Typosquatting: A Solution

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Typosquatting's negative effect on the surfing experience[1] can be easily eliminated, and in a way that allows all parties to make money. What's called for is an affiliate program.

You would not be happy if you typed a domain name into your browser and wound up in nowhere land because of a simple misspelling. That's the negative surfing effect of typosquatting.

In general, if actions of one party have a harmful impact on someone else, taking measures that affect the harm causing party can mitigate the impact. The measures can compensate the harmed party or provide the harm causing party with incentives for giving up the trouble-causing actions. IPonFire's carrot-and-stick strategy for solving potential brand name infringements in domain names can be easily adapted to tackling the undesirable impact of typosquatting.

Another incentive-based solution is to reward the typosquatter for directing traffic from the typo domain to the non-typo site. This can be achieved by forwarding the domain name to the non-typo site. A non-typo domain-name owner can set up an affiliate program for traffic directed to the owner's site. The typosquatter has an incentive to join such a program, since a visitor to a typo domain was most likely trying to get to the non-typo domain. Such a visitor will keep trying to find the intended site, not settle for clicking on the parking links found in nowhere land. However, each company should not manage its own affiliate program; instead economies of scale favor a third party. ∎

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[1] Typosquatting refers to registering a domain name that is a misspelling of a third-party's name. For more background information and alternative solutions, see Wikipedia.