

## A New Internet Domain for the Accounting Profession: .cpa

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This past year has further emphasized the importance of thinking strategically about your online presence, and it's clear this will become even more critical in the future as digital inevitably becomes the dominant business channel.

The AICPA and CPA.com have long recognized this trend and it's the reason why we were compelled to secure .cpa, the new restricted Internet domain, on behalf of the profession. .CPA is what's known as a top-level domain, which refers to the letters to the right of the dot on a website URL or email address. The most common of these are .com, .org, .edu and the like.

Restricted or protected domains such as .cpa are part of the next, more secure, generation of the Internet. Internet crime is rising, according to the latest FBI statistics, and many instances of phishing or other fraud are tied to look-alike or spoofed domain addresses. To combat this, the use of restricted domains has grown dramatically in recent years as businesses and organizations seek to promote visibility and authenticity in their digital operations. (You may have noticed, for example, such recent restricted domains as .bank and .pharmacy.)

Only licensed CPA firms and – starting next year – individually licensed CPAs can sign up for .cpa. The new restricted domain offers several advantages:

- It allows better, more focused branding
- It provides [better security](#) and resistance to Internet fraud
- It promotes greater trust in firms' online interactions with clients and the public
- It demonstrates that firms are progressive and professional in the digital sphere

.CPA is currently in its initial rollout phase, which is designed to permit all firms to claim their existing online branding under the new domain. This early application phase ends Oct. 31, after which the remaining domain names can be applied for by licensed firms on a rolling basis. Individually licensed CPAs can apply for their preferred names starting in January 2021, when general availability begins.

If you have additional questions, we have a wealth of resources at [domains.cpa](#), including a [white paper](#), FAQs and sign-up information for the new service. We live in a digital age, and CPAs can improve the trust and security in their online calling cards with this new restricted domain. Be sure to reserve your .cpa domain name before the Early Application phase expires on Oct. 31.