



POLICY ADVISORY BODY REPORT  
Holiday Inn, 1 Kings Cross Road, London  
14 May 2008  
MEETING 56

Those present:

Andrew Bennett	Elected Member
Simon Bezant	Elected Member
William Brocklehurst	Appointed Member – CBI
Gordon Dick	Nominet Board
David Evans	Appointed Member - Information Commissioner's Office
Earl of Erroll	Appointed Member - apComms Group
Clive Feather	Elected Member
Mark Healey	Elected Member
Nora Nanayakkara	Elected Member
Eric Ramage (Chair)	Appointed Member – ITMA
Jarrold Robinson	Elected Member
Geoff Smith	Appointed Member – BERR
Rob Taylor	Elected Member
Michael Toth	Elected Member

From Nominet by invitation of the PAB:

Martin Boyle, Senior Policy Advisor  
Laura Hutchison, Policy Executive

## **PAB May Meeting - Report**

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

No apologies were received.

The Chair reminded members of the need to complete the register of interest form and to declare any interests in specific items on the agenda. He confirmed that this would not necessarily preclude contributing to the discussion on that particular topic: that the decision would be for the PAB as a whole to decide.

### **2. Election of PAB chair**

Eric Ramage was re-elected unopposed.

### **3. Approval of the March meeting report**

The PAB approved the report.

### **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **5. Board response to PAB resolutions**

Gordon Dick noted that the reference to the costs of overheads was a general point about cost recovery.

## **6. PAB elections**

On behalf of the PAB, the Chair welcomed Simon Bezant, Nora Nanayakkara and Rob Taylor to the PAB and congratulated them on their election.

The Executive mentioned the discussion at the PAB induction on how to improve the visibility of the PAB and develop a more effective dialogue with the wider membership. The Executive will collect these ideas in a paper on engaging with the membership and invited other members to contribute their ideas.

## **7. Policy issues**

### **a).ltd.uk rules**

The Executive introduced the paper. This had been prepared in response to a small number of complaints about the application of the rules for dealing with symbols and punctuation in .ltd.uk and .plc.uk domain names. This can mean that two companies could have claim to the same domain name. The PAB was asked to consider whether the rules for these domain names should be revised.

Simon Bezant and Michael Toth both declared an interest in this item.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- i) The original purpose of the rules was to ensure that a registered company would be able to register its name as a domain name. The PAB agreed that the rules needed to be amended.
- ii) Companies House does not interpret “@” as a punctuation mark: the rules could be amended to require the “@” symbol to be spelt out (as is the case for “&” and “and”). It was pointed out that this would not work because, while the law says that “&” and “and” are equivalent, it treats “@” and “at” as different.
- iii) The .eu regulation specifies that all characters that could not be represented in the DNS should be ignored. However, the PAB recognised that this only applied to the sunrise period of .eu for deciding who had rights to a name.
- iv) It was suggested that domain names should be an exact match of a company name and companies with symbols as part of their name would not be entitled to register under .ltd or .plc. Some were concerned that this would be too restrictive.
- v) The PAB would need to assess whether new rules should be applied to existing domain names.

**The PAB resolved** to recommend that Nominet suspend .ltd and .plc domain name registrations with characters such as @, / and other characters permitted by Companies House but not domain name rules, whilst the situation is investigated.

**It was agreed** that Clive Feather would draft a paper on the clarification of the .ltd.uk and .plc.uk rules for discussion at the next meeting. Anyone who wished to input comments into the paper should send these to nom-pab.

The PAB recognised that some companies might have rights to more than one domain name, but did not consider that this required further action.

#### **b) Report on Byron review**

The Executive introduced the paper on the Byron review, noting that this was a follow-up to the Trust in the Internet discussion at the January meeting. The paper focussed on the Internet-related recommendations of the review and in particular those where Nominet or its members might have a direct interest. Nominet is already active in a number of areas identified in the review (section 3) and had a continuing work programme (section 4). PAB members were invited to consider whether there were other things that Nominet should be doing.

Geoff Smith said that the Government had welcomed the Byron review and that work is underway to implement the UK council for Child Internet safety.

The PAB agreed that Nominet should seek to contribute to the work of the Council where this was appropriate.

At the request of the Chair the PAB split into small groups to discuss the issues in detail. The suggestions from this discussion will be compiled into a paper for the next meeting to decide whether to give advice to the Board.

