	33
School Districts & Boards	25
Libraries	9
Museums	7
Military Schools (private secondary schools & not military colleges)	6
Preparatory Schools	6
Vocational Technical Schools	5
Christian Schools	3
Home Study School Agencies	1
Parent-Teacher Associations	1

\*unable to ascertain the number of international .edu registrants as "Whois" does not permit locality searches.

\*\*"Whois" returns only a maximum of 100 search returns, Source: ".Edu Domain Whois Lookup" (2007).

All existing institutional registrations, despite type or location, were grandfathered and their domain names continued as .edu domains (Cooper & Postel, 1993). Table 1 provides the approximate number of pre-1993 grandfathered .edu domains by categories that presently exist. Eventually, community colleges, higher education consortia, statewide systems, and national and specialty accredited institutions were permitted to register an .edu domain. This occurred when EDUCAUSE became the .edu registrar on October 29, 2001 (Luker, 2001; "Policy Information," 2006).

## **West Virginia and the .Edu Top-Level Domain**

### ***WVNET***

In West Virginia, the first .edu domain was registered to WVNET (wvnet.edu) in Morgantown on March 28, 1988 (“Whois Lookup: wvnet.edu,” 2007). Created in 1975, WVNET (2006) serves as the central computing agency for higher education and other state agencies throughout West Virginia. A number of private colleges have also used the services of WVNET and these have included Alderson Broaddus College, Bethany College, Davis and Elkins College, and Salem International University (Rodenhouse, 1996). As of 2000, WVNET has reported to the Higher Education Policy Commission (WVNET, 2006).

For a number of years, WVNET provided web hosting for the State’s colleges and some private colleges under subdomains such as concord.wvnet.edu, shepherd.wvnet.edu, and dne.wvnet.edu (Davis & Elkins) (Rodenhouse, 1996). Prior to web page hosting, the original subdomains assigned to these schools for email were unwieldy by today’s standards (e.g., ccvms.wvnet.edu for Concord and scvax.wvnet.edu for Shepherd) (“Google search for wvnet.edu & 1992,” 2007). WVNET did not begin registering institutional domains until 1992. Even at that, only four institutional domains for public institutions existed until 1998 (“Edu Domain Whois Lookup,” 2007; Rodenhouse, 1996).

### ***First institutional domains***

Ironically, the first four-year institutional domain name that was registered in West Virginia was the last to be implemented into service. Bluefieldstate.edu was registered on January 30, 1992, but the institution did not begin using the domain until

2002. The subdomain bluefield.wvnet.edu was used up through summer 2002 (“Internet Archive of bluefield.wvnet.edu,” 2007; “Internet Archive of www.bluefieldstate.edu,” 2007; “Whois Lookup: bluefieldstate.edu,” 2007). Table 2 provides a list of the first 10 institutional .edu domain names registered in behalf of West Virginia schools. A listing of all West Virginia current and expired .edu domain names can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2  
*The first 10 institutional .edu domains registered in West Virginia*

DOMAIN NAME	ENTITY	REGISTERED	STATUS
bluefieldstate.edu	Bluefield State College	January 30, 1992	Active
wvu.edu	West Virginia University	May 28, 1992	Active
wjc.edu	Wheeling Jesuit College	August 5, 1992	Expired 1997
nttc.edu	National Technology Transfer Center (Wheeling Jesuit)	August 19, 1992	Active
marshall.edu	Marshall University	August 24, 1993	Active
cotf.edu	Classroom of the Future (Wheeling Jesuit)	April 21, 1994	Active
wvgc.edu	West Virginia Graduate College	May 3, 1994	Expired 2007*
wvwc.edu	West Virginia Wesleyan College	October 20, 1994	Active
ab.edu	Alderson Broaddus College	April 25, 1995	Active
cwv.edu	The College of West Virginia	May 5, 1995	Active & Redirects

\*Marshall University retired the wvgc.edu domain in 1999; however, the domain remained registered until February 2007  
 Sources: “EDUCAUSE: Edu Domain Whois Lookup,” 2007; “Internet Archive,” 2007; “Who.is: Domain Information, 2007).

### *Grandfathered domains*

Up until the time that EDUCAUSE began managing the .edu domain system, several anomalies occurred with domain registration within West Virginia. WVNET’s wvnet.edu was one of these as it was not an institution. While EDUCAUSE’s rules are somewhat relaxed, WVNET falls into a gray area and may or may not qualify under today’s standards. As it was registered prior to 1993, the domain was grandfathered as long as it was renewed periodically.

