

Variable Registration Periods

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1. Introduction

When the PAB last considered the viability of variable registration periods it recommended that:

- A policy of allowing single year registration periods be introduced
- A policy allowing registration period synchronisation be introduced
- The PAB seek further input from the executive on the possibility of introducing a policy of allowing registration periods of up to 10 years due to their concerns regarding:
 - data integrity
 - financial implications (e.g. the requirement to defer income over a 10 year period)
 - domain names held by defunct registrants for prolonged periods

In our paper to the PAB in March 2007 we agreed to consider these concerns more fully.

2. Issues for consideration

2.1 Data integrity

There was concern that offering registration periods of up to 10 years would result in deterioration in the accuracy of the data held for .uk domain names. There are now policies and services in place that should help to mitigate this.

The terms and conditions of domain registration place a responsibility on the registrant of a domain name to ensure that we hold accurate contact information. There is a requirement to “*give and keep us **notified** of [the registrant’s] correct name, postal address and any phone, fax or e-mail information and those of [the registrant’s] contacts (if you appoint any, see condition 5.2). This duty includes responding quickly and correctly to any request from us to confirm or correct their information on the **register**.*”

We have an established policy of cancelling domain names if the registrant information is incorrect or out of date and the registrant or their registrar fails to update the information within a reasonable time frame.

The new account based data structure and Online Services system should also help registrants to ensure the correct information is provided. It is now less likely that there will be inconsistency across a portfolio of domain names, and in the event their registrar does not keep their details up to date a registrant can now use the Online Services system to maintain their own information.

In the event that data accuracy does become a concern, we would retain the flexibility to implement operational solutions.

2.2 Financial implications

There was some concern regarding the deferral of fees over periods of up to 10 years and that our financial software must be able to account for and satisfactorily forecast this.

We are now confident that this will be possible and therefore this concern is reduced.

2.3 Domain names held for defunct registrants

Many domain names held by defunct registrants will also display incorrect contact details. A proportion of these registrations are therefore likely to be dealt with under the policy set out in 2.1 above.

In the event that there is a separate claim on the domain name there are provisions in the DRS policy (e.g. the absent web designers provision) and in the policy for dealing with domain name registered to dissolved companies, previously approved by the PAB in November 2005, that will assist a registrant in gaining full access to the registration.

Again we are comfortable that there are now sufficient provisions within existing policies to address this concern.

3. Recommendations

The PAB is asked to agree the following resolution:

“The PAB resolves to recommend that a policy of extended registration periods of up to 10 years be introduced.”