

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD REPORT
BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON, W1
2 April 2003
MEETING 25

Those present:

Jeremy Beale	Appointed Member
Denesh Bhabuta	Elected Member
Alex Bligh	Appointed Member - Council of Management
James Cronin	Elected Member
Steve Dyer	Appointed Member - Council of Management
Clive Feather	Elected Member
Peter Gradwell	Elected Member
Ben Laurie	Elected Member
Sebastien Lahtinen	Elected Member
Mark Lewis	Appointed Member
Hazel Pegg	Elected Member

From Nominet by invitation of the PAB:

Gareth Cook, Communications Executive
Eleanor Bradley, Director of Operations

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Almeida, Michael Duggan, and Eric Ramage.

2. Election of Chair

Peter Gradwell was re-elected as PAB Chair for a further year.

3. Welcome to new members

Peter Gradwell welcomed Sebastien Lahtinen and Hazel Pegg to the PAB after their recent election success.

4. Thanks to previous members - Adam Beaumont

Peter Gradwell proposed a vote of thanks to Adam Beaumont for his service to the PAB.

5. Approval of February Meeting Report

The February meeting report was approved.

6. Matters arising/updates from last meeting

The Chair requested a review of the progress of previous PAB recommendations:

a. Additional organisations joining the PAB - Representatives from the British Chambers of Commerce, the office of the Information Commissioner, and the office of the e-envoy are interested in principle in joining the PAB. The PAB Chair will write to them formally inviting them to join. The National Consumer Council had declined the offer. Roy Bisson has been asked to nominate a successor from the National Consumer Federation.

b. Quarterly report - further to a suggestion at the last PAB meeting the first quarterly report will be published by the Nominet executive in April outlining the status of Nominet's systems. The CoM had widened the scope of the report so that it will detail the progress of all systems, not just technical ones.

c. Recommendations to the CoM and reports back from the CoM meeting - the CoM accepted the PAB papers on .net.uk and the PAB purpose and definition. Regarding the latter, the CoM suggested that there should be no distinction between elected and appointed members when deciding whether a meeting was quorate.

7. PAB Communications paper update

Peter Gradwell presented the second draft of this paper. Alex Bligh commented that the 30 days time limit for consultations made it very difficult to perform a consultation between two adjacent PAB meetings, and that if a consultation was going to run over a PAB meeting it might as well be longer than 30 days.

James Cronin asked whether it should be the relevant sub-committee or the PAB as a whole who decided which stakeholders the consultation should be aimed at.

Gareth Cook presented a response to the paper from the Communications Department. The paper suggested that some consultations would require more proactive mechanisms than just publishing information on the Nominet website, that the period for consultation be extended to two months, and that consultation papers should be written in plain English and prefaced with a short summary to encourage more people to participate.

Alex Bligh commented that he mainly agreed with the response paper but explained that sometimes the complex nature of the subject (such as the .me.uk rules) means that a short summary of the issues would be difficult in practice.

Steve Dyer suggested that the PAB is meant to be a think-tank for policy matters and he was concerned that recently the PAB has spent more time concentrating on how it works rather than the actual issues they were meant to be discussing. He also suggested that the PAB should be recommending topics for Nominet to consult on rather than the PAB carry out all the consultations.

Recommendation:

The PAB asked Peter Gradwell to produce a further redraft of the PAB Communication and Consultation paper, incorporating the comments made by Nominet, and allowing more flexibility and less prescription in the consultation process. The PAB emphasised that consultations should be carried out in co-ordination with Nominet's own consultative processes.

8. .me.uk rules sub-committee update

Peter Gradwell presented the consultation response paper and explained that the majority of respondents favoured the SLD being chartered for private individuals. He commented that the response was small and mainly looked at the issue from a Nominet viewpoint. He asked for opinions as to how to progress.

Alex Bligh suggested that the sub-committee look at the responses and form a more concrete proposal to bring back to the PAB and then put out to a wider consultation.

Steve Dyer asked how many people were actually complaining about the .me.uk rules and suggested that most people who were upset were annoyed about non-personal names having been registered, and that perhaps the issue was not that harmful or important. Clive Feather asserted that allowing such names to be registered would result in me.uk not being a strong SLD.

