

Draft Policy Advisory Body Report

This report will be tabled for approval at Meeting 61

**Sixtieth meeting of the Policy Advisory Body
Victoria Park Plaza, 239 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1V 1EQ
14 January 2009
Meeting 60**

Those present:

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
Clive Feather	Elected Member
Mark Healey	Elected Member
Nora Nanayakkara	Elected Member
Eric Ramage (Chair)	Appointed Member – ITMA
Stephen Rhodes	Appointed Member - BERR
Jarrold Robinson	Elected Member
Rob Taylor	Elected Member
Michael Toth	Elected Member

From Nominet by invitation of the PAB:

Eleanor Bradley, Director of Operations
Martin Boyle, Senior Policy Advisor
Laura Hutchison, Policy Executive

PAB January Meeting – Report

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Nora Nanayakkara who would be joining the meeting late. The Earl of Erroll was also unable to attend and Jeremy Beale has now left the CBI so will no longer be attending the PAB meetings.

The Chair welcomed Stephen Rhodes to the meeting as the new representative from BERR.

2. Declaration of Interests

Clive Feather declared that he was no longer working for Thus and has updated his declaration of interest accordingly. Andrew Bennett has also updated his declaration of interest form.

No declarations of interest were received on agenda items.

3. Approval of the November meeting report

The PAB approved the report of the November meeting.

4. Matters arising

The Secretariat requested that any PAB member who wished to attend the lock states sub committee should send an email with their availability.

5. Board response to PAB resolutions

The PAB noted the Board's comments.

6. Policy Issues

a. Industry Standards (paper from Gordon Dick)

The issue of Industry standards is becoming more high profile as shown by the recent BERR letter to Nominet and the American Government's response to ICANN. Gordon Dick had only received contributions from two PAB members, asked the group to highlight any issues that may be missing in his paper.

The Chair highlighted an email that had been sent to pab-suggest titled "abuse of domains" about a .co.uk domain name not showing that it was a foreign-based company and asked the group if they felt this fitted with the Industry Standards discussion. The group agreed that this did fit under this topic.

There was a discussion around Industry standards in which the following points were raised:

- The big Internet issues are not technical ones, but customer service issues. There is a perception that if things go wrong on the Internet they are not dealt with in the same way as they would be face to face.
- Consumers assume that .uk means that the company behind the website is based in the UK and buying through one of these websites is the same as going to the high street.
- It was suggested that there was a level of ignorance amongst consumers about how the Internet works. Some of the issues were simply a matter of "buyer-beware" and could be addressed through consumer education.
- One PAB member expressed concern over the possibility of Nominet regulating website content.

It was decided that the issues should be split into 2 groups: Registrars and business viability, which Gordon Dick will lead on; and Trust in the Environment that the Chair will lead.

Eric requested input from Dave Evans and Stephen Rhodes.

b. Follow up to Phishing workshop

In the absence of a report from APACS, Martin Boyle gave a verbal report back on the Phishing workshop. There was good turnout from both the PAB and the banks at the workshop and the session produced some constructive discussion on practical issues that Nominet and the banking sector could work together on. There had been a suggestion that a second event should be held around 6 months after the first and this will be discussed as part of the work programme item (agenda item 8).

There was some discussion about a registrar lock to prevent tag changes in response to a Phishing report. It was agreed that this should be discussed in the forthcoming lock states sub-committee.

c. Summary Review process

The Chair presented his paper to the group. Five PAB members considered that the tick box system for decisions did not provide enough information for Members to be sure that the decision was properly justified and that the system was operating fairly: there should be an explanation for the decisions. Other PAB members were concerned that if the Expert had to write a reasoned decision report in every case then the price of a summary review would increase and the summary review had been introduced to respond to concerns that the high cost of a decision was a barrier to take undefended cases any further.

It was agreed that there should be a properly informed discussion about the way the DRS summary review process works and what safeguards are in place. The Chair agreed that Nick Wenban-Smith from Nominet and one of the experts should be invited to attend the next meeting.

d. Reserved Names

Mark Healey presented his paper to the group. It was agreed that this issue needed further discussion in sub-committee.

The sub-committee on Reserved Names will run after Lock states sub committee. The Secretariat will circulate suggested dates to the mailing list

7. PAB internals

a. PAB methods of work (Chair paper)

One PAB member raised the suggestion that the PAB was no longer representative of Nominet stakeholders. It was suggested that as part of the PAB review report the structure of the PAB could be reviewed. Concern was expressed about the extent that the PAB could review itself and it was noted that the PAB structure is ultimately a Board decision and any changes to the structure would need to be approved by the Board. However, the Board wants to ensure that the composition is relevant and has authority.

Following discussion on how input to the PAB might be made more immediate, and following a question on the point from the Chair all PAB members present agreed that they were happy with the addition of a standard agenda item of **“New Items for the Work Programme”**.

b. Raising the profile of the PAB

The question was posed: “What can the PAB do to make it more visible to members and wider outside stakeholder groups?”

The following suggestions were made:

- Reintroduce a PAB workshop session at the AGM or the registrar conference;
- There should be a PAB member at every member lunch;
- Evening events might allow people to attend out of work hours;
- The PAB could have a LinkedIn profile;

The secretariat will circulate the member lunch dates via the mailing list for PAB members to highlight which ones they would be able to attend. Simon Bezant offered to attend the Bournemouth lunch.

Nora Nanayakkara will follow up on the suggestion of a LinkedIn profile.

c. PAB team building (verbal update)

It was confirmed that we have the agreement of Rt Hon Alun Michael MP to give a keynote speech and Lord Erroll to give a tour of the House of Lords.

The secretariat will circulate some suggested dates on the PAB mailing list.

8. PAB work programme

The additional discussion on the summary review process was added to the March meeting as agreed under Item 6.c.

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

An email had been sent to pab-suggest regarding restricting .uk domains to UK companies. This was discussed under the item on industry standards. The Chair will send an acknowledgement to this email.

10. New issues

No new issues were raised.

11. AOB

One PAB member had received a call from a client expressing concern over a tag release fee. It was noted that there was no rule preventing this and it was simply a case of this organisation having a different business model. However, the Nominet Good Practice Terms state that all registrars must make all their fees clear and Nominet would follow this up if the fees had not been made clear.

Following a query from one PAB member about the Governance review, it was confirmed that the Review wouldn't specifically look at the PAB.

One PAB member asked if a decision had been made about publishing the DRS Experts' contract yet and also requested that Chairman and Non-Executive Director contracts should be published. Other PAB members felt that this wasn't a policy issue and should be raised through the proper channels: this was agreed.

One PAB member raised the issue of Nominet allegedly not following its process on the dissolution of domains because he had read allegations on a web site that this was the case.

One PAB member queried the status of IDN implementation. Gordon Dick agreed to check this and report back at the next meeting.

12. Date of next meeting 18 March 2009