

Policy Advisory Body Report

This report will be tabled for approval at Meeting 60

Fifty-ninth meeting of the Policy Advisory Body
APACS, Mercury House, Triton Court, 14 Finsbury Square, LONDON, EC2A 1LQ
12 November 2008
Meeting 59

Those present:

Jeremy Beale	Appointed Member – CBI
Andrew Bennett	Elected Member
Simon Bezant	Elected Member
Ulrika Diallo	Appointed Member – Federation of Small Businesses
Gordon Dick	Nominet Board
David Evans	Appointed Member – Information Commissioner’s Office (part)
Clive Feather	Elected Member
Mark Healey	Elected Member
Nora Nanayakkara	Elected Member
Eric Ramage (Chair)	Appointed Member – ITMA
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 November Meeting – Report

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from the Earl of Erroll, Jarrod Robinson and Geoff Smith.

2. Declaration of Interests

With the notification by one member that he had published his on his website, it was noted that all elected PAB members have now filed a declaration of interest.

3. Approval of the September meeting report

The PAB approved the report of the September meeting.

4. Matters arising

Nominet is considering the request to publish the standard DRS experts contract.

The follow up discussion on lock states will take place at the January meeting.

5. Board response to PAB resolutions

The PAB noted the Board’s comments.

6. Policy Issues

a. Two-letter domains (report back from sub-committee)

The Chair tabled a paper recording the discussion in the sub-group at the meeting and asked the group to consider the recommendations put forward. (This paper has been added to the meeting papers on the PAB website.)

There was a discussion around the second proposed recommendation as it was felt there was some inconsistency. The PAB agreed that we should clarify that the restriction on .uk SLDs should be applied across the board regardless of whether the combination was also a ccTLD.

It was suggested that there were no technical issues associated with single-letter domains.

The PAB agreed the resolution in the Annex.

b. Industry Standards (paper from Gordon Dick)

Gordon introduced his paper. Raising industry standards needs to be kept under review, as standards have to continually improve. One PAB member suggested that this topic was particularly relevant at this time as the Internet is an integral part in helping businesses to remain competitive in a global market. And businesses are distinguished from their competitors by adding value to their product and service.

Gordon will Chair a sub-committee to discuss this issue. The sub-committee will have an initial brainstorming session by email. It was agreed that this should be a standing sub-committee, reporting back to the PAB on a regular basis.

All the PAB members present at the meeting expressed an interest in contributing to the work of this sub-committee. Martin noted that Geoff had indicated at the September meeting that he wanted to be involved.

Jeremy Beale was interested in this issue but will be leaving the CBI shortly and didn't feel able to commit his successor.

7. PAB internals

a. PAB methods of work (Chair paper)

The Chair introduced the paper and explained the background behind it. The PAB discussed pab-suggest as a method of gaining input from stakeholders. It was generally felt that awareness of this facility could be improved and a marketing campaign was suggested. It was also suggested that individual PAB members needed to do more to improve visibility to the membership and to promote the PAB.

The idea of working with other stakeholder bodies was considered. There was a suggestion of having a pool of appointed members available for the PAB to call upon depending on the items on the agenda of a particular meeting. Some PAB members felt that this would have a negative effect on the PAB, as there would be less pressure on the appointed members to attend meetings if the pool was larger and the PAB would therefore lose some of the representation of the wider community that comes from the appointed members.

The PAB agreed that there did need to be more engagement and fact finding with the wider community to help inform PAB discussions.

The Chair agreed to prepare a follow-up paper for the January meeting that included key points from the discussion.

b. PAB team building (verbal update)

Martin Boyle gave the PAB a verbal update on progress since the last meeting. Lord Erroll has agreed to host a tour of the Houses of Parliament and Rt Hon Alun Michael has confirmed that he would be willing to give a keynote speech. Both of these will be subject to timings and diary constraints.

The following members expressed in interest in attending a PAB team building day: Andrew Bennett, Simon Bezant, Ulrika Diallo, Gordon Dick, David Evans, Clive Feather, Mark Healey, Nora Nanayakkara, Eric Ramage, Rob Taylor and Michael Toth. The secretariat will now try to identify possible dates for the event.

c. PAB work programme

Martin introduced this item. He noted that the item on the profile of the .uk brand (which Nora agreed to lead) is the only work programme item that hasn't been discussed this year because of pressure on the agenda. This will therefore be added to the 2009 work programme along with the follow up item on lock states. He noted the agreement to continuing work on industry standards and trust in the Internet, which should appear on the work programme through the year. And he reminded the PAB that the Board had asked for an annual performance review. We also needed to schedule in the PAB team-building activity.

The PAB agreed:

- The value of an annual review of performance. This could help highlight the work of the PAB;
- Industry standards, trust in the Internet and Phishing should be ongoing items on the 2009 work programme;
- The PAB team building event should be added to the work;
- There should be more flexibility in the work programme and it should be recognised that many subjects need to be discussed over more than one meeting.

To deal with the issue of topics needing to be discussed at more than one meeting it was suggested that there should be a standing agenda item to agree the agenda for the next meeting and also to set a rough outline for the one following that.

PAB members were invited to suggest topics for discussion. The PAB agreed to have an email exchange before Christmas to identify possible items and a draft work programme will be prepared for consideration at the January meeting.

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

There were no matters arising.

9. AOB

An issue was raised over the consistency of the meeting report and naming PAB members. It was noted that the policy was not to name members unless they specifically requested. The PAB agreed that this should still be the case as all present were happy with this policy. The Chair noted that Simon Bezant had been named in the last meeting report without a specific request and apologised.

10. Date of next meeting 14 January 2009

The Secretariat will circulate a list of the proposed dates for 2009.

PAB Resolutions, November 2008

Two-letter Domains

1. Nominet should make two-letter domain names available for registration; making such alterations to its Rules as appropriate. There should be a special approach to releasing domain names with a staged sunrise period.
 - a) The first phase should be for holders of registered trademarks recognised and enforceable in the UK Courts, which are identical to the two-letter combination applied for. There should be provision for dealing with multiple applications for the same name and a cut off date for trademark registration to be set at some point in the past.
 - b) The second phase should be for parties with unregistered rights recognised and enforceable in the UK Courts, which are identical to the two-letter combination applied for. This phase could include registered Companies who can establish that they own such rights.
 - c) There would also be a third phase for releasing any remaining names. The majority of the group favoured a land-rush approach with the minority in favour of a lottery approach.
2. ccTLDs should not be reserved at the third level. The only exception to this is “uk” which should be reserved to avoid confusion, or used by Nominet for an appropriate purpose such as promoting the UK namespace “brand”. Currently reserved SLDs should continue to be reserved, regardless whether or not they are also ccTLDs pending further discussion.
3. The PAB sees no reason why these principles cannot be applied to the release of single character domain names at the third level.
4. Nominet should ensure that registrars have adequate notice of any changes to enable them sufficient time to update their systems.