Recommendation

The PAB considered the consultation responses received, and in light of these asked Peter Gradwell to take the me.uk rules change proposals back to the subcommittee, in order to make a firm proposal for rules change, which can be presented to the June PAB. These should only allow registrations to be made by, and used by natural persons, and enforcement should be by challenge rather than at the time of registration. If this is acceptable to the PAB, it would then be put out for wider consultation following the June PAB.

9. Wait Listing sub-committee update

Alex Bligh presented the consultation response paper from the Wait Listing Service subcommittee. He explained that out of 22 responses received, roughly half supported introducing a WLS.

The subcommittee had reviewed the responses in a telephonic meeting and produced a set of recommendations to the PAB. The PAB accepted these recommendations.

Recommendation:

1. No recommendation be made to the CoM to proceed with a WLS service at this stage.
2. That the matter be reviewed by the PAB in 6 months' time, taking into account results of the various Nominet projects, including the Automaton anti-abuse provisions, the clearing of the backlog of detagged & expired domain names, the new renewals system, and the PRSS review.
3. That such a review should be done with regard to the points raised in submissions to this WLS consultation.
4. That Nominet's executive should alert the PAB should a WLS be required for operational rather than policy reasons.
5. That Nominet's executive should bear in mind the likely design parameters of a WLS (should one eventually be determined desirable) when designing new systems.

10. AGM - afternoon PAB session

Peter Gradwell explained that there would be a session hosted by the PAB following Nominet's AGM on 10 July in the same format as recent years (a brief summary of the PAB's work during the year, followed by workshops on key topics).

He explained that he would be unable to attend the AGM and therefore suggested that a vice-chair be appointed who would then present the summary in his place. James Cronin was elected vice-chair.

Suggested topics for the workshops included the me.uk rules, the Automaton abuse policy and PAB Communications and Consultation.

Peter Gradwell also mentioned that Lesley Cowley had suggested holding a joint PAB and CoM meeting following the June PAB meeting. This was agreed by the PAB.

James Cronin asked whether there were plans to hold a PAB induction session for Sebastien Lahtinen, Hazel Pegg and Mark Lewis, an appointed member from Companies House. Gareth Cook agreed to take this forward.

11. Matters arising from nom-steer and pab-suggest

There were no matters arising.

12. Urgent business

CBI meeting about government consultation

Jeremy Beale explained that the Government was planning to release an extension to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act for consultation and that the CBI were involved in this. This legislation addresses communications data and would apply to most of the internet community. The consultation ends on 3 June and the CBI will be holding a high level meeting on the subject and they will invite Nominet to attend to represent the views of the internet community. Jeremy suggested that PAB members should consider the matter and let the CoM know their views.

Clive Feather then gave more detail about this issue and two more governmental consultations that may be relevant to Nominet members.

Recommendation

The PAB asked Clive Feather to provide Nominet with information about current governmental consultations that are likely to be relevant to members, in order that Nominet might make this information available to members.

New SLD procedure and policy

Eleanor Bradley reported that the OFT investigation into Nominet's 'New SLD' process was ongoing and at its recent meeting the CoM made outline proposals to change this procedure. Nominet had met with the OFT to discuss the proposals and the OFT appeared pleased with the changes but Nominet is still waiting for their official response. Assuming their response is positive the CoM would like to launch a consultation on the changes to the procedure before the June PAB meeting.

Alex Bligh explained that the proposals were presented to the OFT in outline form and were subject to consultation, as well as the Board's final agreement. He further explained that in light of the time constraints, whilst the consultation would be run by the CoM rather than the PAB, the PAB was encouraged to participate in it. He suggested that if time allowed, the consultation should run across PAB meetings (ie. for two months) to enable the PAB to participate more effectively.

Proposal for RIPE-style meeting for Nominet members

Steve Dyer had posted to nom-steer with a proposal to hold a RIPE-style meeting over 3 days for Nominet members to attend. He had received a positive response from members and had contacted Nominet's Communications Manager with the recommendation. He asked the PAB for any suggestions regarding this.

A brief discussion concluded that the meeting should be geared towards Western European ccTLDs rather than Nominet, but that Nominet could perhaps take a half-day slot within the programme.

Steve agreed to provide an update on this topic at the June PAB meeting.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 4 June 2003, followed by a joint PAB/CoM meeting in the afternoon.