## BUILD YOUR OWN REGISTRAR, RAY KING TELLS YOU HOW



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Michael Cyger: Are you tired of your registrar nickel and diming you for addon functionality, or being slow as molasses to add improvements – to the point you're thinking of building your own registrar? Today's guest did exactly that. And he's going to tell you how he did it. Maybe you want to do it yourself. Stay tuned!

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Michael Cyger: Hey Sherpa Network, thank you so much for joining me today. 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. My goal is that you watch these interviews, take away strategies, tactics, and ideas, become successful, and then come back to DomainSherpa and do an interview, giving back to the Sherpa community. Are you tired of your registrar nickel-and-diming you



for add-on functionality or being slow as molasses to add improvements or fix bugs to the point where you're thinking of building your own registrar? Today's guest did exactly that and he's going to tell you how he did it. I'm pleased to welcome the founder and CEO of porkbun.com, Ray King, who launched a brand new registrar that he built from the ground up. Welcome, Ray.

Ray King: Thanks, Mike. Good to be here.

Michael Cyger: You know, a couple of weeks ago I had Christa Taylor on here talking about the .buzz registry being for sale. She's about a hundred and fifty miles north of where I am here in Seattle. She's up in Vancouver. Today I'm connecting with you in Portland about a hundred and fifty miles south of me. It's great to have so many entrepreneurs and investors in the South Pacific Northwest part of the United States.

Ray King: It's a great place to be. I have to...have to say, I love all three cities.

Michael Cyger: And I love Portland. My wife and I took the train down there about, I don't know, a year or two ago, got off downtown Portland...hotels, restaurants, it's just a phenomenal city.

Ray King: It's underrated for sure.

Michael Cyger: You know, but it's been ranked in a lot of...a lot of magazines as one of the top ten places to live in the United States. I don't think it's underrated.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: I think just a lot of people haven't been there.

Ray King: I think you're right, and actually what I should be saying is, know it rains all the time because, you know, the traffic's getting worse and we kind of like it the way it is, so...



Michael Cyger: I know. It...it...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: You know, we say the same thing in Seattle and we try and discourage the Californians from coming up, but being a Californian myself...and I think you used to live in California as well.

Ray King: I did.

Michael Cyger: It's hard for me to, like, actually...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: ...Make the facade.

Ray King: We could build a wall.

Michael Cyger: Exactly, we need more state...interstate walls.

Ray King: Totally.

Michael Cyger: Alright, I'm really excited to talk about how you built porkbun.com, not as a promotional opportunity for Porkbun, although I'm sure many have not heard of it and will want to check it out...but more of a how-to with lessons learned interview, for those of us who are more technology inclined, maybe those of us who can write code and want to build our own registrar to, you know, drop catch or whatever the case may be. So, let me start with a really basic question and make sure that the audience is grounded in the terminology. What is a registrar and how is it different from a registry?

Ray King: Okay, sure. Yeah. So, the way a registry works, there's probably three R's that really matter: it's registry, registrar, registrant. So, a registry



basically maintains the database of names for a given domain extension. So, for example, Verisign manages the domain extension .com, and my other company Top Level Design manages .design. And so, for every domain extension there is a registry that manages that extension. Now, registries are not publicly facing; they sell names to the public through registrars. So, the most popular registrar is GoDaddy which probably most of your listeners have heard of, but as well, there's Network Solutions, Enom, and a pretty long list of registrars. Their job is to sell domain names to the public, and when they do that they check with the registry first and say, "Is the name available"? If so, they sell it and they reserve it from the registry and they then sell that name to a registrant who is someone in the public who buys the name from them.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, perfect. So, you know, it...it's like a manufacturer and a retailer, right?

Ray King: That's right.

Michael Cyger: And so, the retailer sells it directly to the consumer, or if you think about supermarkets you've got the...the produce, you know, suppliers, the people that grow the food delivered to the supermarket, they have the distribution, they do the local marketing, they sell it to...directly to the consumers and then consumers make use of it.

## Ray King: [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: So, it makes perfect sense. So, why, you know, I...I sort of started this interview talking about some problems that people have faced in the past. Why did you decide to build Porkbun?

Ray King: Yeah, so, you know, I've been in the business for a while and I've always been frustrated with the user experience around buying a domain name, setting up your hosting, and your email. It's...it's something that you don't do every day. And because you don't do it every day it's very easy to forget, you know, how to do things and what the terminology means and I



have, you know, like, all of us in the industry have friends and family always asking you, you know, "Where should I go? It's such a pain," you know?

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And so there's that, and so I've always wanted to build something that was easy to use. You know, the...the iPod experience versus the gadget with a hundred buttons, you know? How do we build something that makes it a...a pleasure to register a name and manage it, set up your email, set up your website, and be able to come back to it three months later and not lose your place?

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, and...and I do feel that issue. You know, everybody has heard of certain registrars that exist and I will recommend to people, you know, that say, "I want to go get a domain name. How do I go do it"? And I'll recommend a certain registrar, but I know it's...it's not the best referral. I...I refer them because they've heard of it and so they...they can remember it and they can go there but it's a confusing situation when they log on and the menus don't typically tell you where to go , you know, it wasn't built for end users. So, I completely understand the...the vision that you had for Porkbun. When did it launch? When...when did you actually go live?

Ray King: We launched it in the spring of 2015, so, a year and a half ago I guess.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, and how many domains do you have under management at Porkbun right now?

Ray King: We've got a little bit over eight thousand and the way that breaks down is about, six thousand are in the new TLD space and of that a pretty good portion are...are wiki, inc, and design which are our, you know, the



registry side of the business. Those are our three TLDs. And then the other, you know, twenty five hundred or so are com, net, org, as well as a smattering of ccTLDs like .us, .co, .tv, etc.

Michael Cyger: Got it. And is the registry...is Porkbun profitable today?

Ray King: No. No. You have to have more names to be profitable. It's...it's somewhat of a numbers game but I think it's like a little plant. You have to plant the, you know, and then it grows over time.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And we probably need to hit maybe a hundred thousand names or so, you know, before it's profitable.

