

Function of a domain name:

1 What do you believe is a function of a domain name?

A domain name is a unique mnemonic identifier for one or more services operating on a network. Its sole purpose is to allow people to use various services through their name, rather than the IP address of the machine hosting them. It is not there to tell you what you will find when you get there – that is what directory services do. It is also not there to provide identity authentication – that needs webs or trust or PKIs.

Perception of the “.net.uk” SLD:

2 Would you class yourself as working in, or being part of the ISP/network provider industry?

No, but I work at a company related to that industry.

3 Do you associate ".net.uk" with an ISP/network provider-type company?

Yes – at the moment.

4 On a scale of 1 to 5, do you believe that the “average Internet user” associates “.net.uk” with an ISP/network provider? (1 = No association, 5 = Strong association)

3. I do not believe the average Internet user is strongly aware of net.uk.

5 (a) How far do you see .net.uk as a duplicate for .co.uk, .net or other TLDs/SLDs?

It is a partial subset of .net, but the duplication is small as .net.uk is so much smaller than .net

(b) Would this be different if anyone could register a .net.uk domain?

I suspect there would be greater duplication. Opening up the net.uk SLD to registration by anyone and everyone would force many existing domain registrants into registration in net.uk, simply to protect their names. There are a great many ‘open’ domains in which people can register names. There is no need to provide another.

Definitions of an ISP/Network Provider:

6 How would you attempt to define an “Internet Service Provider (ISP)” and what would you say are typical characteristics of an ISP? Are these objective criteria

which are easy to verify automatically?

Any definition of “Internet Service Provider” is going to cause serious problems. Definitions are attempts to place strong limits on meaning, and so they work well in fairly slow moving or static environments. The communications industry is in a state of strong growth and change. Any exclusive definition agreed now will cause problems in just two or three years. For that reason, if a definition is required I favour something similar to the definition of a public communications provider given in the Communications Act 2003, Chapter 21 (“the provider of a public electronic communications network or service or an associated facility”). It is sufficiently broad to include everyone that wants to be included.

7 How would you attempt to define a “Network Provider” and what would you say are typical characteristics of an Network Provider? Are these objective criteria, which are easy to verify automatically?

See above. Applying exclusive definitions is problematic and will lead to serious problems in short order.

8 Do you believe there are sufficient differences, which can be clearly defined between an ISP and Network Provider?

No.

If you believe the domain should be restricted to some definition, should this be inclusive of both an ISP and Network Provider, or one of them?

This is the guts of the problem. The current system is restrictive and so the domain is not widely used. However, definitions of ISP, network provider and so on are so broad as to be meaningless. Similarly, requiring Nominet membership or tag-holding just makes the domain more expensive than the equivalent .net registration, but does not add any real value to the people that will communicate with registrants of the domain. This leaves the option of opening the domain for registration by anyone and everyone (perhaps with a charter that registrants can ignore at will – if they know about it). The last option is the most exploitative and so the least acceptable to me.

Frankly, while I can sympathise with companies who would like a .net.uk domain, but don't need to run their own Autonomous System, or join the RIPE NCC, I have not seen a proposal that makes things better for the broader Internet community.

Options

9 What general option do you favour, and why?

- a. Close .net.uk completely to new registrations.
- b. Restrict .net.uk for some definition of ISP/network operator with strict eligibility criteria.
- c. Open .net.uk with a charter to indicate its *suggested* use for ISPs/network operators but without a restriction enforcing such a recommendation.
- d. Open .net.uk with no specific charter (everyone is encouraged to register)
- e. Another option. (please explain)

9a. is the least objectionable option.

10 If you believe there should be a restriction of some kind, how should this be structured? (see previous page for some ideas)

The current system is not perfect, but I cannot see even a rough consensus for any particular alternative. As such, the current system should continue.

11 If there is a restriction on the registrant, do you believe that the rules for “.net.uk” should require some kind of presence in the UK?

I wouldn't require it, but wouldn't object strongly to such a requirement.

12 If registration of ".net.uk" domains is restricted to a specific type of organisation, should its use (e.g. subdomains, e-mail addresses, etc.) also be restricted [for names registered under such rules]?

Domain names are delegated. The word 'delegate' implies that the parent has given away authority over the management and use of the child. Nominet is not in the business of regulating the activities of domain name registrants in any other SLD. I do not see a good reason for requiring Nominet to regulate the activities of registrants in this SLD.

13 If the .net.uk SLD is opened up for registration with no or very limited controls, would the benefits of more registrations be defeated by any problems such as more defensive/duplicate registrations?

See above.

Leo Vegoda