

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD REPORT  
ST JAMES'S SQUARE, LONDON, SW1Y  
9 March 2005  
MEETING 37

Those present:

Tom Adams	Appointed Member - Cabinet Office (e-Government Unit)
Denesh Bhabuta	Elected Member
Alex Bligh	Appointed Member - Nominet Board
James Cronin	Elected Member
Sue Daley	Appointed Member - CBI
Gordon Dick	Appointed Member - Nominet Board
Michael Duggan	Appointed Member - DTI
Clive Feather	Elected Member
Peter Gradwell	Elected Member
Sebastien Lahtinen	Elected Member (Chair)
Alex Kells	Elected Member
Hazel Pegg	Elected Member
Eric Ramage	Appointed Member - ITMA
Brian White	Appointed Member - APIG

From Nominet by invitation of the PAB:

Gareth Cook, Communications Executive  
Fay Howard, Nominet Board  
Gloria Mundy, PA to Chief Executive and Director of Legal and Policy  
Emily Taylor, Company Secretary and Director of Legal and Policy

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from James Conaghan, and Mark Lewis.

Emily Taylor introduced Gloria Mundy and explained that she would be providing administrative support as part of an enhanced PAB Secretariat from now on.

2. Approval of January meeting report

The January meeting report was approved unanimously.

3. Feedback from Board on PAB recommendations/Status report

Emily Taylor summarised the feedback from the Board on the PAB's recommendations from the January meeting. She explained that in relation to the .net.uk review item that changing the charter of the .net.uk SLD would not trigger the new SLD procedure as this only applies to new SLD applications.

In relation to the latest version of the status report on PAB and Board issues and actions, Clive Feather asked if there was any information on when the tag statistics discussed at the previous meeting would be published. Emily Taylor advised that she would check with Jay Daley and confirm.

Peter Gradwell asked about the progress with appointing a new Nominet Chairman, and Lesley Cowley advised that there had been 100 applicants for the post and that interviews would take place in the third week of April.

#### 4. Working Groups Update

Peter Gradwell reported that Sebastien Lahtinen would chair the new working group on .net.uk which had interim approval from the WGSC and was seeking full approval from the PAB at this meeting. Clive Feather reported that the final paper from the Internationalised Domain Names working group had been sent to Nominet to be prepared for consultation.

Peter Gradwell reported that the chairs of the current working groups would meet with Lesley Cowley after the PAB meeting to discuss ways of developing the work of the groups.

#### Resolution

The PAB resolved to confirm the WGSC's interim approval of the .net.uk working group.

#### 5. Report from the Registration Periods Working Group

Peter Gradwell summarised the findings of the Registration Periods Working Group.

The group recommended that Nominet introduce one year domain name registrations as well as the current two year registrations.

They also recommended that Nominet provides for synchronising registrations to a common renewal date. This would mean for example allowing registrations of two years and two months in order to synchronise the billing cycle for domain name registration and other services provided by a tag holder. Whilst the meeting supported the principle of synchronising the billing cycle, it was suggested (by Eric Ramage and others) that this could be achieved by periods of up to two years. In other words, the registrant could be asked to select an expiry date, but that would not be longer than two years.

With regard to longer registration periods, Peter Gradwell reported that there was no real interest in registrations of between 3 and 9 years, but there was limited support for ten year registrations. The working group felt however that this required further investigation as there could be issues with data accuracy after such a long period. Lesley Cowley explained that this was the first time that ten year registrations had been properly debated and that to some extent they had been suggested as an alternative to 'lock state' for registrants who wanted to secure their domain names.

#### Resolution

The PAB, having considered the report of the Registration Periods Working Group, resolved to recommend that the Board consider the additional implementation of single year registrations and the synchronisation of multiple registrations to a common renewal date through shorter registration periods. The PAB resolved to recommend that the Board do not implement registration periods longer than two years for the time being, but resolved to reconsider the issue in approximately two years' time.

The PAB further resolved to wind up the Registration Periods Working Group, and proposed a vote of thanks to its Chair.

## 6. Child pornography allegations in .uk

Emily Taylor reported that since the last PAB meeting a program had been run to search the registration database against the list of terms provided by the Internet Watch Foundation. Although there were many false positives there were also a few names that were of concern. The Board had decided to provide this list to the relevant authorities after this PAB meeting.

Emily thanked the PAB members she had spoken to her in preparing this paper and she also explained that as part of her preparation she had also visited the IWF. As a result of this visit it was clear that the IWF would take liability for any errors with regard to issuing notice and takedowns for websites containing illegal materials.

The paper outlined the advantages and disadvantages of three options for action that Nominet could consider taking with regard to this issue. Emily explained that the executive wanted the PAB to narrow down these options and give them some guidance on how to progress with this issue.