Michael Cyger: Got it. And of course it depends on the business model and we're going to get more into that later on so we'll find out why you would need to reach a hundred thousand domains in order for it to be profitable.

Ray King: Sure.

Michael Cyger: And I want to understand the...this opportunity, the income opportunity, the expenses associated with building and operating a registrar, the risks involved, but before we do I want to take a step back and learn a little bit more about your background as a founder and entrepreneur.

Ray King: Okay.

Michael Cyger: You've been an entrepreneur your entire life. You're one of the few people in the industry that actually has his own Wikipedia page, Ray. One of the many claims to fame that you have that you wouldn't actually claim but I will say, especially in the domain name industry, is that you founded SnapNames in 2000 and then grew it to a forty nine million dollar company, selling it in 2007 for thirty million dollars to oversee.net. Is that information correct that I pulled from Wikipedia?



Ray King: Yeah, that's pretty much right.

Michael Cyger: Awesome. And so, you've been a programmer all your life. When...what gave you the idea to build SnapNames to start with?

Ray King: Oh, it...I wanted a domain. I wanted raysworld.com. I think it was, you know, back in the Wayne's World era, just as a, you know, kind of a personal site, and I checked its availability and someone had it, a guy named Ray out in Pennsylvania. So, I called him up and I was prepared to pay money to buy it...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...And he...he was kind of a great guy. He's like, "No, no, I've got this other name I can use, and I'm not really using that name. I'm just going to let it expire. It's coming up in the next month or two." So I said, "Great," put the phone down and, you know, when the name expired I...I kind of went to go grab, you know, register it, and...and it wasn't available. So, I said, "Okay, maybe I've got to wait a couple of days. I'll go check back and check back." I called Network Solutions, you know, at the time the...the only registrar...the...the main registrar at the time and they said, "Well, there's no...oh, we can't tell you when it's going to be available. You know, you've got to just keep checking," because at the time there was no defined process to...to kind of rinse a name and make it available again. So, I started checking and then, you know, having compulsive disorder, you know, the more I checked the more I had to check. So, I was checking every day, then twice a day.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: But getting kind of obsessed and finally just wrote a piece of software to check it to see if it was available. And there is actually no command like that either, so what I did was just check the Whois record and



just compared...did a compare command against the one that I checked an hour before.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And just basically looked for any changes. Any time a change occurred in the Whois record of any sort to then push me out and email and let me know, "Hey, something's happening with this domain name." And then eventually I got the name. It was, you know, a few months later or whatever. And then, you know, the more I told the story, like, almost everyone I knew who was an entrepreneur of any type had a name or ten that they wanted...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...And they're like, "Hey, can you watch this or watch that"? And then eventually that turned into what I called the...the database of desire. So we made this, you know, kind of accumulated more and more names that people wanted and then just, you know, kind of continued to check. In fact, the first...the name of the company originally was Names Wanted.

Michael Cyger: Names Wanted.

Ray King: Yeah, we had a...like a Western theme, you know, the...the sheriff's hat. Like...

Michael Cyger: Pew pew! Yeah.

Ray King: Right. [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: That's awesome.

Ray King: Yeah. Yeah.

Michael Cyger: You know, I just love...and...and I...I started programming when I was really young. I...I never became that skilled at it but I love to hear



stories about how people with some coding skills, in your case, much...much more coding skills than I had, are able to, like, just solve the problems that they're having. I had Mike Carson on from park.io and he...and he wanted to grab great .io's because he knew he...he wanted one for his own startup, he had his other friends that wanted to grab them, so he just built his own and he knew...he figured out how it was dropping and...and wrote a script that grabbed them and so, love stories of entrepreneurship like that where people just make it happen, that's, you know, that's why America is...is...a lot of countries are great but America in general...because you're American.

Ray King: Hopefully.

Michael Cyger: So...so you wrote SnapNames and it was just grabbing these domains that were expiring and nobody else was grabbing them at the time, but over the years SnapNames partnered with certain registrars like BulkRegister, Directi, Domain.com, Dotster, Epik, Moniker, and so basically these registrars would know when domains are expiring and then they would partner with SnapNames and say, "Before they actually expire and drop from the registry, you can sell it for me," right?

Ray King: Okay, right, so there's...I'm going to unpack that into two questions.

Michael Cyger: Please.

Ray King: The first reason people partner with registrars was because every registrar had access...a certain amount of access to the registry, and that was measured in threads. So, to start with, every registrar had forty threads and then eventually they began to shrink that down until in the end they had, like, one thread, but...

Michael Cyger: ICANN would shrink it down so you only had one...well who?

Ray King: Well, Verisign...if you're trying to catch a .com name Verisign would shrink, you know...



Michael Cyger: Verisign, gotcha, the registry.

Ray King: They're...they're...they're the ones you'd go to to grab a name in what we'd call the drop.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: So, basically what happens, when a...when a...when a name expires it goes through three phases which is registrar grace, redemption grace, and then pending delete. And then the registry...the registry rinses and makes the name available again to the public afterwards. That's the normal drop process and that's why, you know, we called it snapping, because when we...we named the company from Name Wanted to SnapNames everything, like, we would snap the names.

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: And a lot of people call it now drop catching. So it drops and you try and catch it [inaudible].

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: That's the typical process. So, the reason you had to partner with more registrars is because the more access you had to the registry, the more likely you were to be able to catch a name because, you know, they're not human beings sitting around saying, "Oh, you know, did it become available yesterday"? What ends up happening is that more and more people understood the timing so when a name became available you would just hit the registry and the faster you could hit it, like, in fact, we didn't even do, like, check, to see if it's available and then add if it's available. We just do add, add, add, add, check, and that's why, you know, when you barrage the registry with add commands it's called an add storm. You know, so the more registrar credentials you had, the more you could add storm the registry and...and that's the original reason you had more...you needed more, we call creds...



Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...Really registrar accreditations and the...I think you might have asked a question around transfer fulfillment. [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: So, when domains drop at a certain registrar before they actually get removed from the registry database, they are sold through...

Ray King: [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: ...Sites like SnapNames.