Another area that would not be permitted today are multiple domains operated by a single institution. Currently, Wheeling Jesuit hosts four .edu domains: wju.edu (the schools primary web server), nttc.edu (National Technology Transfer Center), cotf.edu

(Classroom of the Future), and cet.edu (Center for Educational Technologies). Under the current regulations, Wheeling Jesuit would have only been able to have one domain name. This is despite the foci of these various centers located on the WJU campus. One of these domains (nttc.edu) was registered prior to the rule changes in 1993 and wju.edu (registered in 1996) replaced the earlier wjc.edu after the school's name change ("Whois Lookup: wju.edu, nttc.edu, cotf.edu, & cet.edu" 2007; "Who.is Domain Information: wjc.edu," 2007).

After 1993, only accredited four-years institutions were permitted the opportunity to register a .edu domain; however, some institutions managed to register a domain against the standards that had been set. Bluefield College of Evangelism, an Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ preacher training school, was able to convince Network Solutions (the registrar at the time) to allow a registration in the .edu domain in 1999 ("Our History," 2005; "Whois Lookup: bce.edu," 2007).

No longer located in West Virginia, the school moved to Wytheville, Virginia and changed its name to Blue Ridge College of Evangelism in June 2003 ("Our History, 2005). Although the name change occurred in June 2003, the web site continued to list the former name up until January 7, 2005 when the institution finally updated its own web site ("Internet Archive for bce.edu," 2007). Although the school claims accreditation through the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and the Church of Christ (a cappella), neither fellowship has a formalized organization or structure and therefore do not "officially" endorse any person or organization (Mead, Hill, & Atwood, 2001; "Status," 2005). The U.S. Department of Education (2007) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2006) do not recognize either group as sanctioned accreditation bodies.

The school remains unaccredited and continues to use the bce.edu domain name under a grandfathered provision.

With the change in names, several schools registered new domains that operated simultaneously with the original domain for a period. Although its name change occurred in May 1996, Wheeling Jesuit University's current domain of wju.edu was registered August 18, 1996 ("Whois Lookup: wju.edu," 2007). The former domain (wjc.edu) was retired in February 1998 ("Internet Archive for wjc.edu," 2007). When Marshall University merged with West Virginia Graduate College on July 1, 1997 to form Marshall University Graduate College, Marshall registered the new domain (mugc.edu) on June 6, 1997 ("Whois Lookup: mugc.edu & wvgc.edu," 2006).

Both wvgc.edu and mugc.edu resolved to the same web site and were retired in late spring or early summer 1999 ("Internet Archive for mugc.edu & wvgc.edu," 2006). Although not used since 1999, Marshall University continued to renew the domains until summer 2006 (for mugc.edu) and February 2007 (for wvgc.edu) ("Dropped Domain Names," 2007). Had the institution continued to renew both domains, they could have done so in perpetuity as both were grandfathered when EDUCAUSE became the .edu registrar in 2001.

Another grandfathered domain that has continued with renewals was The College of West Virginia's cwv.edu. The school was permitted to operate its older domain and the newer domain (mountainstate.edu) to facilitate the changing of school's name. Registration of the mountainstate.edu domain occurred eight months before the official name change and, as one administrator remembered, "this helped facilitate to the move to

our new identity as we began to use it in advertising after the name change announcement was made in January 2001.”

Following registration of the domain, all pages on the website were available through either domain up through June 2003. Currently, cwv.edu resolves only to the Mountain State home page (“Internet Archive for cwv.edu,” 2007). Because mountainstate.edu was registered through Network Solutions in 2000, it was permitted to operate both domains as long as both continue to be renewed (Whois Lookup: mountainstate.edu, 2007). According to EDUCAUSE, “Institutions and organizations with .edu domains prior to October 2001 will be allowed to retain those domains so long as they maintain proper administrative control” (n.d., ¶ 11).

### ***Universities post EDUCAUSE***

The five most recently rebranded institutions in West Virginia had different experiences with the domain name system. For Concord and Shepherd, the transition to university status was the least intrusive of all of the schools that became universities neither had to change domain names. Although both schools initial web presence was with WVNET subdomains (concord.wvnet.edu and shepherd.wvnet.edu), the individual domains of concord.edu and shepherd.edu were registered in 1998. Since the domains were generic to the type of institution, no adjustment was necessary (“Whois Lookup, concord.edu & shepherd.edu” 2007).

This was not the case for Fairmont State College and West Virginia State College. As with other public institutions in the state, Fairmont’s first web site utilized a WVNET subdomain. Fairmont’s initial domain was fscvax.wvnet.edu was used primarily for email

services (“Google search for wvnet.edu & 1992,” 2007). In about 1995, the subdomain fairmont.wvnet.edu became the web domain for the school (Rodenhouse, 1996).

