

Reserved names

1. Introduction

At PAB meeting 59 (12 November 2008), the subject of 2 letter domain names was discussed. As part of this discussion it was noted that other domain names are also reserved under rules 5.8 and 5.9. It was agreed that this should be discussed at a future date.

2. What other names should be reserved?

For the purposes of this paper I will only be dealing with names that should be reserved in the .co.uk and .org.uk second levels, but details of those that are currently reserved under .me.uk and .net.uk are included in the appendices for completeness.

I will also be assuming that two letter domain names are made available at some time in the future, as previously recommended by the PAB.

Current policy is that current and new SLDs and TLDs should be protected at the third level. This policy is currently enforced by Rules 5.8 and 5.9, which I will use as a basis for the discussion in this paper.

Rule 5.8 states:

For the SLDs co.uk, me.uk, org.uk, and net.uk, a Third Level Domain may not be identical to any existing SLD (as listed in Appendices A, B and C to the Rules), or any SLD under .uk the creation of which has formally been announced by Nominet. For example, an application to register org.co.uk or nhs.co.uk would be rejected.

Rule 5.9 states:

For the SLDs co.uk, me.uk, org.uk, and net.uk a Third Level Domain may not be identical to an existing TLD or any TLD the formal approval of which has been announced by ICANN (or any replacement body which controls the creation of new TLDs). For example, an application to register uk.co.uk, eu.org.uk or com.co.uk would be rejected.

The other reserved names covered by these rules therefore fall into four groups:

- a) Those "identical to any existing SLD (as listed in Appendices A, B and C to the Rules)."
- b) Those "identical to... any SLD under .uk the creation of which has formally been announced by Nominet."
- c) Those "identical to an existing TLD."
- d) Those "identical to... any TLD the formal approval of which has been announced by ICANN (or any replacement body which controls the creation of new TLDs)."

However, one additional set of names appears to have been overlooked and is not currently protected that I believe worthy of discussion:

- e) Domain names registered at the second level. These are bl.uk, british-library.uk, icnet.uk, jet.uk, nls.uk, and parliament.uk

I requested a list of all names currently reserved by Nominet to see how these rules are currently applied. This list does not include any two letter domains as they are not currently available for registration. These are listed in Appendix 1.

I also requested a list of all names currently registered at the second level. These are listed in Appendix 2.

Taking these five groups in turn:

- a) Those "identical to any existing SLD (as listed in Appendices A, B and C to the Rules)."

Out of a possible 18 variants, not including any two letter SLDs which are currently blocked, all are currently reserved. These are listed in detail in Appendix 3.

- b) Those "identical to... any SLD under .uk the creation of which has formally been announced by Nominet."

Obviously no analysis of this can be performed, but it is likely that any new SLD will already be registered at the third level under .co.uk and .org.uk prior to any formal announcement by Nominet. I base this assumption on my analysis of additional TLDs as detailed below.

- c) Those "identical to an existing TLD."

Out of a possible 10 variants, not counting those identical to an existing SLD, 8 have been registered with only .com.co.uk and .com.org.uk currently reserved. These are listed in detail in Appendix 4.

- d) Those "identical to... any TLD the formal approval of which has been announced by ICANN (or any replacement body which controls the creation of new TLDs)."

Taking the 11 additional TLDs approved by ICANN and now active as a basis for my analysis, of the 22 possible variants 20 have been registered with only pro.co.uk and biz.org.uk currently reserved. pro.co.uk had previously been registered, but expired in 2006, and biz.org.uk had previously been registered, but expired in 2002. As Nominet do not apply Rules retrospectively, there is a possibility that both of these could have been renewed, and none of the new TLDs would be protected! These are listed in detail in Appendix 5.

- e) Domain names registered at the second level

Out of a possible 10 variants, not including any two letter names which are currently blocked, none are reserved, 4 are registered by the registrant of the second level name, and 6 have been registered by other people. Once two letter names are made available bl.co.uk and bl.org.uk would both become available for registration. These are listed in detail in Appendix 6.

3. Should the current situation be changed?

Taking these five groups in turn:

- a) Those "identical to any existing SLD (as listed in Appendices A, B and C to the Rules)."

I believe these should be continue to be protected due to the likelihood of confusion, but with an option for the operator of the existing SLD under .uk to register the SLD at the third level where allowed under the other Rules, as this could be used to help Internet users who are confused by the less common SLDs. For example, the operator of police.uk could use police.org.uk to help Internet users confused by police.uk addresses.

- b) Those "identical to... any SLD under .uk the creation of which has formally been announced by Nominet."

I believe we should protect any SLD application made under the new SLD process, rather than simply any SLD announced by Nominet, in order to prevent the SLD being bought up at the third level as soon as the new application becomes public, but before it completes the process.

- c) Those "identical to an existing TLD."

Only com.co.uk, com.org.uk, pro.co.uk, and biz.org.uk, i.e. 4 domains out of a possible 32 at this time, are currently reserved. The other 28 possibilities are all registered by someone other than the relevant TLD registry.

As we have already agreed that ccTLDs should not be protected, I believe we should extend this to all other TLDs not identical to SLDs under .uk and remove this anomaly.

As an aside, the automaton currently uses the IANA list of TLDs* to block registrations of TLDs at the third level. The automaton will thus need modification to take into account the release of two letter domains that match ccTLDs anyway.

