

Root server

name server for the root zone of the Domain Name System of the Internet

A **root server** is a special server in the [domain name system](#) that tells a [computer](#) what [name servers](#) to use for a single [top level domain](#) like [.com](#) or [.net](#).^[1] There are 13 root servers that are in use. They use the letters A through M.^[2]

A root server is used when a computer tries to look up a [domain](#). For example, if a person types [www.google.com](#) into a [web browser](#), their computer will ask their [ISP](#) what the [IP address](#) for [www.google.com](#) is. If the ISP's [DNS](#) server does not know (does not have it [cached](#)), it will ask a root server which DNS server can tell it the address. The ISP's root server will then get the address from the DNS server that the root server tells it to.

History

In 1981, the idea of a [domain name system](#) was made as part of [RFC 799](#). [RFC 819](#), [RFC 882](#), and [RFC 883](#) said how DNS was supposed to work and made it easier to understand. In 1984, [RFC 920](#) was the first RFC to say what the [top level domains](#) would be for the new DNS. In 1985, the first domain name was made and "modern" DNS began.^[3]

References

1. "Root Server Deployments" (<https://www.apnic.net/community/support/root-servers>) . APNIC. Retrieved 26 February 2016.
2. "Root Servers" (<https://www.iana.org/domains/root/servers>) . IANA. Retrieved 26 February 2016.
3. Rader, Ross. "One History of DNS" (<http://www.byte.org/one-history-of-dns.pdf>) (PDF). Retrieved 29 February 2016.



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