On October 1, 1998, the institution registered fscwv.edu and began transitioning its web presence to the new domain. In anticipation of the move to university status, Fairmont State registered fairmontstate.edu on November 19, 2003 under the auspices of Fairmont State Community and Technical College. The registration still bears this name, however, the address has always pointed to a web page jointly operated by the University and Community College. Fairmont State continues to operate fscwv.edu and registration data lists Fairmont State College as the domain’s operator (“Internet Archive for fairmonstate.edu,” 2007; “Whois Lookup: fairmontstate.edu & fscwv.edu,” 2007). Up through December 1994, the older and new domains were used interchangeably; however, the fscwv.edu domain began redirecting to the new domain at that time (“Internet Archive for fscwv.edu,” 2007).

According to Michael Bestul, Fairmont State University Chief Information Officer, “Keeping the fscwv.edu domain was necessary for us as many systems were in place that use the old domain and it was necessary to retain it” (Personal communication, October 16, 2007). As to EDUCAUSE allowing only one institutional domain, Bestul illustrated his personal feelings regarding EDUCAUSE’s regulations,

It is definitely not true that EDUCAUSE only allows one domain per school. I can think of numerous examples of schools having more than one domain name. As long as you are willing to pay for the renewal, they will renew the domain. The bigger problem, as I see it, is that EDUCAUSE has allowed fraudulent institutions to have an .edu domain.

They have allowed unaccredited schools and diploma mills to have an .edu address and I have approached them about this, but they don't do anything.

I see EDUCAUSE as a weak police force. (Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

Although he is the domain's current administrator, Bestul was not involved in the initial registration of the fairmontstate.edu. He speculated that perhaps the initiative to separate the component community colleges from their four-year institutions precipitated the community college's registration of the domain. Asked if Pierpont CTC will register its own domain, Bestul replied, "The community college is back under the Fairmont State University umbrella and unless the Legislature or the Community and Technical College Council requires the school to have a separate domain name, there are no plans at the present to do this" (Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

Similar to Fairmont State, West Virginia State College operated initially along a WVNET subdomain of wvsc.wvnet.edu (Rodenhouse, 1996). It registered its own domain before most of the other state colleges at the time on October 31, 1997 ("Who.is Domain Information: wvsc.edu," 2007). It is interesting to note that West Virginia's two historically black colleges, Bluefield State and West Virginia State, were the first two schools under the jurisdiction of the State College System Board of Directors (College System) to register their own institutional domain names ("Whois Lookup, bluefieldstate.edu," 2007).

Following the approval of "university status," West Virginia State registered the wvstateu.edu domain name on April 23, 2004. The wvsc.edu domain continued to resolve to the institution's web page; however, complete rebranding of the site did not occur until

June 9, 2004. While the WV State University name was in use, the institutional banner graphics still utilized the former college name. A transition to the new domain began in July 2004 when messages appeared on the site announcing the new domain (“Internet Archive for wvsc.edu,” 2007). During the transition period, the wvsc.edu domain mirrored the wvstateu.edu domain. Although pointing to the same pages, the older domain never resolved to the new site address. The former domain was retired in April 2005 and, according to Director of Computer Services Robert Huston, this occurred under the regulations enforced by EDUCAUSE:

EDUCAUSE will not allow an institution to have more than one domain name (although some institutions do have more than one on a grandfathered basis). They will allow a change, and in our case, they allowed a period where both names were in use to facilitate the change of names. But they put a definite limit on the time allowed for both names to be in use. There were no issues with the new domain. (Robert Huston, Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

At Ohio Valley College, its board recognized that it needed a presence on the web; therefore, a basic web site of two or three pages was constructed and hosted off site. According to Charles Gibbs, Director of Administrative Services, the desired domain ovc.edu was not available and the school opted for ovcollege.edu (Personal communication, October 16, 2007). Although exact registration details are not currently known, it is estimated that the site began during the 1996 calendar year (Appalachian College Association, 1997). When ovc.edu became available, Ohio Valley registered this domain on September 12, 1997. Up through January 2003, the ovcollege.edu and ovc.edu

domains resolved to the same pages. In February 2003, ovcollege.edu redirected to ovc.edu and within days the site completely resolved to the ovc.edu domain. For some reason, the page redirect returned in March 2003 and continued until October 2003 (“Internet Archive for ovcollege.edu,” 2007).

In October 2003, the ovcollege.edu domain began being redirected to web.ovc.edu. This site consisted of academic resources operated by Professor Bruce Terry who served also as Ohio Valley’s original webmaster. This usage of ovcollege.edu as a redirect to the academic resources page continued until summer 2005. The final version of the page contained a redirect to ovu.edu and its last update was made on August 31, 2005. The domain has since expired (“Internet Archive for ovcollege.edu,” 2007).

