

No worries about .xxx

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Councillor Paul Ainslie says he has no concerns over the city not securing the ownership to the toronto.xxx domain name. (Toronto Sun files)

TORONTO - The City of Toronto may be exposed on the Internet.

But unlike other Canadian cities Toronto officials seem OK with not owning the rights to an X-rated online address with the city's name in it.

City staff confirmed Thursday that Canada's largest city didn't secure the site, toronto.xxx, before it went up for sale to the general public as part of the new triple-X domain names now available on the web.

Someone does own the domain but it isn't clear from Internet registry records who bought it or if it will be going up for auction to someone else,

Whoever owns toronto.xxx could run a sex-related website with a URL mimicking the city's official website, the buttoned down, G-rated toronto.ca.

Other Canadian cities, like Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, bought up their city's raunchy internet address along with a few other related sites to avoid embarrassment or damage to their brand. Hogtown officials say they haven't purchased any XXX domain names.

"The City of Toronto continues to promote and publish toronto.ca as the city's official URL in all city programs, advertising, brochures, etc.," city spokesman Kazia Fraser said Thursday.

Officials pointed out the city doesn't even own toronto.com.

Asked if they're worried whoever owns the URL toronto.xxx will start a website that could embarrass the city, officials shrugged.

“No, the City is not worried. We haven’t had any issues with other Toronto URLs in the past,” Fraser said in an e-mail. “This is why we have one primary site. So far, through our consistent branding all indications show that people go to toronto.ca for all our city services.”

Councillor Paul Ainslie, chairman of the government management committee, was also not getting hot and bothered over the idea of toronto.xxx.

“I guess one of the beauties of the Internet or I guess one of the problems is that there are so many (URL) extensions,” he said. “I think it is kind of pointless to try and buy all these extensions.”

“If somebody wants to own toronto.xxx and turn it into an adult entertainment site, feel free. Toronto.ca certainly won’t direct itself to it.”

Ainslie, who also serves as chairman of the Toronto Public Library board, dismissed any notion the city would bid on the URL with taxpayers’ money if it went up for auction.

“I already had enough trouble when (Sun columnist Sue-Ann Levy) found out that the library had Playboy on microfilm,” he said.

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