Ray King: Right. Right. So, there's a second thing that happened, and this was probably the most important innovation that we came up with during that period of time, and it was called transfer fulfillment, but basically it was a way for the registrar to maintain control of the expiring name as opposed to passing it back to the registry...

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: ...Which most of the time was Verisign and...and...and to get it through the normal drop. So, in a...in a transfer fulfillment situation the registrar would mimic the redemption grace period because redemption grace is thirty days and it's their...let...let me back up for a second, the...the three periods are registrar grace, that is a period of time which is up to forty five days where the registrar has that extra period of time to try and get the registrant to renew by, "Come on, you missed the date...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...You were on vacation. Please renew your name." And after that it goes to a mandatory redemption grace period which must be thirty days, and during that period of time the domain name goes dark, the website goes dark, the emails go dark, and that's a protection because if you



were...somehow you weren't getting the emails, you don't want a business to lose their domain name. So if you're...if you're...if the name goes dark then they would immediately notice that. They could call their registrar, pay a little bit extra...

Michael Cyger: Yup.

Ray King: ...And get the name back. So, that's a thirty day fail-safe. And then the last five days is where the registry prepares the name to be made available to the public. So, in a transfer fulfillment situation...what...what you're doing is...the registrar has a...their terms and conditions are changed so that they can mimic the thirty day redemption...redemption grace period within the register...within the first registrar grace period to create that same protection, and then instead of giving the name back to the registry they would then make the name available to someone else who might want it, and that's how that works.

Michael Cyger: Right, and...and oftentimes it's through an auction partner like SnapNames or NameJet or, like...

Ray King: Right. That's the other thing is, yeah, the expiring...expiring name auction is run by SnapNames or, you know, Pool or NameJet, exactly...would allow you to...if there were multiple people who wanted the name then they can run a quick auction and figure out who gets it.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, what...what was your most important lesson learned from building SnapNames from the ground up?

Ray King: I think the, you know, we went through...I think these...these kind of innovations were...were great and we became very good at getting names but, you know, we ended up building our business on...on the margin derived by selling those names and ultimately, you know, did...did okay with that. But I think we kind of missed one of the key changes in the industry which was when, you know, people began to really figure out how to monetize the names even before selling them. And a lot of our clients, guys



like, you know, Frank Schilling who I know has been on your show a lot, obviously smart and, you know, keen...he saw this and did very well acquiring names and a lot of other people did too. And at the time we were very focused on...on serving our customers and so we were just, you know, transfer agents basically and I think that we really were in an amazing position and could have captured a lot more of the value than we did. So, and that's probably our biggest mistake...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: I think in...in the process. Besides that I think I would have built a registrar, along with, you know, at that time I think we had so many customers who loved our service and to be able to do more and, you know, really give them a way to manage their names I...I think would have been a good business for us also...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...And probably would have given us a lot more staying power because ultimately the business was hard to defend. So, although we did, you know, you give me credit for kind of reaching a high revenue point, which is...which is true, it was, you know, not a very defensible place to be over time, especially not as a registrar ourselves.

Michael Cyger: Yeah. You know, and it's funny, I follow a lot of the news on various websites like Domain Name Wire, Andrew Allemann's website and...and I...I see the patents that are coming out almost weekly from companies like GoDaddy and others. Do you think that...and...and maybe you did, I didn't check...did you have a patent for drop catching domains and...and selling them to third parties that would have made your business more defensible?

Ray King: We did file several patents and...and you can see what they look like, but ultimately we did not feel that they were defensible in a way that



would have allowed us to, you know, really kind of say, "No, that's...that's our business exclusively."

Michael Cyger: Yeah, gotcha. Thanks for sharing a little bit about your professional background. I feel like I'm...I'm not doing it justice to only talk about SnapNames for a little while but it does give the audience a flavor of what you've helped build in the past. Today you founded Top Level Domain...Design. You have three TLDs that are currently on sale right now, .design, .inc, and .wiki, and you have two pending still I believe, .llc and .gay, is that correct?

Ray King: That's correct.

Michael Cyger: Why is having a registrar like Porkbun and...and creating a direct connection to customers important to your company?

Ray King: Well, I mean, most businesses, it's...it's critical to know your customer and artistry is separated, you know, for reasons that, you know, date back to 1998, but I think it's really important to know who you're selling to. So, you know, we go to a lot of trade shows for industry events that are interior designers getting together, graphic designers, writers, etc., and I, you know, I go to a lot of them myself and I absolutely love talking directly with the designers, the writers, you know, or collaborators in the case of Wiki, about the new domain program. A lot of people don't know about it so just, their eyes light up like, "Wow," you know, "Didn't know that was available."

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And...and then once they get it, just kind of, you know, hearing them think through, you know, what great name would be available for them, but also the questions, you know? Are people going to...are my customers going to be able to not type .com? Is my email going to work? How much trouble is it going to be to move my website over? You know, all those kind of things. So, we have hundreds, you know, if not thousands of conversations and I think it's...it's...gives us the ability to close our eyes and just really



picture our...our target customer very well, and that is really important when you're crafting your messaging to your audience, designing your products, figuring out what pricing would work for them, etc.

Michael Cyger: Now you could do all of those things without having a registrar as well, couldn't you?

Ray King: Well, you could, but, you know, if you're a registry you're...you're not generally customer facing. The registrar is customer facing so it's...it's harder being that...because you're more of an observer.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: But with actually...with the customer and asking them to sign up for, you know, for a product, I think that's when you get the answers that are...are more credible and real.

Michael Cyger: Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. So, when you decided to develop Porkbun, you said you launched in spring 2015, when did you actually decide to build your own registrar and how long did it take before it went live in the spring of 2015?

Ray King: Probably six months prior or so.

Michael Cyger: Six months of...of basically architecture and coding, UI, you know, what's the customer experience going to be and then coding to that?

Ray King: Yeah. Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, and what are the requirements to buy a...a registrar credential from ICANN?

Ray King: Well, you don't actually buy a credential from ICANN. You apply...

Michael Cyger: Okay.



Ray King: ...To...to become a registrar. You can buy a registrar credential from somebody else.

Michael Cyger: Yep.