With the name change to Ohio Valley University, a third domain name (ovu.edu) was registered on June 10, 2005 (“Whois Lookup: ovu.edu,” 2007). As to its continuation of multiple domains, it appears that ovcollege.edu was surrendered to EDUCAUSE in exchange for the ovu.edu domain. As to the institution having two domains, Charles Gibbs explained, “We needed to retain the ovc.edu domain because a number of servers continue to use the domain. Since we already had two domains, we were not required to surrender ovc.edu. We haven’t received any word from EDUCAUSE to surrender ovc.edu” (Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

### ***Other institutional name changes***

Two schools that changed names in the 1990s previously did not have their own institutional domain names prior to the change. Both West Virginia Institute of

Technology and Salem Teikyo University operated their web sites under wvnet.edu subdomains. Originally, WV Tech's used the wwtvax.wvnet.edu subdomain primarily for email and later the wvit.wvnet.edu subdomain was designated for web traffic. The subdomain was introduced circa 1995 ("Google search for wvnet.edu & 1992," 2007; Rodenhouse, 1996). The current domain name, wvutech.edu was registered nearly two years after the merger with WVU. The wvit.wvnet.edu domain continued to be operational until spring 2002 ("Internet Archive for wvit.wvnet.edu," 2007; "Whois Lookup: wvutech.edu," 2007).

Likewise, Salem Teikyo University never had its own domain. Up until the time of the name change to Salem International University in 2000, Salem Teikyo operated with the WVNET subdomain of salem-teikyo.wvnet.edu (Rodenhouse, 1996). In October 2000, the school registered salemiu.edu; however, it continued to mirror the website with salem-teikyo.wvnet.edu until April 2003 ("Who.is Domain Information: salemiu.edu," 2007). For the next year, the wvnet.edu subdomain resolved only to the Salem International University home page. The subdomain was retired in April 2004 ("Internet Archive of salemiu.edu & salem-teikyo.wvnet.edu," 2007).

### ***Domain rebranding***

A recent development with Salem International University is a rebranding of its domain name from salemiu.edu to salemu.edu in 2007. The new domain was registered on January 18, 2007. The old domain was retired after June 27, 2007 and EDUCAUSE cancelled its registration ("Internet Archive of salemiu.edu," 2007; "Whois Lookup: salemu.edu," 2007). According to EDUCAUSE (n.d, ¶ 2), "When you change a domain name, your old domain name can remain active for up to 6 months to assist in transition.

After 6 months, your old domain name will become available for selection by an eligible institution. If you do not need the full 6 months for transition, you may manually release your old domain name sooner.”

Salem International’s Chief Information Officer Pieter B. Bresler explained the change: “The institution’s board of trustees voted on changing the domain. This was part of the institution’s move to update marketing materials and institutional image. The board also wanted to make the domain shorter and *American students* are more inclined to look for the school at salemu.edu rather than salemiu.edu” (Personal communication, October 5, 2007). Another administrator confessed that, “No official reason has been given for the domain change. The rumor is that a name change is coming and the ‘International’ will be dropped. I’m waiting to see just like everyone else” (Personal communication, October 8, 2007). If the rumor is correct, and it appears likely as Bresler emphasized “American students,” it will be the fourth name change for the school in 20 years.

Like Salem International, several West Virginia schools have rebranded their institutional domain name; however, there were no institutional rebranding that precipitated the change. Although their initial web presence was via CityNet address (citynet.net), The University of Charleston (UC) registered uchaswv.edu on October 24, 1995 (“American University-wide,” 2007; “Who.is Domain Information: uchaswv.edu,” 2007). Just over three years later, UC petitioned Network Solutions for the ucwv.edu domain and this was granted on January 30, 1999 (“Whois Lookup: ucwv.edu,” 2007).

Although operating two .edu domains from 1993 to 2001 was not permitted, under EDUCAUSE’s “grandfather provision,” both names were protected (“Current Holders,”

2007). Although the initial reason for the second domain is not known, Director of University Computing, Ken Miller suggested that email spam messages utilizing the uchaswv.edu address contributed to a move to ucwv.edu, “the school’s domain name for email became blacklisted” (Personal communication, October 5, 2007).

