

### Where to Buy the Hottest .IO Domain Names That Startups Want - With Mike Carson

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<http://www.domainsherpa.com/mike-carson-parkio-interview/>

On today's DomainSherpa show, I interview the founder of a drop catching service that focuses on .IO, .LY and .ME top-level domains. Why do I think it's worth your time as an investor? Because I picked up a .IO domain for \$1,655 and in 30 days flipped it for \$6,000. Stay tuned.

I have three sponsor messages before we get into today's show.

First, if you have a great domain name and nothing to show when people visit, you're missing out on potential advertising revenue, leads and partnership opportunities. NicheWebsites.com can build you a site quickly with a price option to suit any need — but as their tagline says, they don't just build websites, they build businesses. NicheWebsites.com.

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Finally, whether you are buying, selling, brokering or financing a domain name you need an escrow company that is properly licensed, bonded, insured and audited. That company is Escrow.com and they have been doing it since 1999. Escrow.com - it's about trust.

Michael Cyger: Hey everyone. My name is Michael Cyger, and I'm the Publisher of DomainSherpa.com - the website where you can learn how to become a successful domain name investor or entrepreneur directly from the experts. I cannot remember how I stumbled across the drop-catching service we are going to learn about today, but I picked up a domain name for 1655 dollars that I thought would do well selling on the mostly technology-oriented marketplace called Flippa.com.

The domain name was PHP.io, and if you know anything about programming, you know that PHP is by far the most common server side language on the Internet. It used by Facebook, by WordPress, by Amazon, so it is not surprising that I flipped that domain name for six thousand dollars in 30 days and a profit, after broker's fees, of about 3450 bucks or 200 percent over my initial investment.

And I am going to let you in on my secret, even though it pains me to do so because I will likely never get another deal on the drop-catching service again when you start going there. Today I am pleased to welcome the Founder of Park.io, Mike Carson. Welcome to the show, Mike.

Mike Carson: Thanks. Thanks for having me.

Michael: So, I am going to ask you, Mike, to share your screen and walk us through the Park.io service, but I first want to understand a little bit more about the background of Park.io. Why did you build Park.io?

Mike: Well, I have always been into technology and launching sites, and so I tried to get some .IO domains and I was really vigilant around it. And I was watching it and watching it, and I even had a script checking it, but still somebody else beat me and they got the domain that I wanted. And it is really frustrating, and so what I did is I just learned more about it. I wanted to figure it out, and then I figured out more about it, when they drop, what time they drop, which ones are dropping, and then I got into the whole thing.

I started writing scripts around it and it got more competitive. I figured out there was a couple other people out there who were also doing it, and so we were competing with each other and my scripts improved and improved, and they got to a point where they were beating everyone. And so, at that point, I thought I might as well open this up because there were no other .IO backorder services out there, so I decided to open it.

Michael: Right. And so, why .IO? First of all, what is .IO, for anybody that does not know what it is?

Mike: .IO stands I guess for Indian Ocean, but for hackers it is input-output. I mean basically that is what it is about. It is .IO. We, hackers, see it as input-output, and a lot of tech companies, like I read Hacker News all the time and a lot of the sites that are going up there, a lot of the other computer programmers who are launching sites are doing .IOs. So, yeah, it stands for Indian Ocean and I think it is run by the British Government, but yeah, it is input-output.

Michael: Okay, so it is a country code top-level domain for the Indian Ocean and underlying whatever.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: And hackers like it, and you mentioned Hacker News, and I used to read Hacker News pretty regularly at News.Ycombinator.com. When you say hackers, how do you describe hackers in a sentence?

Mike: In a sentence. Well, hacker is just somebody who loves to figure things out and build things. That is how I see it.

Michael: Programming things, right, like services or offerings through a website.

Mike: Usually, it does not have to be. I mean electronics. There could be electronics hackers or other types.

Michael: Okay, great. And a lot of the hackers see the .IO and they have just, over the years, sort of affinitized towards that. They see a lot of their hacker friends using .IO, so then they want to pick up a .IO as well.

Mike: Yeah, and now there is a meaning behind it. Now .IO has a culture behind it. And when you see a .IO domain name, at least when I do and other people, it is like we know a little bit more about what it is about before we even go to it, and that is where I think a lot of the value is coming from it too, this whole momentum behind it and the culture behind it.