Ray King: So, with ICANN what you would do is...you would say to them, "Hey, I want to be a registrar," and then they would...you...you fill out the form. You pay a thirty five hundred dollar, I think, application fee. You've got to demonstrate that you're a company in good standing. I think you have to have seventy thousand dollars in the bank or so, like, show them a bank statement, make a disclosure about, you know, who owns the company and if there's any cross-ownership with other registries or registrars and...and probably a few other things. And...and that goes into your application process, you hand that...give that to ICANN and then if they're...if...if they're satisfied with, you know, everything you present then I want to say it takes about six months, but I think that time varies based on how...how many applications there are in the queue, and then you get your...your credential.

Michael Cyger: Gotcha. And so, why would somebody want to buy a credential versus just applying for a credential? You know, I know, for example, DropCatch has been, I think, buying hundreds of credentials over the past year to get more threads to be able to catch domains that are dropping like we previously talked about. Why would they want to buy these registrar credentials rather than just apply for a hundred at once?

Ray King: I think it's a matter of just timing and cost. I mean, maybe someone else has a credential they don't need or not really using.

Michael Cyger: Yep.

Ray King: It's easier to just, you know, hand it off to somebody else and save you the time and effort of...of going through the process yourself.



Michael Cyger: And ICANN doesn't oversee when a credential sells from one company to another, like, they don't go back and verify that they're actually in good standing and that they have, you know, money in the bank, things like that?

Ray King: I...I think there's probably a requirement that the gaining company matches those same criteria....

Michael Cyger: Oh, yeah. Okay.

Ray King: ... [inaudible] actually the mechanics of how that happens.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: I haven't bought a cred for a while, so, yup.

Michael Cyger: Gotcha. And you have bought creds in the past, especially with, like, SnapNames?

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Interesting. And so, what does a cred typically cost on the market? Like, if you had to just estimate today?

Ray King: I don't think it's that much. I'm...I'm going to say five or ten...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ... Thousand dollars or something like...

Michael Cyger: Somewhere in that order or magnitude?

Ray King: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. it's not...I mean, yeah. Yeah.



Michael Cyger: Gotcha. Alright, so, you decided to apply for your own credential or you decided to buy a credential for Porkbun?

Ray King: We applied for our own.

Michael Cyger: Okay. And then once you...once you were granted...did you start working on the registrar, you know, coding it, building it before you were granted the credential or did you go in series?

Ray King: We did parallel.

Michael Cyger: Parallel. And then, you...did you build everything? I think, you know, I stated earlier that you built everything from the ground up. Is that a correct statement or did you decide to buy some technology and then integrate it in?

Ray King: We...we built it mostly from the ground up. The pieces that, like, I think when...when we first put it out we didn't have a good email solution so if someone buys smith.design and wants to set up jane@smith.design, the...so we did there is we integrated Google apps for work and that was a, you know, good solution and allowed people to set up custom email addresses and things like that, and it gave you some additional functionality and, you know, but it came at a cost. So, it's a monthly cost which we had to pass on to our users and then eventually we ended up, you know, writing that piece ourselves. But we have a kind of, build it here mindset more than, you know, buy the pieces...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...Separately.

Michael Cyger: And you can build it yourself. You have the...you have the know-how and you can do...it just takes time. So, some...in...in the case of the email you bought something off the shelf or you plugged in Google apps but



then when you had the time to build your own you replaced it and pulled it out.

Ray King: Right. And all the pieces that I don't think we would build ourselves so, like, we have a website builder, and we're partnered with Weebly to provide that, you know, that would be a big chunk of work, and I don't think we would be in a good position to compete with, you know, the Squarespace, Wix, Weebly's of the world. Better to...to integrate what, you know, what they're doing and then similarly, you know, we offer cPanel for hosting. You know, that's a lot of technology there as well.

Michael Cyger: Yeah. Yeah. And so, you know, the...the core functionality is me as an end user going on your website typing in mike.design or mike.com and then you telling me if it's available and how much that is?

Ray King: Correct.

Michael Cyger: And clearly you don't have all of that data on your website. You're website, you know, I type that query into your website...your website goes out via, I guess APA...API calls to the registry database to look it up?

Ray King: That's right. Yeah. So, if you type mike.com, we'd...we'd hit...well actually we would just tell you that's not available. We're not [inaudible] for that. No, I'm just kidding. But yeah, we'd hit Verisign for that if you wanted mike.design we'd, you know, we'd hit the top...our, you know, the registry backend for Top Level Design. So you have...

Michael Cyger: And then you already know the pricing because you're set up to sell that top level domain, so you parse it. You know that you've got the pricing and you can offer that domain...top level domain. If I typed in some country code that was, you know, not even automated, you would probably come back immediately and say, "We don't service this country code."

Ray King: Right, so actually let me give you two thoughts on that. One, yeah, if it's not automated we can't...we don't have any manual services so we



wouldn't support that registry. And we don't support all TLDs. We support a lot of them. Most of the new TLDs, we're getting to the country codes kind of in order of...of importance and how popular they are. The...we generally do hit the registry though because oftentimes you don't know if the name is premium. So, that's kind of a new thing with new TLDs.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: It, you know, it's not just, is it available, but is it premium? Because it might return a different price and we have to know that before we present the price.

Michael Cyger: Ah. Okay. So, if I want mike.design it would hit your registry's backend, whoever the operator...operator is. Is it CentralNic or NewStar?

Ray King: CentralNic for us.

Michael Cyger: CentralNic. So, it hits the...CentralNic's databases. It comes back and says, "It is available but it's going to cost you ten thousand dollars a month or a year," or whatever the case may be...

Ray King: Right.

Michael Cyger: ...And then you present that data to me as the end user?

Ray King: Right, it's not quite that expensive but yes.

Michael Cyger: What, mike.design isn't? I'm going to buy it.

Ray King: Alright, I've got a special deal for you afterwards.

