

Dispute Resolution Service

Update on consultation process

This paper is presented to the PAB for information. No decision is required.

The recent consultation drew an unprecedented number of responses (128), from a fairly balanced cross-section of the UK community. We attribute the level of responses in part to changes to the consultation process, such as the introduction of an online questionnaire, briefer consultation papers, and numerous summaries.

We had a high level of responses from domainers, and from DRS experts. We also had representation from Intellectual Property lawyers, other companies, PAB members and other stakeholders.

There is little or no consensus on the issues.

There are a number of suggestions on possible service improvements, which we will need to evaluate carefully. Some of these could result in significant changes to process flow – resulting in a technical development overhead - for example, one suggestion is to allow for skeleton arguments only to be submitted prior to mediation, leaving the “full” submissions to be made only if an expert decision is paid for.

Given the lack of consensus on the issues, and the number of options for changes to the operation of the service, we need to take time to fully consider the best way forward.

The proposed schedule is:

- Report on consultation responses and initial proposals by end of May 2007
- Any policy changes to be referred back to the PAB
- Firm proposals, including operational impact by end of August 2007, along with dates for implementation.