Michael: Well, that is a great point, and this momentum behind it was not created by a new top-level domain that has just been launched, like the hundreds of new top-level domains. This is one that has been out for a while. A quick side note, what do you think about all these new top-level domains, like .APP, which is going to be launched in 2015, .STORE, .WEB - you name it?

Mike: Yeah, I do not really know. Personally, what I think is they need to have success. If there is a successful company built on these domains and people have role model or it starts to develop a culture around the TLD, then I think people will gravitate towards that for that reason. That is why I think .IO domains. There is a whole culture behind it, and so there is value from that. And I think if they can do that, which I think needs to be led by people building products on those TLDs, then they will have value that way. That is my opinion, but I do not know that much. I mean I have only been in domains for like one year.

Michael: For just one year?

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: That is when you first started writing this script, before you commercialized it and offered it to others. You have only been doing this for about one year.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: When did you launch the Park.io service?

Mike: It was just last June, the end of June of last year.

Michael: June 2014. Wow, okay. And what top-level domains will you try and drop-catch for people.

Mike: Right now, on Park.io, we do .IO, .LY, and .ME.

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Michael: Okay, and .LY is the country code top-level domain for Lichtenstein, I think, or Libya.

Mike: Libya.

Michael: Libya. And .ME is the country code top-level domain for another country.

Mike: Montenegro, yeah.

Michael: Right. So, why country code top-level domains? What drove you to these three to first launch the service?

Mike: I mean they are all around basically the culture. So, .IO is kind of a domain. It is input-output. We have kind of changed the TLD to mean input-output, and .LY is used for domain hacks. For example, Bold.ly or Local.ly sold for like one hundred thousand dollars. So, you can create these cool hacks and it does not really mean. Libya is kind of not as important as the hacks that you can make around it, and the same with .ME too. I guess it is just the things that I am interested in because you can create the hacks with the names around it.

And also, there were not any backorder services for .LY or .IO, so I created it to provide a service for that.

Michael: Cool. So, if I go to Park.io today and I want to create a backorder for one of the .IOs, and we will see exactly how it works, how much does your service cost?

Mike: Well, it does not cost anything to place an order and you are only charged if you get the domain. So, if you place a backorder for a domain and we get the domain for you, and you are the only person that placed the backorder, it is a 99-dollar fee. If another person places a backorder also, then it goes into a ten-day public auction.

Michael: Ten-day public auction and anybody who is signed up for Park.io can participate in that auction.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Okay. All right. And I have see 99 dollars if I am the only one that sees the domain name going to auction and places a bid. That is not too much of a profit for you because if I go to Nic.io and I see .IO, the registry for .IO, it is going to cost me 60 pounds, based in the United States, to register a .IO domain name, which is about 90 dollars.

Mike: Yeah, there is a small fee if it is only one, but a lot of the profit comes from the auctions.

Michael: Right, and so basically you are going to go out and grab the domain name if there is one or more bidders, and then you grab it for regular registration fee and then you are opening up to whoever wants to bid on it. The market value will be determined at that point.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Got it. All right. What is the most expensive domain that you have sold in auction through your service, that your service was able to catch quickly and then sell?

Mike: It was SMTP.io. There were a few people. I guess people were watching. So, what we do is - well, when I say we, I just mean me. I do that all the time. I do not know. Once you become a website, you start referring to yourself as we, but anyway. When Park.io gets a domain, we change the DNS to redirect to Park.io. So, for example, SMTP.io. When we got that, we redirected to the auction page, and so that is how a lot of people find Park.io. They are looking at SMTP.io because they wanted to register it when it was dropping, and when we got it, they saw, and so they go to the auction and start bidding on it.

There was quite a few companies that wanted SMTP.io and it ended up SendGrid had got it for 6,385 dollars or something like that.

Michael: And SMTP is a technical acronym. What does it stand for?

Mike: Good question.

Michael: Come on, Mike. You can do it.

Mike: Something mail protocol.

