

Industry Standards: PAB Discussion paper

Prepared by Gordon Dick

1. Introduction

At the September 2008 PAB meeting it was agreed to look further at what could be done by Nominet or with Nominet's support to further the legitimate expectations of stakeholders of standards in the industry. BERR noted the legitimate expectations of stakeholders of the industry to regulate itself responsibly.

2. Background

Nominet's vision is of "a world where the Internet is a trusted space, which everyone can be part of and has a positive impact on people's lives."

The actions, and reactions, of the industry to all the issues affecting the wider stakeholders in the use of the internet will clearly have a direct impact on how trusted the internet will be and ultimately the success of the internet economy.

Nominet's mission is "to make a positive difference to UK Internet users and to shape the development of the Internet. We will do this by delivering excellence and innovation in our products and services, driven by the needs of our stakeholders, and creating a company where our people love coming to work."

There are a few ways that Nominet can make a positive difference to achieve Nominet's vision:

1. Direct actions by Nominet itself.
2. Strategic partnerships where Nominet works with others.
3. Promoting self-regulation as an opportunity for the industry and encouraging debate and action on the needs of stakeholders.

3. Existing initiatives

There are a number of initiatives and fora already in place regarding industry standards of one form or another, which include:

1. The Registrar Agreement and Good Practice Terms.
2. Policy on domains involved in child abuse.
3. Dispute Resolution Service protecting rights.
4. Nominet Best Practice Challenge.
5. UK Internet Governance Forum & the Internet Governance Forum.
6. CENTR.
7. ICANN.

The PAB is currently looking at the topic of Phishing with stakeholders and the ".uk" brand is on the work programme.

4. Fact finding

To support the policy discussion, we need to develop our evidence base and increase our engagement with key stakeholders to understand their concerns and expectations. In addition we need to benchmark ourselves against the industry leaders and ensure that we continue to be seen as a responsible registry.

1. What are the issues of concern for stakeholders in the use of the internet?
2. Which stakeholder representatives can we usefully engage to further develop our understanding of needs and concerns?
3. What initiatives do other registries, registrars or industry players nationally and internationally have in place?
4. What regulations do other governments impose on the internet sector?

5. Addressing the facts

1. How well do existing initiatives address stakeholders needs and concerns?
 - a) How can we find out?
 - b) Are there any ways we can adapt current initiatives to better address them?
 - c) Are there new initiatives we should consider?
2. How does Nominet compare on the international comparisons?
 - a) What can Nominet do to improve their position?
3. How do UK registrars compare both with each other and internationally?
 - a) What can registrars do to improve their position?
4. Are there elements of government regulations imposed on the internet sector in other countries that are relevant to the UK and that the industry could usefully have an opportunity to address the public policy issues in a pro-active and self-regulatory manner?