Michael Cyger: So, we talked about...so that's...I understand how that works from a high level...I don't know how I'd actually program it but I...I understand it. And so, we talked about the...the types of services that you offer and...right before I hit record and it was refreshing to hear that you



offer, you know, free Whois privacy which I believe I have to pay for at most registrars out there, that when I want to search for and transfer a domain out of Porkbun I can get my auth code right there on the screen. I know a lot of people complain about Network Solutions, that you have to wait a week in order to get that auth code emailed to you if it...if it even goes out. And we talked about SSL Certificates for people that are paying for hosting on your service and I was telling you that my developer spent time integrating Let's Encrypt...it's a...it's an initiative that gives free SSLs to companies but you have to program it and you have to renew your certificate every three months and so you built that programming into Porkbun so if I sign up for hosting I can have a free SSL Certificate that automatically renews as long as I have hosting with you.

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Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, that's phenomenal.



Ray King: That's right. You just...you just answered the question.

Michael Cyger: I know. What other things do you do at Porkbun that people might be interested to know that you built?

Ray King: Yeah, well I think the...our mindset is...is how do we want it to work? The auth code thing is just, I mean, it's...the registrar knows the auth code so why make it difficult, you know, for people to get it?

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And, you know, we want people to stay with us because they want to stay with us, not because they can't figure out how not to stay with us. So, you know, you hit the button, you get the auth code. That's...it's just...there's no other way that should work. And, you know, and Whois privacy, you know, one of the things that we also suffer with, any...all domain registrants suffer with, is that once...people say, you know, when they sign up for the first domain name all of a sudden, "Hey, I'm getting spam," and it's really a problem. And so, we think that Whois privacy is...is something that, you know, everyone should have the option to have or not have and...and it should have it also at the start because one of the problems with offering as an add-on is that you buy the name and you think, "Well, maybe I'll add Whois privacy later," you add it later, it's too late because the Whois data's already been scraped...

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: ...And now people have it. So, you can't ever undo...you can't ever make it really private unless you have that from the start. So, we don't want to sit there and explain that all to people. We just say, "Well hey, you know what? It's not a big deal. We're just going to make them all private to start with, and if you don't want it private," which you might not, maybe you want to make the name available for sale or something like that. You might want people to...to be able to reach you, "You click a button. It's makes it unprivate."



Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: If you change your mind, you click a button, it turns it private again. It just happens, like, takes two seconds. [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: Yeah, and I love that. I...I recently registered...I was chatting with my Sales Manager...we...we have a print magazine here on Bainbridge Island, and she was saying that her husband wanted a certain domain name. And so, you know, like any domain industry professional I quickly typed in Whois to look and see if it was registered or not and it wasn't available. So, I'm like, "I'm just going to register it right now for you. I don't care if you want it or not. I'm just going to get it and if you don't want it then it's, you know, eight bucks out of my pocket, no big deal...

Ray King: Right.

Michael Cyger: ...And I'll let it expire." And immediately, like, the next day, I started getting spam from...from website developers. It's amazing how much spam I got on that one domain.

Ray King: It's crazy.

Michael Cyger: It is. So, I thought the idea behind privacy was that my details are kept private so you can't see michael@webexmedia.com, but there's an email address that's, you know, some convoluted...

Ray King: Yeah. [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: ...Numbers and...and letters. But the email still forwards.

Ray King: Correct. Right, so there's...but it's better though because, one, we're not giving your email out.

Michael Cyger: Right.



Ray King: Right.

Michael Cyger: That's true.

Ray King: Secondly, we can filter, so we can take out a lot of the spam...

Michael Cyger: Ah.

Ray King: ...As it comes through. So, those...so it doesn't prevent you from getting all the spam but it's certainly a lot better than just having your naked email address out there available on the web.

Michael Cyger: That is true. And do you...I thought I heard of a registrar in the past actually changing the email address on a regular basis to stop people who have scraped from emailing.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Is that something that is a good practice for a registrar as well?

Ray King: I think it you have the...if you're not...if you have the Whois privacy and it's really easy to use then I don't think you need to do that.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: So, our...our thinking is, you know, make it simple. Don't make it something you have to...people have to think about, don't want to pay extra for it or not. It should be a given, you know...

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: ...In today's day and age. And, you know, we feel the same way about the SSL Certs. The SSL Cert's kind of a bigger deal because it's, you



know, generally something that costs more, you know? It could be, you know, for a proper SSL Cert that gives you the ability to protect the dub, dub, dub, as well as the...the...just the dot name, you know, you're generally talking, you know, one, two, three hundred bucks a year, something like that...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...As well as an effort to install. But the web is better off encrypted and the...so many people are, you know, don't know not to use public networks when they're in the airport or they travel to foreign countries and, you know, logging onto websites and things like that, and it's important for us to build a better web. So, we'd like to see the whole web encrypted and I think that that's the philosophy that the, you know, folks who put Let's Encrypt out use also which is why I think they made it available to everyone free of charge. So, all we did was basically say, "Let's...let's make that available to our customers free of charge as well and take the hassle out of it."

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: So, to buy a name, even if you're not using our hosting, you buy a name, just click the SSL button and you can get the cert and you can install it yourself, you know, on your own web hosting environment, or...

Michael Cyger: Oh, really?

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Wow. And so, you'll do the automatic renewals and I can still install it on my server? Or it renews...

Ray King: Yeah. [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: ...So then I need to update my server credentials?



Ray King: Correct.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: I can't automatically renew it on your server...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...But if you use our hosting, you know, then we can automatically renew it. I can make it free.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: [inaudible] Which is the same as it would be if you bought it somewhere else.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Now I can make it even better which is free and auto-install and auto-updated if you [inaudible].

Michael Cyger: Yeah. Yeah, Let's Encrypt is phenomenal, you know? I...I...I hunted around for a cheaper SSL Certificate that still provide all the functionality and I think I was paying at least seventy nine or ninety nine dollars a year, so...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: ...It's fantastic. So, what technology stack do you use? What programming language did you decide to build Porkbun in and why?

Ray King: We're just using a LAMP stack. I think it's, you know, simple and easy to work with and it's what we know and of course, you know, there's some other technology built around that, but that's...that's primarily what we use.



Michael Cyger: Okay, and then you're using PHP as the language for operate, you know, the screens that I see being delivered through my web browser, those are all PHP?