The University of Charleston’s original and new domains both pointed to the same site up through November 2002. During late November, ucwv.edu became the primary web address with the uchaswv.edu resolving to it. In 2004, the uchaswv.edu domain was revived as it resolved to the institution’s portal: “Campus Cruiser” while ucwv.edu continued to be the primary home page address. By November 2004, uchaswv.edu again resolved to the ucwv.edu address and after September 2006 was allowed to expire (“Internet Archive for uchaswv.edu,” 2007). According to Ken Miller, “We could have kept it [the uchaswv.edu domain], but we had no further plans to use it. We let it go because we saw no good reason to keep the domain” (Personal communication, October 5, 2007).

Likewise, Davis & Elkins College [D&E] for a brief time operated two domains: dne.edu and davisandelkins.edu. Like many of the other private institutions in the central and northern portions of West Virginia, D&E began its web presence with a WVNET subdomain. The dne.wvnet.edu subdomain was used as the main web page address up through December 1997. From December 1997 through December 2001, the URL [Uniform Resource Locator; i.e., web address] produced a page asking visitors to “Please Change your Bookmarks: The main web site for Davis & Elkins College is available at <http://www.dne.edu>” (“Internet Archive for dne.wvnet.edu,” 2007; “Who.is Domain Information: dne.edu,” 2007).

On January 28, 2003, the current domain of davisandelkins.edu was registered. By February, the new domain was operational and pointed to the same pages as dne.edu (“Internet Archive for dne.edu,” 2007; “Whois Lookup: davisandelkins.edu,” 2007). Craig Merriam, Coordinator of Administrative Computing at D&E explained the reasoning for the change,

When we started with the dne.edu domain, we could not use an ampersand in a domain name, so the “n” was used. Our marketing department felt that for name recognition, the college needed to change to davisandelkins.edu. They wanted people to actually say “Davis and Elkins dot EDU.” They felt that “D N E” sounded hick, although I preferred the shorter domain name. (Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

By August 2003, Davis & Elkins began the phase out process of the dne.edu domain as it was redirected to the new davisandelkins.edu address. The dne.edu address was retired at some time after December 2003 (“Internet Archive for dne.edu,” 2007). Merriam explained, “According to EDUCAUSE regulations, we were allowed to keep the domain for six months. We asked and received an extension and had both for over a year” (Personal communication, October 16, 2007). Merriam indicated that there were no problems after the surrender of the dne.edu domain. At least 595 web pages, however, still contain link to the old dne.edu address (“Google Search of dne.edu,” 2007).

One other domain name change has occurred within West Virginia. On March 29, 2005, New River Community and Technical College in Beckley registered its initial domain name of nrctc.edu. The acronym was fraught with issues as New River LAN Specialist, Jeremy R. Ball, explained: “Most people could not say or remember nrctc.edu,

nor did they know what the initials' represented" (Personal communication, October 6, 2007). On July 23, 2007, New River CTC registered the newriver.edu ("Whois Lookup: newriver.edu," 2007). According to Ball, "The main reason for changing the name was for [institutional] branding" (Personal communication, October 6, 2007).

While the name should help enhance the web presence of this school, the Dublin, Virginia based New River Community College is not happy with this decision. Having unsuccessfully protested the New River name for the West Virginia school in 2003 (see Chapter 9), Mark Rowh, Vice President for Advancement at the Virginia based school, worried that this development "will probably add further confusion" between the two schools with similar names (Personal communication, October 15, 2007). Ball explained that transition is expected to last at least six months. "They [EDUCAUSE] will give you six months to use both domain names. They will cut the old one off unless you write a letter saying you need another six months" (Personal communication, October 6, 1995).

### ***University anticipation***

Although West Liberty State College touts itself as the oldest college in West Virginia and one of the 150 oldest in the U.S., it was last of West Virginia's regionally accredited (at the time) four-year institutions both public and private to register its own domain name ("West Liberty Key Facts," 2005). Having used wlsvox.wvnet.edu and wlsc.wvnet.edu for a number of years, West Liberty did not register its initial domain of wlsc.edu until December 20, 2000 ("Google search for wvnet.edu & 1992," 2007; Rodenhouse, 1996).

To facilitate its move to “university status,” West Liberty State College applied to EDUCAUSE for the new domain name of westliberty.edu on July 7, 2006 (“Whois Lookup: westliberty.edu,” 2007). According to Vice President of Institutional Advancement Mark Cottle, “While we realize that this change will be disruptive in the short term, we are confident that it is the best long-term decision. West Liberty’s administration and Board of Governors are committed to achieving ‘university’ status within the next three to four years; hence the change, as the address of www.wlsc.edu would become inappropriate” (“West Liberty State College Changes Domain Name,” 2006, p. 4).

