



## Online Reviews Provide Insights into gTLD Customers' Needs

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There is a high degree of uncertainty when launching a product, and new gTLDs are no exception. However, registries that have introduced them—or will introduce them in the second round of new gTLDs—can improve their odds. A key move: go to established domain name forums and check out their specialized sections for new gTLDs. What users say there can help companies refine tactics and strategy.

In a recent [study](#), Simon Li, Kamrun Nahar, and Benjamin C.M. Fung of Concordia University suggest that analyzing online reviews is a valuable tool to better gauge and understand the best positioning of the gTLDs and the necessary refinements that [customers need](#) once a novel product has been launched. Unlike traditional consumer surveys or registration/sales numbers, online reviews provide immediate information on valuable opinions of early adopters and highly motivated users.

The study analyzed online reviews posted on popular sites such as Amazon and CNET between April 2010 and May 2011, a year after the rollout of the Apple iPad tablet, and about the time that competitors (Asus, Lenovo, Samsung, and Toshiba) started offering their own versions of the tablet. The competitors needed insight into consumers' needs for various hardware and functionality features.

The authors applied data mining techniques to online reviews to extract keywords and patterns that revealed customers' critical or favorable comments for 27 different tablet attributes. For domain names attributes, reviews should be [segmented by the desired role and the availability of the domain name](#). Insight can be gained into the customers' choices, as the selection decision is not a simple choice of .com or an appropriate gTLD.

Do not confuse analyzing online reviews with following product mentions on social media (Facebook and Twitter). That sort of feedback is more hindrance than help, as [studies](#) have shown. Online reviews are different. They represent the opinions of people who have actually used the new device and experienced its ups and downs and/or have questions about desirable features. They aren't mouthing speculation about potential features and customers' adoption rates.

It is no easy task to develop data mining techniques for nonstandard forum formats. However, building such a competency for gTLDs will provide a competitive advantage that may lead to concentration of gTLDs' registry ownerships and/or the emergence of new consulting businesses providing such services.