Ray King: Yup.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, pretty...pretty standard. And if somebody wanted to build their own registrar they could really build it in whatever they want if they know asp.net, they could do it in asp.net. If they wanted to build in Ruby on Rails, they could do it in Ruby.

Ray King: Absolutely.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Okay. So what do...what...what's left on your development road map? You know, I know you're rolling things out over time. What can people expect at Porkbun? What's...what's in your vision?

Ray King: Yeah, so I think we have, you know, kind of the...the basics, you know, pretty much complete. You know, there's...there's always work on...on the user experience so we're constantly interviewing people and...and talking about their experiences. We want to make it like a, you know, like a honed pearl, something that, you know, really, really feels and works great. We're also working a lot with organizations that are...I think a lot of the new TLDs have a...a niche focus, not all of them, but some...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...You know, certainly, so, whether it's .plumber, or .law, or like ours, .design for designers, .inc for writers, bloggers. You've got these entities...it could be like a LinkedIn group, you know, and you've got organizations like



AGDA, the American...the Australian Graphic Design Association, or IDSA, the Industrial Design Society of America, and we're working with a lot of those organizations to bring the appropriate domain extensions to their members. And so, one of the things that...when we...we do that we often want to provide those members with an even easier on-ramp, maybe a better deal in the first year, maybe free website builder or, you know, something that's appropriate given the audience that they already have and so, what ends up happening is you need to figure out, well, who's eligible for that? So, we call that eligibility verification, and then over time, who's still eligible for it? You know, who's no longer a member? Who just became a member?

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: That type of thing. So, it turns out that that's a little more work than you'd expect. You have to either, like, in some cases we use an API which is great.

Michael Cyger: Yup.

Ray King: You know, the organization's large enough to have their own database and...and can provide an API. And in other cases we built some interface management tools which allow them to update their member list, and maybe it's a standard CSV format as...as frequently as they wish.

Michael Cyger: Uh huh.

Ray King: And...and then get some reportings [inaudible] like, "Who's taking advantage of the offer"?

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: That type of thing. So, I think our focus is, you know, we're not GoDaddy, we're not out there selling a gazillion names to, you know, the public directly, although we do do that but...



Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...You know, a lot of our focus is finding these entities that will be more targeted towards a given audience and trying to find a really smooth way to work with them where their members are delighted by, "Wow, the name's available. Wow, I just clicked the button. It was so easy."

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: "I've got my website, my new email. I'm going to print some new business cards." So, we want to be able to provide that kind of seamless experience and that's I think where a lot of our energy is right now.

Michael Cyger: Totally get it, and that's why you need a registrar, because if you have a registry, you have the .design registry and you want to sell more .design's, you need to form those relationships with these groups like you're talking about. But then because they're all over the place with respect to their maturity...technology maturity level, you need to the flexibility to take a CSV or an Excel spreadsheet of...of their members or plug into their systems, and you need your own registrar in order to do that, because you can't go to a GoDaddy and ask them to set up all this custom coding for you to be able to suck in, you know, and validate people's...

Ray King: [inaudible] Yeah, GoDaddy doesn't, I mean, they're great partners by the way...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...But for them to get into working with an organization that has, you know, five hundred members...

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: ...It's...it's...they...I don't think they can spend the time. They can't scale that small.



Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: Whereas for me, if I find an organization with five hundred members I want to meet them.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: You know?

Michael Cyger: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ray King: I want...I want to be able to, you know, get to those people. It's worth it for...for us.

Michael Cyger: That totally makes sense.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: So, for .design and...and .wiki and your other TLDs that might come out in the future, you make money on the registry level because you're selling them at a wholesale price but then your registrar actually makes money on it as well by selling the domain name and getting a markup, by selling hosting, by selling email. And so, what is the business model for Porkbun today?

Ray King: Well, they're...they're two companies, right? So, Top Level Design and Porkbun are...are two separate companies...

Michael Cyger: Okay.

Ray King: ...And, you know, at Top Level Design we've got, as you've mentioned, .design with about fifty thousand names registered, .wiki and inc with about twenty thousand-ish each, and those names are still primarily sold through large registrars, you know, like GoDaddy and...and some others.



So, that's...that's our...our core registry business. On the registrar side as I mentioned before, you know, we're just getting that going and...and I'm actually having a lot of fun with it. I've always kind of wanted to build a registrar and although we don't have that many registrations yet, we have a lot of very happy customers. There's always transfers coming in. There's, you know, with a very rare exception, nothing going the other way which is an indication...

Michael Cyger: That's great.

Ray King: ...To me that people are, you know, happy with the...the...they probably come in because they like the pricing but then they're happy because they like the user interface...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...And...and the other things that we offer.

Michael Cyger: So, tell me about the pricing, Ray. How does that work?

Ray King: Oh, yeah sure. So, basically what we do at Porkbun is we mark everything up a...a dollar, so, actually with the exception of com, net, org which we don't even mark up at all, but we mark up a dollar plus the credit card fee. So, you know, if you had a name that, like, I don't know, I think .design, you know, is a wholesale thirty three dollars per year, and by time you get through with the dollar and credit card fee it's like, I don't know, thirty five or thirty six bucks, something like that. So, it's...it's pretty good pricing. I think it's almost second to none if you look at kind of, you know, the aggregate where...we're...we're trying to also begin to incorporate more of kind of the first year offerings that other registries provide so that we can, you know, be as competitive as possible all through the pricing spectrum. As I said before, free Whois, free SSL Certs, email's two dollars a month for an email address that's customized to your domain name, hosting is eight dollars a month or if you buy a year I think it's eighty dollars, so six sixty



seven a month, something like that if you buy...buy, you know, a year at a time. We use cPanel again to provide that.

Michael Cyger: Let me come back to the email and ask...because I have another question about that. So, the domain registration's a dollar over the price you pay or the whole...the wholesale price of your own domains or the price you pay to other registries.

Ray King: Correct.

Michael Cyger: That's a phenomenal deal. I...I, you know...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: That might be second to none. I know that at GoDaddy I'm a part of the Domain Discount Club because I have a certain number of domains there and they offer me discounted pricing but I haven't actually compared their pricing versus yours. I suspect yours might be better.

