

## Nominet Foundation

The idea of a Nominet Foundation was floated in 2005 and we are now proposing to create a Nominet Foundation as a charity and company limited by guarantee, with a first year donation of £5m.  
Please read the full details of the proposal on Nominet's web site.  
This survey contains four questions.

This document contains respondents between 32 and 32 inclusive.

### 1. What do you think about the proposal for a Nominet Foundation?

The proposal for a Nominet Foundation looks sound and well-researched.

### 2. What are your views on the types of potential beneficiaries and are there any you would like added to this list?

While the types of potential beneficiaries listed are all worthy causes, I see one crucial omission from this list: the growing number of small, not-for-profit advocacy/campaign groups in the UK who focus on protecting and promoting civil liberties and consumer rights in the context of networked, digital technologies.

The media and politicians often don't understand new technologies, but comment or legislate anyway. The result can be an ill-informed public and poorly-drafted laws. Although internet industry groups have done well in highlighting where poor regulation harms industry, the voice of the individual internet user also needs to be heard.

The long-term interests of the internet industry lie with internet users - people who feel confident that engaging with digital networked technologies is in their best interests. The advent of grassroots technology groups who campaign for rights online is therefore good news for industry. In the debate surrounding the unlawful sharing of copyrighted files on the internet, for example, the voice of the individual UK internet user provides a vital counterpoint to rightsholder lobbies, and ensures that responses to the issue remain of the effective and proportionate variety.

The Open Rights Group (ORG), is one such grassroots, technology-focussed organisation. ORG was created online and uses the online environment to run its campaigns. The open principles for which ORG stands are born of the same practices that have allowed the internet to thrive. ORG has had a number of successes since its foundation by 1,000 individuals in 2005. Thanks to pressure from ORG, the Government has agreed not to lobby Europe for an extension to copyright law, and to create provisions in the law that allow people to use digital music the way they want to. Thanks to submissions from ORG and others, the Ministry of Justice reversed plans to restrict the UK's nascent Freedom of Information laws. Thanks to a six-month ORG campaign, the Electoral Commission have called for a halt to ill-conceived remote electronic voting pilots in the UK.

One of ORG's major challenges is financial sustainability. Traditional grant-giving foundations in the UK, with the notable exception of the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd, are not technically-informed to the extent that they recognise the implications of the poor implementation and regulation of technology for civil society. This is an area where we feel a Nominet Foundation could really make a difference. Indeed, we feel that beneficiaries like ORG stand to benefit more than any of the types listed by Nominet, since each of those listed (and granted to different extents) is already recognised by existing foundations as an area of need.

### 3. What projects or organisations are you aware of that could benefit from a grant from the Nominet Foundation?

The Open Rights Group  
The Foundation for Information Policy Research  
Action on Rights for Children  
Creative Commons  
NO2ID  
MySociety

### 4. What other comments do you have?

If Nominet decide to pursue the funding of groups such as those we have suggested, it should ensure the Nominet Foundation grant-making principles do not limit grants to charitable bodies only. For reasons both administrative and legal, many UK not-for-profits (including, of course, Nominet) are not registered charities, and this includes the Open Rights Group and some others listed in question 3.

### 5. Please give us your contact details

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