Michael: Mail transfer protocol. I do not know what the S is either, but yeah, if you ever setup your iPhone and you want to connect it to your mail server, you need to enter in either pop servers or SMTP servers, something technical.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: So, some companies really wanted it and SendGrid, a large software as a service provider, actually picked up.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Nice. And so, you actually wrote the script yourself. You are not just the guy that had this idea. Hey, there are no drop-catching services. I am going to start on and go hire a programmer to build it. You are the business owner and you are the programmer.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Wow.

Mike: Yeah, the whole reason I got into it was because I was interested in how it all worked and figuring out the most efficient way to get a domain the instant that it drops. And I think the only way you can really do something is that way. I mean this is just my opinion, but I feel like if I just hired a programmer, they would not have the enthusiasm behind it to make it as good as it is. I am proud of this script because it works so well. So, for the first six months, I launched in June and through December, we had got one hundred percent. One hundred percent of it is perfect. Every single .IO domain that was ordered on Park.io, and this was hundreds of orders, we got. Nobody could beat us.

Michael: Wow.

Mike: And the reason it got so good is because I was just really interested and also it is competitive. Before, months before, there was somebody who every once in a while would beat me.

Michael: Yeah, I can attest to that. I think I have purchased four or five domain names through your service and every single one has been caught. In most cases, I was the only bidder, which probably does not say much about my investing skills, but then some of them that you did catch go to auction and I won them for more. So, yeah, I will attest to that. Do you find that most of your customers, most of the registered users of Park.io are investors, or do you find a lot of end users who have discovered .IO, a lot of hackers who have discovered .IO and figured out that Park.io is the best catcher of those expiring names?

Mike: I think it is mostly domain investors. Those are the regular users because honestly it is a way to get discount domains and sell them for more. And I know a lot of users even get them for 99 dollars and then sell them for thousands, but every once in a while, like I said, I redirect the domain to Park.io, so some end users who are looking for that specific domain find Park.io through that way.

Michael: Yeah. Do you track domains that you catch at Drop.io because an investor or user wanted to pay you to catch it, and then track them to find out what they sell for later on?

Mike: I mean I am active on Flippa, so I watch that a lot, and also I keep in touch with some of the users and they tell me. Actually on the blog I post a lot of success stories about people who have flipped it.

Michael: Cool. What is the range that great .IO domains typically go for on Flippa?

Mike: Well, it is increasing. I mean I think, just like one year ago, there were not many .IO domains on Flippa and now it is getting pretty, but I still think

there is a lot of potential for growth. I mean I think right now the highest ones on Flippa are going for - I think SEO.io went for 11 thousand. But if you look at some of the sales history of .IO domains, there have been a few for like 30 to 40 thousand, but then it is mostly like five to ten thousand.

Michael: So, SEO.io was actually mine, but I did not buy it through your service. They are definitely heating up. So, anywhere from registration fee, up to ten thousand dollars you would say is the range for .IOs right now.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: For good .IOs, not like CoffeeMug.io. That is not going to sell on Flippa, right?

Mike: Yeah. I mean it seems that way. I guess for people who are willing to sell right now. If you want to hold, I bet you can get something later on, but it seems right now the things that are selling are going for around that.

Michael: Yeah. What about the .LY and .ME domain names? Do you see those picking up and gaining steam and selling for a few thousand dollars on Flippa as well?

Mike: .LY definitely has a lot of interest. I do not think they have the buzz right now that .IO does, but still they are selling pretty well I think. I mean I have seen a lot and I have personally sold some pretty well. But .ME I do not see as much interest as I have with the .LY and .IO, but maybe it is because I do not have as many good ones or I have not seen as many good ones sell on Flippa, but I just do not see as much interest now as I do for the other ones.

Michael: And you mentioned that hackers were interested in .IOs. Is that who you see actually paying the retail market price for the .IOs and the .LYs today? People that want to develop them out into businesses.

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, I think so. I mean a lot of people see the culture behind it, and so they want to launch their product inside of that.

Michael: Cool. All right, let's do this. Let's flip to conversation, start screen sharing, and then I am going to do a screen capture as you walk us through the Park.io service.

Mike: Okay, sure, sounds good. Can you see it?

Michael: I can. Yeah, perfect.

Mike: Okay. So, yeah, when you come to Park.io, we show a list of the domains that are dropping in the next week.