Ray King: Yeah, and ours is also, like, it's very clean and simple. So, it's not like, "Hey, it's a big first year deal," then it gets, you know, a big hike up in the second year.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: It's just a dollar over.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: So, it's kind of a simple thing. You know you're...you're going to be, you know, not paying too much of a markup...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...You know, in...in future years.



Michael Cyger: So ...

Ray King: It's...it's very simple. It's a very honest kind of straightforward approach.

Michael Cyger: Yeah. So, a...a hundred thousand domains then would be a hundred thousand dollars in profit, you know, gross profit, not obviously...

Ray King: Yeah, just for...

Michael Cyger: ...Obviously you have operational costs but...

Ray King: Right.

Michael Cyger: ...So, when...when you're at a hundred thousand domains let's say, Ray, how much of your total Porkbun revenue do you think would come from domain registration renewals and how much do you think would come from email, hosting, and other add-on services, roughly?

Ray King: That's a good question, one that we've been digging into more recently because as we, you know, begin to get people up and running, like, in the beginning we saw people just kind of coming over for the price but now we're beginning to see people dig into the services, so at this moment we're still making more on the markup but I think over time it's definitely going to cross over and the additional services will be the, you know, the bulk of the revenue because, you know, those, you know, you might...even an email at two dollars a month, you know, might be twenty four dollars in a year. I have to sell twenty four domain names to, you know?

Michael Cyger: To equal that revenue, exactly.

Ray King: Yeah. Yeah.



Michael Cyger: And if you look at GoDaddy and where they're going...they're...they're going [inaudible] hosting. They make money on the domains but then they make, you know, X times the number of money from hosting.

Ray King: Sure.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Sure. Yeah. [inaudible]

Michael Cyger: Okay, that makes sense. And so then, back on the emails, two dollars per month, which seems very reasonable. I love my Gmail service because they've got great spam filters, right? There's so much spam that's going through nowadays. I want them to catch the spam and put it in a spam folder that I need to review. But the stuff that's clearly spam spam, like black spam, I don't even want to see that hit my folder.

Ray King: Right.

Michael Cyger: How do your services compare, and how do you even build something like that when you...when Google, a very innovative company that...that focuses on programming is focused on that?

Ray King: Yeah, well you can still use a Gmail client, you know, to get access to your email and stuff so, you know...

Michael Cyger: Ah.

Ray King: ...We're not planning to build all that infrastructure. That's, you know, we don't...we can't compete on...on that kind of stuff.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Yeah.



Michael Cyger: Okay, so basically you'll set up an email...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: ...Account and then I can use a client to connect to it like Outlook or I can use a...

Ray King: Sure.

Michael Cyger: ...Gmail alias to connect into it.

Ray King: Right, and you have all the same spam control that you would get...right.

Michael Cyger: Gotcha. Do you have a web mail interface as well?

Ray King: Yeah. Yeah, we do. You can...there's a...like, once you...if you just go to our site and say, "Hey, you know, set up email," you can just click over. It opens a separate, you know, browser interface and you just...and people just use that sometimes to just see, is it working, you know? But most people ultimately, you know, will want to use a...a mail client that they're familiar with.

Michael Cyger: Yeah, that makes sense.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: And so, one of the things that I often love to have is the catchall. Do you have an opportunity to say, "Yeah, set up Michael at mike.design," but then do a catch-all so any email coming into...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: ...mike.design gets caught?



Ray King: Yup.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Sure.

Michael Cyger: Very cool. One other question, technology question, and this is for Chris in DNAcademy because he uses...he doesn't use, well he uses drop catchers like SnapNames but he also uses a desktop drop catcher and he wants an API to connect into a registrar, and I mentioned as I was preparing for this, you've got an API...if...if people are using drop catch software on their own computers, Ray, can they connect into your API and then use your credentials to try and snap a name back as soon as it drops from the registry's database?

Ray King: That's a good question. We don't have anyone doing that currently. So, we have the API mainly for our partners so you can do, you know, checkin registration and stuff like that...

Michael Cyger: Uh huh.

Ray King: ...But it's not designed to, you know, really kind of work in a high speed environment for drop catching.

Michael Cyger: Gotcha. Okay, so not yet but maybe sometime in the future?

Ray King: Yeah, sure.

Michael Cyger: So, let me ask you...now that we've talked about technology, we've talked about your business model and how you plan to make money and...and how that connects into your registry where clearly if you sell your own domain names you have partnerships, you're making money both on the registry side and the registrar side...let me asking you about branding, Ray, right? Everybody in the domain name industry talks about branding.



There was recently a discussion forum thread on NamePros asking for input on the Porkbun service. People are like, "Hey, this seems like a good deal. Has anybody used it, and what do you think"? And it seemed like half the people on that thread loved the name Porkbun and half the people thought it was terrible...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: ...The worst name you could think of. Better change it now than wait, you know, two years. What do you think when you get feedback like that?

Ray King: I...I read that thread that you're talking about and it hurt me a little bit when I first saw it of course, you know, because you don't want to hear anyone, you know, unhappy with a...a name you've chosen.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: But I, you know, pork buns are delicious.

Michael Cyger: They are. If you don't know what a pork bun is go to Google, type in pork bun and look at the...and click image search. They are delicious.

Ray King: They're absolutely delicious. They're one of my favorite foods, and I think that it's...it...it matches kind of how we are. I mean, we're Portland. We're...we're fun and quirky and we, you know, we feel like the name's great and I...I think that it's...it's okay to have...have a name that some people like and some people don't. I'd rather be memorable than...than bland, you know?

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And so, we're just going to have some fun with it and not worry too much about, you know, whether people like the name or not.



Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Alright, and then...so, from a business standpoint you own porkbun.com. Let me ask you this, because when all the new TLDs came out, as a business owner, as a trademark owner, it was a lot more work for me and a lot more calm...a lot more cost to make sure that I was buying defensive registrations. What do you think at porkbun.com? Are you buying defensive registrations in all these TLDs that's adding to your cost basis?

Ray King: No.

