

## The .uk brand

There are many TLDs to choose from for businesses and individuals who wish to build an online presence and some of these TLDs are viewed as attributing specific characteristics to an entity's online identity; for e.g. a .org TLD is often used for not-for-profit organizations, while a .tv is used by those with television tie-ins. The use of ccTLDs in particular, can be a very important part of an organization's efforts to replicate a multinational identity for itself on the internet. Web users choose to type in .co.uk domains for a variety of reasons but recent consumer research has shown that:

- 77% of Internet users would choose a .uk ahead of a .com
- A .co.uk domain says the site is more local, relevant, and trusted
- 3/4 of women refer to .uk sites over .com
- 2/3 of men refer to .uk sites over .com

Research on UK businesses has also demonstrated that:

- 25% of companies see a .com as critical
- 18% of companies see a country code as critical
- 34% believe the country domain to be important to them

This shows that .uk is well regarded by many Internet users and brand owners. However, what policy issues should the PAB look at to ensure that the perception of local presence is a valid one and that ensure the brand perception matches brand reality? What policy issues should the PAB consider to ensure that the perception of being trusted, relevant, etc. are valid? How do topical market issues that arise around .uk, such as our FCFS registration policy or our acceptance of overseas registrations affect these perceptions? What are the policy issues we need to look at in regard to safety, criminal activity, brand protection, consumer protection, etc. to ensure a continued and healthy brand image for .uk? How can we ensure our policy development process reflects the consequences of our recommendations for the perception, value and integrity of .uk?

How can we, the PAB, use the revised PAB process to consider the "brand" that is .uk and the policy implications that need to be considered in the light of the brand. I would like to suggest that we, as a PAB explore

- how our policy decisions underpin the perception of the .uk brand
- What kind of/how might policy decisions that we make affect the attributes that a .uk TLD gives to an online presence
- The likely impact of new TLDs on .uk. policy decisions and the impact this may have on the .uk brand" What policy issues need to be considered in order to ensure that we maintain a positive brand image for .uk
- Which stakeholders can we call upon to advise and how can we identify .uk users who could contribute to the discussion? How can we use the new PAB process to reach different stakeholders and attract contributions from a range of relevant .uk users?