Michael: Hey Mike, before we get into that, let me clarify the URL in the address bar is Park.io.dev. That is your development server. If people go to Park.io, they will see your homepage, which describes the service. And if they want to get access to the application, it is at App.Park.io. So, those are the two URLs. Park.io and then App.Park.io.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Okay. And when somebody goes there, regardless of whether they are signed in or not, this is what they see on the app homepage.

Mike: Yeah, it shows a list of the domains dropping in the next week, starting with the ones that are dropping tonight. And then there are different tabs, so it starts with .IO domains, but you can switch to .LY or .ME. So, if you want to buy a domain, you just click on it.

Michael: There we go. I just got nervous for a second there for you.

Mike: There are some development things. So, first, you have to sign up, so you just create a username and password, and then agree to our terms of service. You should click to read those.

Michael: What am I agreeing to there, Mike? It just says that I am going to buy what I say I am going to buy or something.

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, I guess.

Michael: All right, go read the terms of service. And then, when you come here and you find a domain name that you want to buy, you click on it or click the view.

Mike: Yeah, and then you click on backorder domain. And you have to enter a credit card. Now, you are not going to be charged unless we get the domain for you, but you have to enter it just to secure the domain. So, you will type in your name here, email address, and then this is just a test card number. So, then you just click to backorder the domain, and then it goes into your orders. So, it is there, and then when you are logged in, you can click up here in the orders tab to see the status of your order. And over here you can view the order.

Michael: And when does this one actually drop that your script would try and grab it?

Mike: Well, this is my development service, so this one might have been renewed, but it would have dropped today. Probably today.

Michael: Got you.

Mike: So, you would check later tonight or tomorrow to see if we got that for you.

Michael: Okay, and your system will send an email if you are able to grab it as well.

Mike: Yeah, it will send an email once we update the order.

Michael: Is there any way for me to know if somebody else has already placed a backorder on a domain name, Mike?

Mike: No, there is not.

Michael: And why do you do that?

Mike: I do not know actually. I guess this is just the way. Yeah, I do not know.

Michael: At some point you just decided that hey, you have got to have a good idea for these domain names, and if you cannot spot the ones, then somebody else should benefit with not necessarily having to go to auction.

Mike: I guess maybe one of my concern was that maybe somebody would see the domain about to drop, and if they did not see any other backorders, but they wanted it, they may not try to backorder it themselves and get it themselves.

Michael: Oh, right. Okay. All right, so let's click on that domain link at the top again. So, basically there are sub-tabs that allow you to look at the next, I think you said, ten days of dropping domain names on each of those tabs.

Mike: Yeah, so you can page through here and look at all of the different domains that are dropping in the next week.

Michael: Okay. So, look over this page right here, the .IO ones that are dropping on February 2nd. Which one of these do you think, and these will already have dropped by the time this interview airs, but which one of these domain names do you think would sell well on Flippa, sell for more than the 99 dollars assuming there was only one person that put in a bid?

Mike: Well, personally, I think Sonic sounds like a nice one. Intuitive probably sounds good, but I mean there is no science behind this. It is just based on my experience from selling .IO domains and also seeing products that are launched. I mean it has to do with like the brandability of it and just how it sounds really and what it means behind it.

Michael: So, you will actually buy brandables in the .IO extension, whereas a couple of the domains that I have sold on Flippa were short descriptives like SEO for search engine optimization or PHP for the software language. Do you recommend one way of investing over another, because I know you have done some investment yourself?

Mike: Well, like I said, I am kind of new to all of this, but I have sold a lot of .IO domains and I have done a lot with .IO domains, and I actually wrote this program that appraised .IO domains, and I think it works pretty well. I am planning to launch this as a service for Park.io, so you can type in a .IO domain and it will appraise it, and it is specific to .IO. I think it does the most accurate appraisal out of anything I have seen, any other services on the Internet for .IO domains.

Michael: Yeah, interesting.

Mike: And I use this for myself when I am pricing a domain for sale or when I am considering to buy a domain. I look at it to see.

Michael: All right, I need access to that script, Mike, so yeah, let's get it up.

Mike: Okay.

