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Tiny country has eminent domain (suffix)

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Moldova, a tiny former Soviet republic, is one of the poorest countries in Europe. But thanks to the Internet and a quirk of the alphabet, it has a new export: the .md domain suffix.

Moldova's Internet domain suffix -- .md -- provides it with a small but growing amount of import revenue, thanks to some former U.S. investment bankers whose company, MaxMD, seized an opportunity 21/2 years ago, says Seanne Murray, a lawyer and company senior vice president.

After negotiating six months with a company in Moldova that had a relationship with that country's government, "We have a contractual relationship which gives us exclusive rights to market and distribute the .md domain (suffix) in the U.S. and over 90 countries worldwide," Murray says.

The Jersey City, N.J.-based company has about 9,000 users of the .md domain suffix who mainly found out about its existence through word of mouth. The company spent the intervening 21/2 years researching the healthcare industry and now has a public Web site, max.md, and a package that provides customers with an exclusive domain name using the .md suffix, a Web page and an e-mail address for \$150 per year, Murray says. Moldovans will retain the right to use the .md domain suffix in their own country, she says.