According to West Liberty officials, the transition to the new domain followed the regulations set forth by EDUCAUSE:

EDUCAUSE, has barred any educational institution from controlling more than one web address. We cannot therefore control wlsc.edu and westliberty.edu simultaneously. EDUCAUSE will, however, give [sic] us a transition period of six months during which both addresses will function. After the first six months, we can request an extension for an additional six months. This extension generally is granted, giving us up to one year to complete the transition . . . All current web links and web address will remain functioning until at least January 5, 2007, and ideally through July 5, 2007. (“West Liberty State College Changes Domain Name,” 2006, p. 4).

Even if the change to “university status” does not occur, the domain name change would be beneficial to West Liberty. One administrator explained that the change was

part of positioning the college for a change, “With the college part on there that is why we changed domain names. Whether it [‘university status’] comes to pass or not, we’ve got West Liberty and we feel maybe that it’s more descriptive than the wlsc.edu that we currently have.” The former domain of wlsc.edu was retired at some point after May 19, 2007 (“Internet Archive for wlsc.edu,” 2007).

### **The Domain Vultures**

When a domain is surrendered, an institution must be prepared for someone else to register and use the domain name. When Kentucky Christian College rebranded as Kentucky Christian University during fall 2004, it registered a new domain of kcu.edu (“Whois Lookup: kcu.edu,” 2007). Its former domain kcc.edu immediately was set to redirect to the new name. In February 2005, the kcc.edu domain expired (“Internet Archive for kcc.edu,” 2007). According to Greg Richardson of University Telcom, Inc., “Basically, we had no choice but to surrender it back to EDUCAUSE since we were allocated the new ‘kcu.edu’ domain from them” (Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

Within weeks of the expiration of kcc.edu, Illinois’ Kankakee Community College registered the domain on March 24, 2005 (“Whois Lookup: kcc.edu,” 2007). A similar occurrence involving both institutions revolved around the radio station call letters of WKCC. Francis M. Nash, WKCC General Manager from 1973 to 1987, outlined part of the situation:

The school [Kentucky Christian] continued to operate it [WKCC] for a few years, and then they had another big cutback and did away with the

program as such in about 1993. They kept the transmitter and call letters, and tried to operate it with a makeshift automation but failed even to give call letters so it wasn't really legal. Then they ran it only for KCC ballgames especially for the National Tournaments, but it was dark the rest of the time . . . again against the rules, until the FCC finally revoked the license. (Personal communication, September 29, 2007).

Roy J. Stewart, Senior Deputy Chief of the Media Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission, explained why the station license was revoked,

Section 312(g) of the Communications Act of 1934 . . . provides that if a broadcasting station fails to transmit broadcast signals for any consecutive 12-month period, then the station license granted for the operation of that broadcast station expires at the end of that period. Station WKCC(FM) failed to broadcast for a consecutive 12-month period. Accordingly . . . the WKCC(FM) license was cancelled on March 31, 2002. (Personal communication, October 5, 2007).

Although the license was set to expire on August 1, 2004, the lack of activity precipitated its revocation. The station had been operational since fall 1973 when it received its original FCC construction permit and the initial call letters of WIXS ("Facility Report for 34224: DWKCC," 2007; Owston, 1979). Kentucky Christian's loss became Kankakee Community College's gain. With the call sign available, the FCC allowed Kankakee Community College to re-identify its FM Station WKTC as WKCC on July 8, 2003 ("Call Sign History for 33327: WKCC," 2007). As with the call letters,

Kankakee appeared to be anxiously awaiting the kcc.edu domain name to expire. It is not known, however, if Kankakee Community College's ownership of kcc.edu has caused any issues for Kentucky Christian University. Greg Richardson admitted, "Regarding Kankakee CC: I really don't have a lot of information about that" (Personal communication, October 16, 2007).

When transitioning to a new or adjusted name, a little forethought will make an institution's changeover smoother. Consider the relative ease experienced by Concord and Shepherd. Had Fairmont State, West Liberty, and West Virginia State (perhaps using wvstate.edu) used a logical name as opposed to initially using an acronym, a future change would have one less issue. Dr. Ralph Wilson advised concerning the six criteria that constitute a good domain name: "A good domain name 'is relatively short,' 'is memorable,' 'isn't easily confused with others,' 'is hard to misspell,' 'relates to your business name or core business,' and 'sounds solid to your target audience'" (2006, ¶ 1-6).

### **Summary**

The World Wide Web is a medium by which all institutions need an Internet presence. Part of this comes through the positioning of one's name. Despite what one administrator's view of how EDUCAUSE manages domains, the agency has allowed multiple domain names only for institutions that had multiple domains prior to October 2001. Only one exception has occurred. It is believed that Fairmont State's operation of two domains is largely because the new domain was registered under the name of the Community and Technical College and this occurred under EDUCAUSE's radar. Unless grandfathered (like Mountain State, The University of Charleston, Wheeling Jesuit, and

Ohio Valley), all other schools seeking new domain names were required to surrender their older domains following a six to 12-month transition period.