Michael: All right, so that is the domain section. We talked about the orders section. What is the auction section?

Mike: So, yeah, this is where domains go if more than one person backordered them, and then they go to a ten-day public auction and anybody can bid on them. So, there is a list of auctions. If you go to the Park.io site, you will see a list of the current auctions. And if you sign up for our email newsletter, every week you get an email with the auctions that are currently going on.

Michael: Got you. Now, I actually enjoy your newsletters, Mike, but I do not think that they come every week. Are those manual newsletters you are sending out or are they automated to go out every week?

Mike: They are automated.

Michael: All right, I need to check my spam folder then. So, this is an example auction. If I click on it, I can see the current bid, I can see the number of bids, and then I can put in a bid myself.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: It is a nice, simple system. I love the fact that you have built this for simplicity and it is going to look and operate the same on my phone as it does on the website. A lot of times the website is cluttered with a whole bunch of stuff, and then you have to go to the mobile version to get access to the simplicity, but you have done a nice job on this.

Mike: Thanks.

Michael: And so, I notice on NameJet and other services that you actually have to have a bid in the auction in order to be a part of the private auction, which takes place after. Why did you decide to make it an open auction if there is more than one bid?

Mike: These are good questions, but I do not have good answers for a lot of them because I put it up. A lot of the idea behind launching a site is you just put something up there that works and then, based on feedback and how things go, you can change things, and so I just put this up as it was and it seems to work okay so far.

Michael: Okay, great. And if people do sign up for your service and become customers and buy domains and have feedback for you, what is the best way to provide that feedback?

Mike: Well, you can email [Support@Park.io](mailto:Support@Park.io) or [Mike@Park.io](mailto:Mike@Park.io).

Michael: And you do all of the support I have noticed from my interaction.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Which has been really fast actually.

Mike: Thanks.

Michael: For somebody that has another job, which I am going to ask you about. So, the last thing that I want to ask you about is once I win a domain

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name on your service, how do I go about setting the name server, setting a forward, getting the authorization code - the things that investors and entrepreneurs typically need to gain access and use the domain name?

Mike: Yeah, once you successfully get a domain name, then you can go to the orders tab and the order will show up as green now that you have it and it will have the paid date and total there. And when you click to view it, inside here will be different options for updating the DNS. So, you can update the name servers. There are some other options. I mean a lot of it is really geared towards domain investors, like you can set a TXT record if you want to verify it or you can a URL redirect. And then also if you want to transfer to another registrar, you can get the transfer authorization code.

Michael: Great. And if I do not want to transfer it, because your service is so simple and easy to use, can I actually renew domain names and keep them on Park.io?

Mike: Yeah, we are going to make that available. Like I said, we just launched this in June, so that has not really come up yet. It will not come up for another five or six months, but yeah, I am going to make some options available for that.

Michael: Great. Any idea what the pricing is going to be? If it costs me 99 dollars to grab it, what will a renewal be?

Mike: I am not sure yet. I still have to figure that out, but it will not be any more than that.

Michael: Okay. And if I buy a domain name and then I want to push it to a new owner because I, let's say, sold it, is there a way to do that on Park.io?

Mike: Yeah, right now you can just email me and I can take care of it.

Michael: Support@Park.io.

Mike: Yeah.

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Michael: Awesome, and it was very easy when I did that, so I appreciate that. I assume that if enough people ask you, you will create a way to do that.

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, basically.

Michael: Very cool. All right, is there anything else on the website that you think we should take a look at?

Mike: I do not think so. I mean the blog. There are some interesting stories. And just to point out, the email newsletter. You have to go to the Park.io webpage and scroll to the bottom and enter your email here, and this will sign you up for the newsletter that comes out every week. And it has updates on auctions and also different updates from the blog and stuff.

Quick break from three sponsors of today's show:

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Finally, if you're buying a domain name from a private party and want to know what else they own, DomainIQ.com is the tool you should be using. View their entire portfolio, filter by Estibot value and be a better investor. \$49.95 for 250 queries per month. Visit DomainIQ.com/portfolio to learn more.

Michael: Cool. All right, I am going to go back and re-subscribe to that, because I thought I got it in the past, but then it did not show up with regularity.

Mike: Okay.