#### **c) CBI survey**

William Brocklehurst introduced the explanatory note on the CBI IT User Competitiveness Survey. He explained that the E-business group does a survey every year with a different focus. This year the survey was looking at how businesses were using IT to add value to their product or service.

The survey had reached the target of 500 respondents from enterprises employing over 50 people. It included questions specifically on domain names such as the relative importance of top-level domains, the cost and ease of registering a domain name, parking, cyber squatting etc and asked for views on self-regulation of industry. The PAB asked the CBI to give a further presentation when the results are published.

### **8. PAB Internals**

#### **a. PAB performance review**

The Chair introduced his paper: this was based on the discussion at the May meeting.

The PAB suggested that the text in section 3.2 (Response to Consultations) should be changed to read: "The PAB has considered all of these and published formal advice on two of them".

It was felt that the definition of policy was very useful and would help to remind PAB members what they are here to discuss.

Subject to amendment of 3.2 as outlined above **the paper was agreed** and will be forwarded to the Board.

#### **b. PAB work programme**

The Chair introduced his paper on the PAB work programme. This sought to take account of issues identified from the new members' election statements and a number of current policy issues.

It was agreed that the July meeting would be a good time to assess the impact of the EU regulatory framework. Geoff Smith agreed to provide a paper.

The PAB agreed to add an item for November combining the promotion of Nominet and the .uk brand, and participation, awareness raising, transparency.

The Executive will amend the PAB work programme to include these issues.

#### **c. Member involvement in Nominet events, nom-steer and the introduction of a web-based forum**

##### **1. Member Lunches**

There were volunteers for all of the member lunches (annexed).

##### **2. nom-steer mailing list and the forum**

There had been comments on and off list and an email to PAB-feedback suggesting that nom-steer should be a moderated list. PAB members recognised the importance of effective communications with the wider membership. Only 25 % of the whole membership subscribe to nom-steer and very few contribute: the mail list was failing to provide useful feedback to the PAB.

The nom-steer forum should be ready for launch by the end of June. It will still provide an e-mail based method for posting and receiving messages. The PAB decided to look at moderation and forum etiquette at the next meeting.

There was a suggestion that the forum could be used to share best practice and encourage registrar information exchange on more general issues.

#### **9. Update on the Nominet Foundation**

The Executive gave a brief update on the creation of the Foundation. This had been identified at the 2006 and 2007 AGMs, with a consultation in November and

December 2007. In February 2008 the Board approved the creation of the Foundation. The independent trustees are currently being recruited. Once the trustees are appointed, the Foundation will be registered with the Charity Commission. This was reported at the 2008 AGM.

Some PAB members expressed concern about the number of consultation responses and the balance of representation on the Board of Trustees. However, it was noted that the Board of Trustees needed to be independent of Nominet. There had been good media coverage at the time of the consultation.

Other PAB members commented that the Foundation was a good initiative and that they had received positive comments about it.

### **10. Other matters arising from nom-steer and PAB-suggest**

It was suggested that a team-building initiative would help PAB Members work more effectively together. The PAB asked the Executive to bring a proposal to the PAB at a future meeting.

### **11. AOB**

4.2 of PAB rules on the number of directors on the PAB: it was noted that the Board had agreed that there would only be one representative. The Chair agreed to draw the Board's attention to the clause and whether it needs to be re-written.

The Chair noted that PAB members could email suggestions of additional appointed members. It was agreed that, where appropriate, the PAB should invite experts for specific discussions (as for the discussions on Phishing).

There was a discussion on whether the PAB name affects the perception within the industry. It was agreed that the main priority was to raise the PAB's profile so that people recognise its key role. Several members stressed the importance of the meeting content and discussion being of high quality.

PAB members at the ICANN meeting in June: the PAB agreed that this might help raise the PAB's profile, but questioned whether it would achieve much from participation, bearing in mind the structure and nature of the ICANN meetings. Some PAB members would be attending anyway.

Meeting location: Andrew Bennett agreed to identify possible venues and circulate ideas to nom-pab.

Previous PAB meetings:

i) A query was raised with regards to the DRS case referred to in section 8 of the January meeting report and where this had got to in terms of reporting back the implications of it. Gordon Dick agreed to look into this and report back at the next meeting.

ii) Good practice terms for Parking Pages: the November meeting had agreed that this should be added to the 2008 work programme.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 July 2008 at 10.30 am at the Holiday Inn, 1 King's Cross Road, King's Cross.