This standard for public-facing website host names was created by the University Communications department, working with the University Communications Standards Committee, and approved by the Web Technology and Infrastructure (WTI) subcommittee on Feb. 6, 2014.

Background and Business Need
During the UT Web Infrastructure project design phase, the project’s Customer Steering Committee (CSC) members required that their www.utexas.edu URLs remain unchanged, regardless of the hosting technology or server location. However, the panel-based design requirement for the new UT Web architecture meant that every website must have its own hostname (a.k.a., URL).

The project technical team met both requirements by designing UT Web to use reverse proxy to maintain www.utexas.edu addresses yet refer to uniquely named websites within the UT Web environment. This approach allows greater freedom for site owners, including allowing different technologies to be used, e.g., Drupal, WordPress, etc., but also requires that the www.utexas.edu name remain pointing to on-campus systems.

To resolve the complexities introduced with the reverse-proxy solution and to support a future cloud-hosted strategy for the main university website, the UT Web Infrastructure project team escalated the need for a website domain naming standard to the University Communications department, which owns the www.utexas.edu namespace.

Objectives
The Website Domain Naming Standard calls for changes in the utexas.edu public-facing website host namespace in order to:

- allow the www.utexas.edu home and core pages, built in Drupal, to move to the cloud to provide improved business continuity for – and consistent emergency communications via – the university’s home page;
- eliminate the need for reverse proxy for the www.utexas.edu namespace to improve the UT Web system architecture and to increase portability of the environment;
- lead to a more consistent user experience for website visitors and to increase branding opportunities for colleges, schools, and departments.

Impact
The Website Domain Naming Standard may affect a number of colleges, schools and departments. About half of the university’s colleges and schools use a www.utexas.edu address and will have to change their primary, public-facing website address, e.g., www.utexas.edu/law to law.utexas.edu. Other centers, departments, and unit websites may be affected if their public website names currently do not comply with the proposed naming standards.

Ultimately, implementation of the standard will require all sites within the
www.utexas.edu namespace to be built in UT CMS, the Drupal content management system (CMS) managed by Information Technology Services (ITS) Applications for University Communications.

Colleges, schools, and departments will have two years to move to a new domain name, if required to do so per the new standard, or to move websites into the Drupal CMS.