Michael Cyger: No.

Ray King: I don't think...I mean, this...there's too many TLDs out there and I think, you know, people browsing are going to become more and more savvy over time. So, I'm just not too worried about it.

Michael Cyger: So, .com is still the de facto and if you tell people, "Come to Porkbun and get your domains registered there..."

Ray King: Well, the reason we chose .com. We...we, you know, we thought long and hard about choosing one of, you know, a new TLD and because we're selling a lot of different new TLDs we didn't want to, like, pick one to focus because that...we thought that might be confusing.

Michael Cyger: Right.

Ray King: So, you know, we went with porkbun.com. So, I mean, of course com is still, you know, very generic for folks, and...and we didn't want to make it, like, focused on design or wiki or something like that. That's why we chose that.

Michael Cyger: Did you think about porkbun.domains or porkbun.tech?



Ray King: We did think about a few. I'm not sure we thought about those exact ones but we did, and at the time...remember we started this before a lot of the new TLDs were...

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: ...Launched.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: So, they weren't really available at the time.

Michael Cyger: Right, that makes sense. But did you buy any of those domains at a...as a defensive registration?

Ray King: Nope.

Michael Cyger: No? Okay. And you're not worried about it. If...if somebody's watching this show and they're, like, "porkbun.domains, I'm going to snake that because Ray may pay me more in the future." You're not worried?

Ray King: Just buy it at Porkbun.

Michael Cyger: That's all you ask.

Ray King: That's all I ask.

Michael Cyger: Hold it as long as you want. Just go register at Porkbun.

Ray King: Exactly.

Michael Cyger: Alright, and how much did you pay for porkbun.com, Ray?

Ray King: Nothing, I've always...I had it a long time ago.



Michael Cyger: Ah, you've loved pork buns all your life so you had it.

Ray King: I love pork buns, right.

Michael Cyger: What is it, a hand registration for you at one point?

Ray King: I think it was one of the ones we got when we first started SnapNames and we were, you know, looking through, you know, kind of the ones that other people didn't want. It was like, "Well, that's a good name." It's a delicious name actually so I grabbed it back then I think.

Michael Cyger: How many domains do you personally have holding for investment, not for, you know, part of your business?

Ray King: Not that many. I don't know, a few hundred.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: What's your best domain? What's the one you're holding out, you're like, "Oh, when that one sells I'm going on vacation"?

Ray King: ray.us maybe.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: Nice. What did you not anticipate when you set out to build your own registrar that you wish you knew?

Ray King: I...I think it probably took a little longer than we expected so we actually put the pieces out. We always were, like, thinking, "Wow, there's one



more thing we have to do to make it really complete." So, I think it just takes some patience to get all the pieces in place and then getting the word out is, you know, we haven't really started to market it yet and...and it's tough because the existing registrars have so much lion's share. So, that's why our goal is not to, you know, go as mainstream but, you know, kind of work through member organizations and then people who are in the know so, like, you know, people in our industry who understand the difference between, you know, all the different components of, you know, the pricing and first year versus second year and...and can look through a lot of that kind of hype to understand what a really good, fair deal is.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: So, we're hoping it'll catch on, you know, somewhat organically from there.

Michael Cyger: And I...and I didn't ask this specifically, but renewal prices are the same at a dollar over your cost for the domain name?

Ray King: Yup. Yup.

Michael Cyger: Yeah. Great. Anything that I didn't ask you about, Ray, that you wanted to mention?

Ray King: Let's see. You didn't...people generally wonder, you know, why we're so focused on...or why we pick the names we picked and...

Michael Cyger: The top level domains? And so, like, design...

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: ....inc, Wiki.

Ray King: Yeah. Yeah. So, I...I might just say a few words on that.



Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: [inaudible] We've had a...a love for Wikis for a long time going back to, you know, they're used as an internal tool within prior companies and also ICANNwiki which is the non-profit that we run to help people understand the ICANN process because that's both transparent and opaque at the same time.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And...and thought design is also something that's very near and dear. I've...I've always loved great design and I...I consider us to be in an age of design. You know, design is a necessity versus a...just something that makes your thing look more pretty. It's...it's not about that. It's about, you know, I think Apple's taught us it's about form and function and working in this space allows me to work with people who design the products that...that I love, you know? Like...like everything in the Apple store for example.

Michael Cyger: Yeah.

Ray King: And that's...I think that's what keeps us going and we try and, you know, use that same philosophy with how we're developing Porkbun, etc. So anyway...

Michael Cyger: Yeah. I, you know, I need to have you on just to talk about your design background and the company that you had before you founded SnapNames and then how that led to .design and...and then of course SnapNames because there's so much that we didn't talk about. The one thing that I wanted to ask you...I'm always wondering when entrepreneurs launch their own companies whether they're bootstrapping it themselves, whether they're using their own money to...to fund it, or whether they took an outside investment. What have you generally done for Top Level Design, your...your registry company and for Porkbun, your registrar?



Ray King: Yeah, so, I...I work with my brother-in-law and so it's kind of a family business. We haven't gone for outside financing. We did do outside financing for SnapNames.

Michael Cyger: Uh huh.

Ray King: We got some, you know, angel investment and a...a very small fund also that helped us get off the ground, so a little bit of both. Yeah.

Michael Cyger: But for Top Level Domain...Top...Top Level Design, it sounds like you're self-funding it, you and your brother-in-law?

Ray King: Yeah.

Michael Cyger: And then for Porkbun as well?

Ray King: Correct.

Michael Cyger: Yeah. Fantastic. Alright, if you're watching the show and you have any questions, please post them in the comments below this video on DomainSherpa and I'll ask Ray to come back and answer as many as he can. If you received benefit from today's show, learned something new, thought for a few moments about building or buying your own registrar credential, please take a moment to thank today's Sherpa. I'm going to be the first to say thanks to Ray, Ray King, founder and CEO of porkbun.com. Thank you for coming on the DomainSherpa Show, sharing information on how you built your registrar and how that's benefitting your registry and helping you connect better with your customers, and thanks for being a DomainSherpa for others.

Ray King: My pleasure. Thanks for having me, Mike.

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