

Follow up to the discussion on the Byron Review

1. Introduction

The PAB considered a paper at May meeting looking at the implications of the Byron review for the Internet industry: it agreed to revisit the discussion at the July meeting to identify whether there was specific advice it should give to the Board.

2. The May Paper

The Byron review identified the three elements in Nominet's on-going work for specific mention:

- Engagement with the Internet Watch Foundation
- Nominet Best Practice Challenge
- Nominet leadership in the UK-Internet Governance Forum

The May paper identified current activities that contribute to the Byron agenda (section 4) and asked for views on what additional action should be put in place.

3. Issues identified in the May PAB discussion

During the discussion at the May meeting, the PAB made the following points:

Education was the main theme with suggestions that the Nominet Foundation could produce resources to educate children, provide free tools for parents to lock down PC's or put together a "Green cross code" initiative for the internet to set out best practice for children and parents.

Gordon Dick clarified that the Foundation was a separate entity from Nominet and therefore Nominet could not control the Foundation in any way. There was some discussion and it was felt that it was more appropriate for the Foundation to take on the above suggestions rather than Nominet.

It was also suggested that Registrants have to be made more aware of their impact on the .uk namespace. This could possibly be achieved by amending the terms and conditions to highlight this responsibility to the registrant.

With regards to the issue on whether there were particular aspects of the DNS that Nominet could highlight, it was suggested that this could be dealt with by working with the membership. A small hosting Company will be out of its depth on these issues but it would be useful if Nominet could provide materials to take it forward.

There was a brief discussion on law enforcement access to WHOIS data. The general consensus was that it comes down to where the balance has to be between data protection and law enforcement.

There was a suggestion that Nominet should advertise .uk and also give guidance on issues such as safety and try to raise awareness of important issues.

There was a brief discussion on WHOIS data and the value of adding extra checks to ensure Nominet has valid data. The feeling was that extra checks would not necessarily raise the standard as the data can be changed at any time.

4. Possible messages for the Board

1. The Byron Review has a clear message for industry to show that the self-regulatory approach is effective: that it is taking the lead in addressing child safety on line. The emphasis is on industry identifying and adopting good practice, evaluating and benchmarking its actions.

2. We welcome Nominet's work in this area. We would encourage Nominet to maintain its leadership role. It should continue to make information available about the Nominet Best Practice Challenge, the UK-Internet Governance Forum and other initiatives.
3. Many Nominet members are small and might find useful to receive updates of initiatives from time to time: for example, Nominet could help draw the implications of the review to the attention of the wider membership. In addition, it could provide a channel of communications about other industry action like the Internet Watch Foundation.
4. The Byron Review shows an expectation that the industry will assess the success of its actions. This implies building an evidence base continued auditing and benchmarking to demonstrate responsible behaviour. Nominet could help members keep up to date by sharing information about good practice and monitoring activities.
5. We recognise the importance of maintaining industry standards to ensure the continued good reputation of the .uk name space. We would like to look at the promotion and enforcement of industry good practice and acceptable standards, and will schedule this into the work programme for future discussion.
6. Nominet could identify to the Nominet Foundation the importance that the Byron Review placed on education in addressing child protection. However, we recognise that funding decisions are for the trustees.

5. Discussion

The PAB is invited to consider whether there are messages it should give to the Board on the Byron Review and its follow-up, in particular on action that Nominet could take in communications to its members.