

Proposal to Nominet UK for creation of

An SLD for Social & Society Use

drafted by Dr W Black

A. Introduction

The present proposal has resulted from a thought-process which sprang from the discussions and apparent support for a personal SLD for *.uk*. However, SLDs limited to personal names potentially suffer from overload and contention (e.g. the numerous John Smiths) and proposed anti-contention methods appear to have many unfair side-effects (one John Smith would have a more valuable Domain Name than all the others).

My next thought was to treat a personal name space with a freely chosen tie-break (for example, John-Smith-theblacksmith.personal.uk). But further thought led me to consider what worth the personal name was anyway. After all hotmail, citizen's band radio users etc choose a "characteristic" name or "handle". In other words allow a first-come-first-served SLD but with the nomenclature and charter to make it clear that registrants would use the names for personal use only. Naturally this could not be policed even remotely successfully and it would have to be up to the registrants to abide by the spirit of the SLD, similarly to the use of *.org.uk*.

I considered what such an SLD should be called and *.fun.uk* came to mind, as the SLD would be intended for personal use. But not all personal use could be deemed to be "fun". At this point the problem of how families, unincorporated and non-trading associations of individuals might be accommodated in either a personal or fun SLD. This led me to the idea of a specific SLD for social and society use: the presently proposed *.soc.uk*.

Typical uses of *.soc.uk* might therefore be:

- individuals and families maintaining their own personal material: photographs, hobby materials, links to favourite web sites etc.
- societies: Boy Scouts, Women's Institutes, again for interesting and informative materials
- local residents' associations outlining their concerns and plans.

The above list is by no means exhaustive, but the common factor in all is that the Domain Names registered are intended to be used by individuals and non-incorporated bodies and not intended to be used for trading or commerce.

I believe that this complements nicely the other two open SLD in *.uk* : *.co.uk* intended for commercial, trading entities; and *.org.uk* for not-for-profit associations and other, but generally, incorporated bodies.

The World Wide Web is clearly an importantly valuable tool for individuals, families, unincorporated groupings of individuals etc. and I believe that there is a clear and large market for registrations in such an SLD. It is a much larger market than any personal SLD or more restricted “leisure” SLD.

It is intended that the *.soc.uk* SLD would be operated by Nominet.

Although 3LDs under *.soc.uk* would be first-come-first-served and no checking is proposed on initial registration, the nature of the SLD should be publicised to be intended for social and society use only. In order to encourage this use, it is proposed that the Nominet automaton reject applications from registrants with Ltd/Plc in their names or with supplied company numbers, from partnerships or other bodies with a trading name.

B. Definitions

‘Nominet’ refers throughout to Nominet UK.

‘The Policy’ refers to Nominet’s policy on the creation of new SLDs.

‘The Procedure’ refers to Nominet’s procedure for the creation of new SLDs

C. Draft Charter

It is proposed that the Social & Society SLD be given the designation *.soc.uk*.

The purpose of the SLD is to provide a name-space for registrations likely to be used for social and society use. Registrants are anticipated to be individuals, families, groups of individuals, clubs, unincorporated groups of co-operating individuals all with an association with the UK. It is intended that registrants will **not** use the SLD for commercial or trading purposes.

There is an analogy with *co.uk* where registration tends to designate a commercial entity with an association with the UK, and with *.org.uk* where registration tends to designate some other (often not-for-profit) organization with an association with the UK.

Although registrations will not be actively policed, Nominet’s automaton will be configured to prevent registration by entities having the words “Limited”, “Public Limited Company” (or their abbreviations, Welsh or foreign equivalents) in them, or any registrant where a company number is required. In addition, the automaton will reject registrations with a “Trading As” field. These obvious and easily implemented restrictions will be cast as additional rules to those in *.org.uk* and will be prepared as the “Rules for the *.soc.uk* SLD”. Naturally all applications must comply more generally with “Rules for *.uk* Domain and its Sub-Domains”.

It is confirmed that Nominet's standard Terms & Conditions (as amended from time to time) apply to this SLD.

Although the SLD is intended to be used for non-commercial and non-trading purposes, and, therefore, should be free to Trade Mark and other name-related disputes, nevertheless in any first-come-first-served SLD, disputes will arise. Since Nominet's standard Terms & Conditions will apply, Nominet's Dispute Resolution Policy and Processes will also apply to *.soc.uk*.

D. Statement of Compliance with The Policy

The community of interest served by the SLD is individuals, families, groups of individuals, unincorporated groups of co-operating individuals, clubs, associations or other such similar entities who have an association with the UK. This is clearly a large community. Compared to any personal SLD, it is asserted that by (a) extending the scope of the SLD to wider groupings of individuals, and (b) by allowing first-come-first-served rather than attempting to utilise human names, *.soc.uk* would provide a much wider coverage with less problematic naming issues.

Registrations might be expected to run at several thousand per day, but much will depend on marketing, publicity and costs charged by the tag holders. Given a UK population of 50,000,000 with possibly some 10,000,000 family units and hundreds of thousands of eligible clubs/associations, several million registrations might be expected in total even with a low percentage take-up.

The present SLDs of *.uk* are aimed at commercial trading or not-for-profit trading companies and there is no appropriate SLD for non-trading use by the categories of registrants for which *.soc.uk* is intended. Nominet has received feedback that an appropriate SLD for the targeted community would be welcome.

.soc.uk would be an efficient use of resources. The existing Nominet structure and processes would be useable unchanged apart from changes to the automaton to police the objective restrictions in the "Rules for the *.soc.uk* SLD". There would not appear to be a strong overlap with the existing SLDs of *.uk*.

The new SLD complies with The Policy. Policy Rules 1 & 2 are general rules. Each subsequent policy rule is taken below, in turn.

