

# Member and Tag Holder Feedback regarding *.net.uk*

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## 1. Introduction

As the PAB members will be aware, Nominet has a programme of Member and Tag Holder meetings. At these meetings, feedback regarding Nominet is encouraged, information is shared and members and tag holders are asked to highlight any issues that are of concern to them. A report detailing the feedback received from the first half of the 2004 programme was presented to the August 2004 meeting of the Nominet board.

The issue of *.net.uk* was raised by a number of members and tag holders. As a result of this feedback, the Board agreed to ask the PAB to review the rules for *.net.uk*, with a view to making the second level domain open (i.e. by removing the current eligibility requirements). If, as a result of that review, the PAB concludes that the present eligibility requirements should remain in place, the Board request the PAB to publish a PAB position paper on this issue.

## 2. Background re *.net.uk*

The *.net.uk* second level domain was intended to be used for ISP registrations. With that intention in mind, applicants have to meet certain criteria. Applications are manually vetted before registration and only applications that meet the criteria are successfully processed.

A Green Paper by Clive Feather in 2002, presented to a sub-committee of the PAB, provides a very useful summary of the history, rules and issues regarding *.net.uk*, and this is shown in Appendix A to this paper.

The current registration statistics are as follows:

Total <i>.net.uk</i> registrations as at 20/09/04:	460
Average number of registration requests/month:	22
Average number of successful registrations/month:	2

The sub-committee reported to the PAB in October 2002 and its report is shown in Appendix B. The sub-committee recommended to the PAB that *.net.uk* should be closed to new registrations. The PAB did not accept this recommendation and recommended that the sub-committee should gather further stakeholder opinion and reconvene to further investigate two specific options:

- Opening up the domain (potentially with a strong charter)
- Fixing the current rules

At its meeting in February 2003, the PAB recommended to the Board that:

PAB

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Date: 6 October 2004

'no changes be made to the rules for *.net.uk* at the present time, because the issues are not sufficiently tractable for consultation to be an effective use of time and resources. The PAB recommends that Nominet re-examine the charges for *.net.uk* on the basis of cost recovery as part of the next pricing review.'

This recommendation was accepted by the Board at its meeting in February 2003. The subsequent pricing review concluded that the price for *.net.uk* registrations (and renewals) should remain unchanged. This was because of the low volumes and the fact that the vast majority of uneligible applications are so obviously not eligible to register in *.net.uk*, they can be determined as such very quickly.

### 3. Feedback Comments

The member and tag holders who said that *.net.uk* was an issue for them had a diverse set of views on the subject. Most commented that *.net.uk* should have been fully opened up (i.e. unrestricted) as per the *.net* gTLD. Some felt that it should remain restricted but the rules should be changed to make it easier for members and tag holders to get a registration in *.net.uk* for their own businesses. Some felt that *.net.uk* was an issue, but that the rules should be left unchanged.

Those members and tag holders who were dissatisfied cited the same reasons detailed in the previous PAB sub-committee paper which are:

- The corresponding gTLD (.net) does not restrict applicants
- The guidelines are not well specified (e.g. what *is* an ISP?)
- The guidelines are unfair (e.g. the requirement to be an LIR or have an ASN discriminates against lower-tier network operators)
- The guidelines take a lot of effort to enforce (applicants have to be vetted by hand)
- Subsequent use of a domain name (after registration) does not always adhere to the guidelines (allegedly some *.net.uk* names are being used in ways not permitted by RFC 1591)
- The SLD is under-utilised and more use should be made of it

It was also noted that many of the members and tag holders who felt that *.net.uk* was an issue were not aware of the previous PAB deliberations on the subject.

### 4. Recommendations

- That the PAB review the Nominet policy regarding *.net.uk*, with a view to making the second level domain open.
- That, if as a result of the above review, the PAB does not agree that the *.net.uk* second level domain should be opened up as recommended, the Board request the PAB to publish a PAB position paper on *.net.uk*