

(Context - I'm a Nominet Tagholder (not "registrar"...), Member and registrant)

1 - Yes

2 - I think some improvement should be done through the contract, but other bits through an 'added value' facility. Maybe the 'list of tagholders' on Nominet's website should have a set of 'marks' next to each tagholder. I think you have to be careful with an 'added value' 'goldmark' because not everyone will fall into certain 'slots'. For instance, we offer free, quick support during business hours, but limited support out of hours, and no SLA. Some people offer chargeable support 24/7 - is that better than what we offer? Answer - It depends. Having a single 'goldmark' means that you either have to be 'good' or 'bad', there's no allowance for intermediates.

3 - not sure. The only problem we had was setting up the PGP key, because Nominet use RSA keys which aren't generatable by modern PGP software, so we had to get hold of an old version of PGP to make the key. After that we worked out everything else pretty easily.

I think there should be training material available on the \*non-technical\* side of things - eg what the PAB and COM are, how the 3-way contract system works, about the mailing lists etc. IMHO, if you need more training material than is available for the technical side of things then you shouldn't be a tagholder - it's really not hard if you can read. If I've ever needed help the telephone support or mailing lists work well IME.

It would be nice to have a user interface for managing domains and our account, but it's not critical - it's a bit tedious doing it the current way, but it's not hard.

4 - No

5 - I don't think Nominet can. They can do it to a certain degree, eg

a) Lay out required performance criteria - eg releasing tag within 2 business days of request, changing WHOIS data within 1 business day etc

b) - have a 'complaints' facility where registrants can complain about tagholders, and have Nominet do something when they get a complaint if the tagholder doesn't meet the required criteria. Investigate complaints, do things, eg make surcharges, suspend tags etc if the tagholder hasn't got a good explanation or gets too many complaints.

6) Not really - I don't find it difficult to understand. The only complicated bit about Nominet is the 3-way contract.

7) When registrants talk directly to Nominet, Nominet should ensure that the registrant has tried to contact the tagholder first. Maybe Nominet should have a record of user-usable support telephone numbers that they can pass on to the registrant.

8) No, domains are cheap enough already. Maybe charge extra for tagholders whose customers regularly have to contact Nominet directly for help because the tagholder won't help. (To recover the cost of the Nominet support technicians)

9) Yes

10) Yes - they can be enforced by allowing registrants to complain to Nominet about the tagholder not fulfilling the requirements

11) That would be difficult to enforce. If the tagholder is punished because of the behaviour of their resellers, then the tagholder will work harder to ensure that their resellers 'behave'

12) No

13) Yes - but only if the party is aware of the error. The tagholder shouldn't be required to verify the registrant's details.

14) There should be a minimum required information published, eg costs, timescales for doing various operations etc. It doesn't really matter what's on it as long as it's the same for all tagholders. I think this information should be submitted to Nominet who could associate it with the tagholder some way, eg as a table accessible from a link on the tagholders list, or as a set of 'icons' next to the tagholder or something. This way a prospective registrant could compare using a standard form of data, and from a 'neutral' place. It could be enforced using a complaints procedure to Nominet

You have to be careful that you don't restrict business practices by doing this though - eg if you had to publish the 'cost of registering a domain', what about people who register the domain for free with a year's contract for webhosting for £300 and who don't do stand-alone registrations - they can't say the cost is £300 to register the domain as that would be misleading, and they can't choose an arbitrary cost for the domain registration as potential registrants may expect to be able to just register a domain for that price.

15) No - but it could be an option on the published data in a standard form to allow comparison

16) What do you mean by 'registrant details'? and what's the 'quality' of them? Use gold ink?

17) Yes, but it would be hard to enforce

18) Only if Nominet write it clearly first, then tagholders could link to that page on Nominet's side or whatever. Having tagholders try to explain the 3 way contract to an average registrant is asking them to achieve the impossible.

19) I don't think so. They should be informed of any required performance criteria and be asked to agree to meet those criteria, and shown what information they need to publish etc. I don't think a prospective tagholder could meet any criteria until they've been set up with a tag to develop & test their systems

20) In response to complaints. If a tagholder gets complaints, then Nominet could investigate further, but I think having an 'assessment' in the case where no complaints have been received is detrimental to the tagholder who is doing everything right, and is a waste of time for Nominet

21) Any complaint should be discussed with the tagholder who can be given a chance to explain (things do go wrong sometimes, even in the best systems), if a tagholder consistently does something wrong, then they could be given a surcharge, or have their tag suspended in an extreme case. If the complaint relates to some information that the tagholder has published (eg if they say it takes 2 days to do a tag release, but it consistently takes 3 days), then the only necessary sanction may be to correct the published information - this would be my preferred solution.