Michael: All right, so you can go ahead and turn off screen sharing, so I see you again. Awesome. All right, so we walked through the service and details, so everybody gets an idea of how that works. You had mentioned before we did the tutorial, Mike, that you actually wanted to grab .IOs yourself and then use them, and it is through optimizing the script that you decided hey, I can make it available to other people as well. How many .IOs did you grab in the past year plus in writing this script?

Mike: I do not know. Hundreds.

Michael: Hundreds?

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Wow. And have you sold most of those, or what do you do with them?

Mike: I have a lot of them still. I have sold a lot of them also. So, yeah, I am selling them as I go, but yeah, it has been fun. It is interesting because it started out just as a hobby, and it is kind of a hobby, but then suddenly like within a few months of writing the script, I had kind of like cornered the market, like dropping .IO domains, and to such a level that people started complaining that they did not think it was fair. They were complaining to the registry and said that they did not think it was fair, like there was some cheating involved or something, but I mean it was all first come, first serve. It was just that the script was designed in a way that was really fast. But anyway, that is what made Nic.io eventually make their own backorder service.

Michael: So, let me ask you about that. So, Nic.io is the registry for the .IO top-level domain. You can go there and look at their site and see that they

have recently just offered a drop-catching service. I believe the way the service works, Mike, is that I can pay 50 dollars. Let's say I like SMTP.io, the domain that SendGrid just picked up through your service for six thousand dollars. Let's say I really like that and I want to be first in line when that expires and I want to catch it. I could sign up for your service. Well, no, I actually cannot even sign up for your service to grab that because yours is only domains that are definitely set to expire in the next ten days.

But if I go to Nic.io, I can pay 50 dollars and they will monitor it and I will be the first in line when it does expire, but it may never expire. Is that your understanding as well?

Mike: Yeah, you have to pay upfront 60 pounds.

Michael: 60 pounds.

Mike: Yeah, and that is for a two-year backorder, which yeah, you may never get it, but you have to pay for it.

Michael: Yeah, that seems really high. 60 pounds. 90 dollars for something that may never expire.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: At least at Pool.com, where I used to grab domain names before I even realized there was a whole investing world out there, just from my own entrepreneurial activities, at least there I could transfer to another domain and if it did not get picked up, I could use it some other way. There was a time limit I believe on it as well, but yeah, that is interesting. So, they created that. I assume that if a domain name is expiring and I put in the backorder at Nic.io, because they own the game, they will probably beat out your drop-catching service.

Mike: Yeah, it is guaranteed. It is interesting because that just happens, so I have had to figure out what to do, and so what I have been doing is I have been backordering myself through their service and then putting it through

Park.io, or just orders that drop regularly, then they can still be ordered in the same way.

Michael: And will they take more than one backorder at Nic.io, like you do at Park.io?

Mike: No.

Michael: No, just one.

Mike: First come, first serve, yeah.

Michael: Got you. All right. So, you have backordered a ton of great domain names. Actually I discovered you were on Flippa, selling domain names because I was tracking .IOs because I was selling some of the .IOs and then I realized hey, this is the guy that I have been emailing with. And you have got a ton of great .IOs listed for sale on Flippa and somebody can go look at your profile there. It is open to the public.

You have got a lot of two-letter .IOs. How much do you generally think those are worth?

Mike: Well, ES.io recently sold, last year, for 30 thousand dollars, but I mean I, personally, will not sell one of them for less than two thousand dollars, and that is for the ones with the worst letters or something. But I mean I collect them. I love them. I mean for me, it is just that they are so short. It is a two-letter TLD and two letters, so it is as short as the shortest .COM possible, four characters in total. I do not know.

Michael: It is funny that you collect it because they are not as cheap to collect as like a .COM, right? .COM, you are only paying around ten dollars per year for them, whereas .IO, one of the cheapest registrars is charging 36 dollars per year.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: And Nic.io, if you have it directly with them, will charge you 90 dollars per year. Now, I know they have volume discounts, but still they are pretty expensive.

Mike: Yeah, but I mean they do make up for it. The sales for .IOs are pretty good. Even though they are expensive, I think it easily pays for itself.