While picking the right domain name initially (as did Concord and Shepherd) would have been the best strategy, a change to new name to correct a problematic name can be accomplished. This has occurred with Davis & Elkins, Fairmont State, New River CTC, and West Virginia State. Positioning for a new name in advance of the change appears to be a strategy that will succeed for West Liberty and possibly Salem International as name changes are anticipated for both institutions.

Upon the retirement of the old domain, institutions need to be cognizant of the multitude of pages available on the Internet that point to the old name. While Davis & Elkins does not see this as a problem, nearly 600 pages linked to the old domain name. It appears that where the old domain completely resolves to the new domain may be the best approach as it forces search engines to index pages under the new domain and not under both domains – one which will expire in six to 12 months. Additionally, an expired domain becomes fair game to be registered by another institution. While chances of this occurring in the .edu domain are not as frequent as other TLDs, both Ohio Valley and Kankakee Community College were successful in securing expired .edu domains.

Finally, if a change in an institutional name occurs, as did with several institutions in West Virginia, care must be made in updating the institutional web site and the web domain. Although WVU Tech's web site was updated immediately, the school did not register the wvutech.edu domain until 20 months after the name change occurred. West Virginia State had its domain in place, however, artwork on its web site still contained the old name for six weeks after the name change. While only the banner contained the old

name, the text references were all updated to the new university designation. When Bluefield College of Evangelism became Blue Ridge College of Evangelism and moved to Wytheville, VA, did not update the institutional name or location for 20 months after the fact. A school's Internet presence is part of its overall branding initiatives. With rebranding, a clear and correct message is of utmost importance. As Janal (2000) observed, "the Internet is a powerful marketing force that can take businesses to new heights" (p. 3).

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**APPENDIX A: EDU AND RELATED DOMAINS IN WEST VIRGINIA**

**Statewide Agencies**

<b>WVNET</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvnet.edu	March 28, 1988	Currently in use.
<b>Higher Education Policy Commission</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
hepc.wvnet.edu	DNA	Redirects to wwhepc.wvnet.edu
wwhepc.wvnet.edu	DNA	Currently in use.
wwhepc.org	March 27, 2003	Currently in use.
<b>Community and Technical College System</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvctcs.org	June 3, 2004	Currently in use.

**Public Four-Year, Graduate Schools and Branch Campuses**

<b>Bluefield State College</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
bscvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
bscvx1.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
bluefield.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through July 2007; no longer in use.
bluefieldstate.edu	January 30, 1992	Did not use until summer 2002. Currently in use.
<b>Concord College/University</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
ccvms.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
concord.wvnet.edu	DNA	First web site domain. In use through July 2006.
concord.edu	February 23, 1998	Currently in use
<b>Fairmont State College/University</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
fscvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
fairmont.wvnet.edu	DNA	Used through spring 1999
fscvv.edu	October 1, 1998	Currently redirects to fairmontstate.edu
fairmontstate.edu	November 19, 2003	Currently in use
<b>Glenville State College</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
glenville.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through summer 2007. No longer in use.
glenville.edu	November 22, 1999	Currently in use.
<b>Marshall University</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
marshall.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
mu.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
marshall.edu	August 24, 1993	Currently in use.

<b>Marshall University Graduate College</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
mugc.edu	June 4, 1997	Mirrored wvgc.edu from 7/1/1997 through April 1999. Not in use after April 1999. Domain expired summer 2006.
<b>Potomac State College of WVU</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
pscvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
psc.wvnet.edu	DNA	Used prior to 2000.
psc.wvu.edu	DNA	Used from 2000 to 2004
potomacstatecollege.edu	September 18, 2002	Currently in use.
<b>Shepherd College/University</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
scvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
shephred.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through December 2002
shepherd.edu	September 29, 1998	Currently in use
<b>West Liberty State College</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wlsvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
wlsc.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through November 2002
wlsc.edu	December 20, 2000	Retired after May 19, 2007
westliberty.edu	July 7, 2006	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia Graduate College</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvnm.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
wvgc.edu	May 3, 1994	Mirrored mugc.edu from 7/1/1997 through April 1999. Not in use after April 1999. Domain expired February 2007.
<b>West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvsom.edu	April 8, 1998	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia State College/University</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvsc.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through August 2000
wvsc.edu	October 31, 1997	Retired after April 4, 2005
wvstateu.edu	April 23, 2004	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia University</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvu.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
wvnm.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
wvu.edu	May 28, 1992	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia University Institute of Technology</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Status</b>
wvtvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
wvit.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through March 2002
wvutech.edu	March 2, 1999	Currently in use