Policy Rule 3

3. The purpose of an SLD is:

3.1. To act as a mnemonic for the Domain Name System; and

3.2. To assist identifying the category of eligible registrants in the Domain Name System ("Registrants"); and

3.3. To facilitate the location of Internet resources in the UK.

The name of the SLD is meant to reflect the two key ideas in the scope: **society & social**. The categories of eligible registrants follow from these intended uses of the

SLD should therefore indicate resources and registrants intending to use the SLD for those purposes.

Policy Rule 4

4. It is intended that the number of new SLDs created shall be limited to minimise potential confusion in the marketplace. The unnecessary creation of an SLD diminishes the value of the existing namespace in which users have already registered.

There is a clear need to permit non-trading, social and society uses of the Internet. Currently registrants are compelled to use *.co.uk* or, perhaps more preferably, *.org.uk*. But, in truth, neither is appropriate. By creating a *.soc.uk* rather than a more restricted personal SLD, a large potential registrant population will be covered with a single new SLD. Since commercial and trading entities (for- or not-for-profit) will be actively discouraged by the automaton from registering in *.soc.uk*, there should be no great rush by such entities to register here in addition to their *.co.uk* or *.org.uk* SLDs.

Policy Rule 5

*5. Any new SLD must be:-
5.1. beneficial to users, or potential users of the UK namespace and the Internet community as a whole ("the Internet Community"); and
5.2. an appropriate use of limited resources.*

The new SLD will be beneficial to users of the UK namespace by allowing a complete category of registrants to register appropriate names of their choice and avoid clashes with trade marks or other trading names. A *.soc.uk* will effectively cover a very large section of the user community and can be managed by Nominet with minor changes to the automaton and simple scaling to the existing operations.

Policy Rule 6

6. No SLD shall be created if its uses and functions are wholly or substantially encompassed by the charter of any single existing SLD.

The uses and functions of the Social & Society SLD are not incorporated by the charter of any existing single SLD.

Policy Rule 7

7. A new SLD shall not normally be permitted where a new SLD with a wider charter would better serve the interests of the Internet Community.

The scope of *.soc.uk* is meant to be cast as widely as possible for any non-trading use. It would be difficult to extend this more effectively. See comments above on more restricted personal SLDs.

Policy Rule 8

8. There may only be two types of SLD:

8.1. "Third Party Delegated" and

8.2. "NOMINET Operated".

This SLD shall be "Nominet Operated".

Policy Rule 9

9 If an SLD is Third Party Delegated, control of the operation of the SLD will be contracted by NOMINET to a third party ("the Third Party Registry").

9.1. An SLD will only be delegated to a Third Party Registry where the Third Party Registry is able to demonstrate it is recognised as a suitably neutral and impartial body by a significant number of potential Registrants in the SLD, and that it can comply with The Policy.

9.2. A Third Party Registry must act in the interests of the Internet Community as a trustee of the delegated SLD.

As the domain is proposed to be Nominet operated, this rule is not applicable.

Policy Rule 10

10. If an SLD is NOMINET Operated, NOMINET shall retain day-to-day management of the SLD.

Nominet shall retain complete (including day-to-day) management of the SLD.

Policy Rule 11

11. There will be a predisposition towards NOMINET Operated SLDs.

As the domain is proposed to be Nominet operated, the predisposition documented by this rule is met.

E. Outline of Proposed Social & Society SLD Rules

As with *.co.uk* and *.org.uk*, rules for *.soc.uk* are based on a first-come first-served system. The rules for *.soc.uk* are identical with those for *.org.uk* but with some

additional restrictions which are objectively applied by the automaton. These are intended to prevent obvious abuses of the SLD. No 3LD in *.soc.uk* will be accepted if:

- the registrant field contains the words “Limited”, “Public Limited Company” or “Limited Liability Partnership” (or any appropriate abbreviations of these words, or their Welsh or foreign equivalents);
- a company number (UK or foreign) is associated with the registrant;
- the registrant is a partnership (unincorporated) or an individual using trading name.

If, subsequent to accepting a registration, it is discovered that a registration is in breach of the above restrictions, Nominet reserves the right to notify the registrant, and, if no satisfactory explanation is provided, to subsequently cancel the registration. This is based on and consistent with the existing power to suspend and cancel when “the basis on which the name was registered has changed.”

All Registrants are bound by Nominet’s Terms & Conditions for the registration of Domain Names, and “Rules for *.uk* Domain and its Sub-Domains”, in both cases as amended from time to time. Where there is conflict between the rules for *.soc.uk* and those of The Rules, the former will take precedence.

F. Applications from Third Parties

It is intended that Nominet operate this SLD.

G. Background on the Author, Disclaimer, and Copyright

Dr W Black is the Managing Director of Nominet UK and does not intend to benefit personally from this proposal other than indirectly from the benefits Nominet as a whole might gain from its adoption.

This proposal is submitted as a personal contribution to the development of the *.uk* Domain Name space. It has been reviewed internally by Nominet senior staff.

The author is a member of the CoM of Nominet, which has a role to play in The Procedure. The author does not intend to vote in any decision of the CoM (should the need arise) concerning the adoption of this SLD. He also publicly offers to withdraw temporarily from any discussions of this CoM discussions if requested to do so by the other members. It is the author’s intentions that Nominet should only adopt this SLD, if it is given support by the membership of Nominet, the CoM and the PAB.

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similar nature, but for commercial benefit, to take advantage of the author's work.

H. Process and Consultation

After processing by the Nominet Executive, this proposal will be posted on the Nominet Web site for a period of public consultation. At all stages the author will be happy to modify the proposal if an appropriate consensus is reached.

10 June 2001