Michael: Yeah. So, you said the .IO market was heating up. Do you think that it has a potential to cool off? Do you think hackers will become tired of .IO at some point and stop using them?

Mike: Well, I mean anything can happen. On the Internet things change, and so I do not think it is something that would change fast, so I think there would be some warning signs ahead of time. Right now it is going up, so I think the trend will just continue going up until it starts going down, but I think there will be warning signs ahead of time. But yeah, I mean things change. Who knows what the Internet is going to be like?

Michael: What do you think one of the warning signs would be?

Mike: Well, there are a couple that come to my mind. I mean, on Hacker News, if you stop seeing .IO services listed there with such frequency, if the frequency goes down or on Flippa, if the sales go down, or even just personally, if you start getting less offers and stuff. So, I think there would be plenty of warning signs ahead of time, and I do not think it would be something that would happen overnight. It would take years probably for it to happen.

Michael: Yeah. Do you use your own service right now to catch and buy .IO domains?

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: You do. Do you consider it a conflict of interest if you are bidding against me and I am on the system?

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Mike: Well, we do not bid. I will only do it if there is a domain I really want, and I will not list it on Park.io, because that came up right at the beginning, when I launched it and I decided I am not going to bid in my own auction. So, I do not bid on the Park.io auctions, but if there is a domain that I really want, I just will not list it on Park.io.

Michael: Got you. All right. I was looking through ICANN's accredited registrars because I wanted to figure out if Park.io was an accredited registrar, but it actually turns out you do not need to be accredited by ICANN for country code top-level domains. Is that correct?

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Yeah, so that is a great way to run a business, when you do not have to deal with the bureaucracy of ICANN.

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, I guess. I have looked into the ICANN accreditation because I have thought about getting into .COM or something, but I do not know. I just want to stick with the things that I am interested in right now.

Michael: Yeah. Hey Mike, there is no way I could come up with an idea like Park.io and then go on to Elance or Freelancer.com and try and hire somebody to program what you have done. The fact that you have written the script and then you have optimized it over time and really honed down to make it as quick as possible and as effective as possible is something that is unique to the Park.io system. How have you gained so much experience in programming? What has allowed you to create this service?

Mike: Well, I mean I have always been interested in programming. I have been programming since I was a kid, and so basically it is my interest in programming that has just led me to do it a lot, and so I gained that skill. So, I think if you have an interest in that stuff, then you get better at it.

Michael: Yeah, and is this your full-time job?

Mike: No. Park.io?

Michael: Yeah.

Mike: No, it is a side.

Michael: May I ask what your full-time job is?

Mike: Yeah, I Co-Founded WizeHive.com. It is a software as a service business.

Michael: And what does WizeHive provide?

Mike: It is basically like an online database solution platform, where you can intake a lot of data and make decisions based on this data. And so, yeah, it has been going pretty well. I have been working on it for the last six years or so, so it is doing well.

Michael: Wow. And do you have a lot of customers on WizeHive? Is it bigger than Park.io?

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Michael: And your role at WizeHive I understand is Chief Technology Officer.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: So you roll up your sleeves and you actually do coding and architecture in your day job as you do on Park.io.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: Cool. I tried to understand what WizeHive was myself and I am not sure if journalists could not understand what you were offering back in 2009 or if your business has actually changed the model since 2009. In 2009, TechCrunch said that you were a group messaging and task management app, like Yammer or Present.ly. And then, in 2013, I read that you configure and

deploy cloud-based products that help companies organize, automate, and streamline their business activities.

Mike: Yeah.

Michael: It seems like a difference between those two descriptions.

Mike: Yeah, we have pivoted a little bit because we found that there was more of an interest and more usefulness it seemed like in doing it. Taking what we had, the collaboration idea, and using that to focus and collaborating around data more and making it more about the data and the processes behind that.

Michael: Yeah, cool. Knowing your background as a CTO and your understanding of domain names and their value, most domain investors I know would love to work with somebody like you, a technologist, a programmer. What advice do you have an investors who are not technical, but have great domain names and a great business idea and they want to develop one or more of their domains out?

