

General Points.

The consultation paper relates to the known problems of the difficulty of defining the current users and rules of the .net.uk domain.

As a starting point it should instead look at the utility of the name, what it communicates and its potential.

Utility.

There is always a temptation to view any new industry as being special - Internet Providers saw themselves as special, and created their own special category. This is similar to Mr Edison setting up "wires.uk" when he first invented electricity. In those days it would have had meaning, today the use of wires has become so generalised and commoditised it would serve no useful purpose to identify "wire users and producers" as a category.

Networks now have a similar reach and commoditisation such that a .net.uk name does not identify a category of business that requires such identification.

As a side issue, the number of users of .net.uk is small, indeed infinitesimal in comparison with serious domain names like .co.uk or .com.

Arguably therefore .net.uk has little utility.

Communication.

Even if one judges that .net.uk has a theoretical use what does it communicate and who to? The .uk bit is probably pretty clear to all literate English-speaking peoples. The correct meaning of the .net bit however is only known to a small number of people, mostly in the uk, and mostly in the internet industry. I doubt that a street poll (even in Tottenham Court Road) would find many who could say what it meant. From a global perspective over 99% of people would equate it with the free-for-all-uses .net.

So .net.uk communicates nothing to a globalised or local world.

Potential.

Could it be improved? Probably not, because the .net domain is so huge, and the people who see .net.uk are so globally diverse it wouldn't be practical or useful to teach them its meaning.

It is all too easy, sitting on our little island to think that our name and industry is important, but to millions of Chinese, Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, Welshmen and English it means nothing.

The potential it does have however is to join its bigger and stronger brethren, .co.uk and .org.uk as a domain name for general use.

Regards
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