The first option was for Nominet to use its existing policies with no further change. The second option was to work in partnership with the relevant authorities and possibly introduce measures such as a fast track cancellation system for domain names with false contact details, cancelling domain names that constitute illegal advertisements and dealing with materials where the domain names are hosted offshore. The third option was to develop a home grown solution including a 'DRS style' complaints procedure for domain names with a suspected connection to child pornography and to replace the current 'first-come, first-served' registration policy and introduce a procedure to pre-vet registrations against a list of 'banned' terms.

There was a wide ranging discussion during which each option was considered in terms of its advantages and disadvantages. The PAB agreed to reject the third option and generally felt that Nominet should combine use of its existing policies (and services such as the PRSS) with some of the suggested elements of the second option.

### Resolution

The PAB resolved to recommend that the Board reject Option 3 proposed in the PAB paper 'Child pornography allegations in .uk'.

The PAB resolved to recommend that the Board make the PRSS service available to the IWF such that they can detect registrations of domain names containing potentially dubious strings relating to child pornography immediately upon their registration.

The PAB resolved to recommend that the Board confirm to the Executive that it should cancel domain names the maintenance on the register of which, having received legal advice, appear to Nominet would be likely to result in criminal liability (whether in terms of an illegal advertisement under the Protection of Children Act 1978 or otherwise) and prevent further registrations of the same domain name which would have the same effect.

The PAB resolved to recommend to the Board that it should actively promote discussion at an international level through CENTR of how to deal with the issue of domain names attached to content containing child pornography, and to seek further input from the IWF on this issue.

## 7. PAB Rules

Emily Taylor explained that the PAB had asked for a 'tidying up' of the PAB rules which had been carried out, and that the new rules had been approved by the Board already. As the PAB had previously requested to see a draft of the new rules Emily explained that any further changes requested by the PAB would of course be included in the final version.

Clive Feather outlined three small drafting amendments that needed to be made, and a further one was subsequently noted. The PAB approved the rules subject to these amendments being made.

#### Resolution

The PAB resolved to confirm the Board's approval of the new rules.

The PAB resolved to recommend that the Board further amend the rules as follows: (a) amend clause 4.7 to change "clear 28 days" to "28 clear days"; (b) amend clause 4.14 to change "At the beginning" to "At the first meeting"; (c) amend clause 8.2 to change "Unless received" to "Unless acknowledged as received"; (d) amend clause 8.4 to insert the word "be" between "may" and "given"; and that the Board approve the rules including these amendments without further reference to the PAB.

#### 8. Report from the SLD Panel Recruitment Subcommittee

Eric Ramage reported that the subcommittee had met again on 8 March to consider the CVs of the additional candidates and now had sufficient names to put forward for the Panel Chair to select from.

He explained that they had chosen candidates from different areas of specialisation, and that there were 6 from business, 2 from finance, 3 from law, 4 from IT, 3 from internet, 3 from Intellectual Property and 5 with technical expertise.

He also reported that the subcommittee recommended the Panel Chair selects at least one candidate from each of these specialist areas.

#### Resolution

The PAB resolved to accept the report of the SLD Panel Recruitment subcommittee and resolved to recommend that the Board pass the names on the short list to the Panel chair. The PAB further resolved to recommend that at least one candidate from each category of specialisation be selected.

#### 9. AGM - discussion

Sebastien Lahtinen introduced a discussion about this year's Nominet Annual General Meeting. Clive Feather was concerned that the AGM was being shortened this year, and being held in Newcastle. Lesley Cowley stated that the AGM was still going to be a whole day event and that Newcastle had been selected as a venue by a number of members canvassed at last year's AGM. Lesley explained that in recognition of dwindling attendances at the AGM Nominet would be holding a separate industry day later in the year. This would give members more of an opportunity to participate, would attract a greater attendance and would not clash with holiday periods. Alex Bligh explained the AGM is currently held in July in order to coincide with requirements under the Companies Act in respect of the publication of Nominet's Report and Accounts.

James Cronin asked whether Nominet would consider extending the webcast of the AGM to make it interactive so that people could post questions and receive answers online. Lesley Cowley stated that this was being considered.

10. PAB elections

Sebastien Lahtinen reported that the voting papers for the PAB election had been issued by Electoral Reform Services, and that a PAB induction had been arranged at Nominet in Oxford on Tuesday 3 May for any new members who are elected. He also thanked Peter Gradwell, who is not standing for re-election for his services to the PAB, including his two and a half years as PAB Chair.

Resolution

The PAB resolved to pass a vote of thanks to Peter Gradwell, who is standing down, for his service on the PAB.

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

There were no matters arising.

12. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 May 2005.