Mike: Yeah, I do not know. That is a little hard for me to say because I am coming from the other side of things, but I guess my advice would be to either find somebody that is more technical that they could partner with and somebody that they trust and can work with, and work with them that way as a balance, offering different sets of skills, or it may work where you could do some hiring. Just hire a developer and try to work that way. I guess that would be my suggestion.

Michael: And Hacker News is full of programmers that get on there and evaluate things, but it is tough to meet new people. Is there a certain meet-up that you would recommend that domainers go to, to try and meet more people in the hacker community? How can investors meet people like you?

Mike: It is a good question. I have met so many people just online. For example, you. And so, I think just try to hang out where hackers hang out and start up conversations with them, and just find out. Even just going on Hacker

News and participating in the discussions there, and getting a feel for the different people there and reaching out to different ones there.

Michael: Cool. So, it seems like WizeHive is a fantastic application and it seems that Park.io is a fantastic application. It seems like you are batting a thousand here, Mike. Have you ever developed an application that did not take off?

Mike: Yeah. Yeah, a lot of times.

Michael: What is one that you remember offhand?

Mike: Well, I made this one website where you could type in like an email message and then we would handwrite. You would pay a small fee and then we would handwrite a letter and mail it out to somebody. So, I tried doing that with a friend for a little while and that did not really work. I mean we got some buzz around it, like Pee-wee Herman tweeted about it.

Michael: What was the domain you picked for that service?

Mike: Actually we were using Letters.io.

Michael: Letters.io.

Mike: Yeah, but since then I let it expire.

Michael: See, it is too nice. You have got to like put glitter in an envelope for people to spread it all over the place. Is that the problem? You were too nice.

Mike: I do not know. I do not know what the problem was with that, but I think it is a good idea to try a bunch of things, and if it does not work, do not stick with it too long. I try to give things three months. And if you are not seeing the traction after three months, then just drop it and move on to the next thing.

Michael: Three months. That does not seem like very much time.

Mike: Yeah, I guess. I do not know.

Michael: Try a lot of things is what you are saying.

Mike: I guess so. Maybe if there were something that I felt more strongly about, I would try longer.

Michael: Yeah. And how do you determine if a new service, let's call it, that you are offering is getting traction? Like how did you determine that Park.io was one that you would keep versus Letter.io that you decided to close down?

Mike: Yeah, that is a good question. Well, basically what it was is I did not even launch Park.io. I put it up and then suddenly I had an order. I had an order without even telling anyone about it, and so that was a sign right there that suddenly people are placing orders that this was a service that was needed. And then if people are willing to pay you for your service, then you know that it is something. Consistently, month after month, if they are willing to do that, then I think that you have an idea that it is offering something of value.

Michael: Yeah, good advice. What is one domain that you own that you just love and wish you had time to develop?

Mike: A lot. There is a lot of ideas I have, and I would love to develop. I think that is a problem I have; is I just really want to move on to the next thing so many times. I like Auction.io and my work that I have done with auction stuff on Park.io, I think it would be really cool on Auction.io to have an API. A platform or an API for auctions, where people could easily auction things themselves on their own websites using an API.

Michael: Yeah, that would be cool. They install a plugin, like a WordPress plugin that hooks into your architecture, and they check off the things that they want, like it has got a buy it now price or it has got this functionality or that feature, and suddenly it is live. That would be awesome. You should do that one.

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All right, if you have additional questions for Mike, please post them in the comments below this video on Domain Sherpa and I will ask him to come back and answer as many as he can. I encourage you, the person who is watching this interview, to get out from behind your computer, reach out to people in the industry, in other industries that you think would be beneficial to you. Just like Mike said, you have got to start meeting people and making connections if you want to find maybe somebody that can be your counterpart on a new business that you would like to get out and launch.

All you have to do is start by posting a comment that says thanks Mike or I appreciate you telling your story and describing your service. Whatever you feel like posting, just start by posting a comment. I am going to be the first to say thanks to Mike.

Mike Carson, thank you for coming on the Domain Sherpa Show, sharing the interworkings of your drop-catching service, Park.io, and thanks for being a Domain Sherpa for others.

Mike: Yeah, thanks for having me on the show.

Michael: Thank you all for watching. We'll see you next time.

**Watch the full video at:**

<http://www.domainsherpa.com/mike-carson-parkio-interview/>