* <http://data.iana.org/TLD/tlds-alpha-by-domain.txt>

d) Those "identical to... any TLD the formal approval of which has been announced by ICANN (or any replacement body which controls the creation of new TLDs)."

I believe we should remove this protection, as in virtually all cases any new TLD previously launched has already been registered in all possible SLDs under .uk prior to any formal ICANN announcement, and this would be without merit if we have removed the protection for existing TLDs.

e) Domain names registered at the second level

I believe that going forward we should protect these domain names from registration at the third level.

4. Recommendations

I propose the following:

1. The PAB recognises that the registration of any SLD at the third level could lead to confusion, and should continue to be prevented.
2. The PAB further recognises that the registration at the third level of a domain name registered at the second level could lead to confusion, and should be prevented in future.
3. The PAB also recognises that confusion already exists in some cases due to the popularity of .co.uk.
4. The PAB recommends that SLD operators should be allowed to register the SLD at the third level where that registration is allowed under the other Rules; making such alterations to its Rules as appropriate.
5. The PAB recommends that the registration at the third level of any domain name registered at the second level is prevented, unless this is by the registrant of that domain name where that registration is allowed under the other Rules; making such alterations to its Rules as appropriate.
6. The PAB recommends that the registration at the third level of new SLDs applied for under the new SLD process before the application for that SLD has completed be prevented; making such alterations to its Rules as appropriate.
7. The PAB recommends that Nominet should make any other names currently reserved under Rule 5.9 not covered by the recent discussion on 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 as with two letter domain names.
8. The PAB recommends that Nominet should not block registrations for any new TLDs which are announced by ICANN (or any replacement body which controls the creation of new TLDs); making such alterations to its Rules as appropriate.

Appendix 1

Currently reserved names:

aero.net.uk
arpa.me.uk
arpa.net.uk
biz.net.uk
biz.org.uk
com.co.uk
com.me.uk
com.net.uk
com.org.uk
coop.net.uk
edu.me.uk
edu.net.uk
gov.co.uk
gov.net.uk
gov.org.uk
info.net.uk
int.me.uk
int.net.uk
ltd.co.uk
ltd.me.uk
ltd.net.uk
ltd.org.uk
mil.me.uk
mil.net.uk
mod.co.uk
mod.me.uk
mod.net.uk
mod.org.uk
museum.net.uk
name.net.uk
net.co.uk
net.me.uk
net.net.uk
net.org.uk
nhs.co.uk
nhs.net.uk
nhs.org.uk
nic.co.uk
nic.net.uk
org.co.uk
org.net.uk
org.org.uk
org.sch.uk
plc.co.uk
plc.me.uk
plc.net.uk
plc.org.uk
police.co.uk
police.me.uk
police.net.uk
police.org.uk

pro.co.uk
 pro.net.uk
 sch.co.uk
 sch.net.uk
 sch.org.uk

Appendix 2

Domains currently registered at the second level:

bl.uk
 british-library.uk
 icnet.uk
 jet.uk
 nls.uk
 parliament.uk

Appendix 3

Those "identical to any existing SLD (as listed in Appendices A, B and C to the Rules)."

	co.uk	me.uk	net.uk	org.uk
gov		Nominet		
ltd				
mod				
net				
nhs		Nominet		
org		Nominet		
plc				
police				
sch		Nominet		

All Variants	36		
Reserved	36		
Registered	0	0 %	

Relevant Variants	18		
Reserved	18		
Registered	0	0 %	

Grey denotes reserved, "Nominet" denotes registered to Nominet.

Appendix 4

Those "identical to an existing TLD."

	co.uk	me.uk	net.uk	org.uk
arpa	Registered			Registered
com				

edu	<i>Registered</i>			<i>Registered</i>
int	<i>Registered</i>			<i>Registered</i>
mil	<i>Registered</i>			<i>Registered</i>

All Variants	20		
Reserved	12		
Registered	8	40.00 %	

Relevant Variants	10		
Reserved	2		
Registered	8	80.00 %	

Grey denotes reserved, "Registered" denotes registered to another party.

Appendix 5

Those "identical to... any TLD the formal approval of which has been announced by ICANN (or any replacement body which controls the creation of new TLDs)."

	co.uk	me.uk	net.uk	org.uk
aero	<i>Registered</i>	Nominet		<i>Registered</i>
biz	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		
cat	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
coop	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
info	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
jobs	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
mobi	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
museum	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
name	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
pro		<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>
travel	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		<i>Registered</i>

All Variants	44		
Reserved	14		
Available	0		
Registered	30	68.18 %	

Relevant Variants	22		
Reserved	2		
Registered	20	90.90 %	

Grey denotes reserved, "Nominet" denotes registered to Nominet, "Registered" denotes registered to another party.

Appendix 6

Domain names registered at the second level

	co.uk	me.uk	net.uk	org.uk
british-library	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>		

icnet	<i>Registered</i>		
jet		<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>
nls	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>
parliament		<i>Registered</i>	<i>Registered</i>
All Variants	20		
"Reserved"	4		
Registered	10	50 %	
Relevant Variants	10		
"Reserved"	4		
Registered	6	60 %	

Grey denotes registered to registrant of second level domain, "Registered" denotes registered to another party, unshaded denotes available for registration.