

## CYBERSPACE

ON THE NET

## Got a cool idea for a domain name? Then go tell Mikey

**T**he legendary and long-for-sale television.com domain name is finally off the auction block, but Mikey the Domain-meister will be happy to sell you another online property. He owns several. The most prominent, bar.com, can be yours for a cool million.



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But this isn't really about money, local Internet entrepreneur Mike O'Connor says. He's looking for "amazingly cool ideas."

O'Connor repeatedly made headlines in recent years for refusing to sell his television.com domain. He turned down a \$50,000 offer from the CNet technology-

information provider in 1996, and last year rejected a \$1.1 million bid from someone he won't name.

All the while, O'Connor says he scrutinized suitors. "I was looking for someone to do something really cool with this domain. I was less interested in the money and more interested in the Internet" and how television.com could be used in a revolutionary way, he explains.

Enter Steeplechase Media and MarkeTVision Direct, which now own 75 percent and 15 percent of a new venture called Television.com.

The companies last week announced plans for "television home pages" that, they claim, will dramatically enhance TV viewing. With properly equipped hardware such as a PC TV-tuner card or a TV-based Internet terminal, the firms say, viewers will be able to surround their television imagery with customized Inter-

net content that originates on the Television.com site. Get details at: [www.mktv.com](http://www.mktv.com).

O'Connor, a minority partner in the Television.com venture, says he is "betting that these guys' vision for TV and the Net will result in something really neat."

That's why he allowed television.com to spawn Television.com without asking Steeplechase or MarkeTVision for any cash.

The future owner of bar.com could be equally lucky — but only with a proposal for using the domain creatively and constructively, O'Connor stresses.

He receives periodic inquiries about the site but deliberately sets the price at "a number with two commas in it" to discourage schemers and kooks. "They choke" when they hear the price, he notes with amusement.

O'Connor, the semi-retired co-founder of

the St. Paul-based gofast.net Internet service provider, says his other domains have made his life interesting over the years.

The United Nations once approached him about place.com but "got pretty grouchy" when he refused to donate the domain. "But we're the UN!" he remembers a representative saying. "Yeah, well, I'm Mikey," he says he responded.

Several of O'Connor's other domains, meanwhile, sent torrents of unwanted e-mail into his Eudora inbox.

He received messages addressed to "foo@bar.com," for instance. It so happened UNIX system administrators used this address to do e-mail testing, O'Connor says. So, he would mischievously respond with diatribes such as, "Who dares arouse the wrath of the mighty Foo?"

O'Connor also got top-secret missives from within the bowels of major corpora-

tions because the senders carelessly used the corp.com domain instead of domains more specific to their companies.

"I received performance evaluations, acquisition plans, marketing strategies, financial documents, lots of stuff I wasn't supposed to be getting."

The corp.com domain is now configured to reject e-mail, and O'Connor uses intricate Eudora mail filters to keep the rest of his incoming correspondence manageable.

But Mikey will happily entertain proposals for all his domains. These include company.com, grill.com, pub.com, shelter.com....

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