## Public Community and Technical Colleges

<b>Blue Ridge Community &amp; Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
blueridgectc.edu	April 3, 2006	Currently in use
<b>Community and Technical College at WVU Tech</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
ctc.wvutech.edu	DNA	Currently in use
<b>Eastern West Virginia Community &amp; Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
eastern.wvnet.edu	DNA	Currently in use
<b>Marshall Community and Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
marshall.edu/ctc	DNA	Currently in use
marshallctc.edu	October 26, 2005	Currently in use
<b>New River Community and Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
nrctc.edu	March 29, 2005	In the process of phase out
newriver.edu	July 23, 2007	Currently in use
<b>Pierpont Community &amp; Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
fscwv.edu	October 1, 1998	Currently redirects to fairmontstate.edu
fairmontstate.edu	November 19, 2003	Currently in use
<b>Southern West Virginia Community &amp; Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
southern.wvnet.edu	DNA	Currently in use for email
southernwv.edu	June 29, 2007	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia Northern Community &amp; Technical College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
nccvax.wvnet.edu	DNA	Early email domain.
northern.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through August 2006
wvnorthern.edu	September 23, 2003	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia University at Parkersburg</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wvup.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through October 2001
wvup.edu	January 7, 2002	Currently in use

## Regionally Accredited Private Institutions

<b>Alderson Broaddus College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
mountain.net/ab/	DNA	Used through August 2000
ab.wvnet.edu	DNA	Used through May 2000
ab.edu	April 25, 1995	Currently in use
<b>Appalachian Bible College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
abc.edu	April 11, 1999	Currently in use
<b>Bethany College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
info.bethany.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through October 2002
bethanywv.edu	December 23, 1996	
<b>Davis &amp; Elkins College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
dne.wvnet.edu	DNA	Used through December 2001
dne.edu	July 25, 1997	In use through December 2003
davisandelkins.edu	January 28, 2003	Currently in use
<b>Mountain State University (The College of West Virginia)</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
angelfire.com	DNA	First website 1996-1997.
cwv.edu	May 5, 1995	Currently redirects to mountainstate.edu
mountainstate.edu	December 20, 2000	Currently in use
<b>Ohio Valley College/University</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
ovcollege.edu	circa 1995	In use until August 2005
ovc.edu	September 12, 1997	Redirects to ovu.edu
ovu.edu	June 10, 2005	Currently in use
<b>University of Charleston</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
citynet.net	DNA	First email addresses
uchaswv.edu	October 24, 1995	Retired after September 9, 2006
ucwv.edu	January 30, 1999	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia Wesleyan College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wwvc.edu	October 20, 1994	Currently in use
<b>Wheeling Jesuit College/University</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wjc.edu	August 5, 1992	Retired after February 5, 1998
nttc.edu	August 19, 1992	National Technology Transfer Center (in use)
coff.edu	April 21, 1994	Classroom of the Future (in use)
cet.edu	May 6, 1997	Center for Educational Technologies (in use)
wju.edu	August 18, 1996	Currently in use

### Regionally Accredited Proprietary Institutions

<b>American Public University System</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
apus.edu	June 30, 2002	Currently in use
<b>Huntington Junior College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
huntingtonjuniorcollege.edu	May 10, 2002	Currently in use
<b>Salem Teikyo University / Salem International University</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
salem-teikyo.wvnet.edu	DNA	In use through April 2004
salemiu.edu	October 18, 2000	Retired after June 27, 2007
salemu.edu	January 18, 2007	Currently in use.

### Nationally Accredited Proprietary Institutions

<b>Mountain State College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
mountainstate.org	In use in 1998 & registered by school September 20, 2002	Currently in use.
<b>West Virginia Business College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wvbc.edu	May 27, 2004	Currently in use
<b>West Virginia Career College</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wvci.edu	January 24, 2006	An arm of West Virginia Junior College located in Mt. Braddock, PA
<b>West Virginia Junior College – Charleston</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wvjchas.net	April 6, 2006	Currently in use
wvjc.edu	November 18, 2003	Redirects to wvjchas.net
<b>West Virginia Junior College – Morgantown</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
wvjcmorgantown.edu	August 20, 2003	Currently in use
<b>Valley College of Technology</b>		
Domain	Registered	Status
vct.edu	October 26, 1996	Currently in use

## Unaccredited Institutions

Bluefield College of Evangelism / Blueridge College of Evangelism		
Domain	Registered	Status
bce.edu	March 22, 1999	School originally in Bluefield, WV now in Wytheville, VA.