

# What is a label?

## Question

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## Answer

A *label* is the term that the Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH) uses to define which exact text string is covered by a validated trademark. It is the name of the trademark, converted into a domain-like representation. That means that characters that are invalid in a domain name (for example a space) are removed or converted.

As a trademark might be represented as different labels, depending on how the invalid characters are handled. The rules are the following:

- the special characters & and @ may be omitted, replaced by a hyphen or spelled out in one of the languages for which the trademark is valid
- special characters may be omitted or replaced by a hyphen

In all cases, the result should be a valid domain name, i.e. not starting or ending with a hyphen, not containing two or more consecutive hyphens and not being more than 63 characters in length.

As an example, assume the trademark “We & Openprovider” is registered in the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property. The following labels may be registered:

- weopenprovider (omitting &)
- we-openprovider (replacing & by a hyphen)
- we-and-openprovider (replacing & by the English 'and')
- we-et-openprovider (replacing & by the French 'et')
- and similar, replacing & by 'en', 'y' or 'und'

For more details and examples, please refer to section 3 of the [TMCH Guidelines](#).