.uk Public Policy Partnership

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Background

• Private sector registry
• No formal agreement between UK Government and Nominet
• No domain name legislation, no sector regulation
Nominet, the basics

• Not for profit company, limited by guarantee
• Liberal domain name policy (over 4.3 million names)
• Strong registrar competition (over 3,700 registrars)
• Mission – to act in the interests of the Local Internet Community, responding to stakeholder requirements
• Active participation of multi-stakeholders (Policy Advisory Board)
The Root/IANA services

Decisions in line with UK law and supported by UK stakeholders

UK to be the best environment to do e-business

Be confident of stable environment for UK e-business
Ability of community to ensure continuity

Serve our customers
Stay in business
Be efficient
Keep up with technical developments

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Ensure that the industry is running policies that serve the community

Be a good citizen
Promote best practice
Ensure our policies meet the community needs

Business & technical continuity

Stay in the root!
Transparency, Operational efficiency

Competition at registrar and registry level

Key issues

Government

Registry
Business and technical continuity

- Automation, robustness, redundancy
- Continuous investment in infrastructure
- Key performance indicators based on 100% availability of services
- Healthy retained surplus
- Likely reaction of membership if decline or poor management
- Insurance and risk management
Benefits of self-regulation

- Direct dialogue with stakeholders
- Balancing conflicting viewpoints
- Open, public consultations on policy issues
- Policy Advisory Board within Nominet’s corporate structure
The PAB's influences

- Government
- Laws and Regulators
- Registrants and Tag holders
- Internet users (Electorate)
- Data Protection Policy Advisory Board
- Big Business SMEs
- Intellectual Property Rights holders
- Parliament
- Big SMEs
- Registrants and Tag holders
- Public
- Nominet UK Board
The UK Framework:  History

- “[need for] an organisation willing to run the UK Internet Naming Service in a manner that guaranteed high quality service levels”
- “… dependent upon the support of interested parties forming the British Internet industry”
- “… legitimacy … because of the openness and transparency of the process associated with its establishment and the type of organisational structure”
- “… incorporating the interests of a multitude of actors … in a manner that prevented any particular group of interests from exerting undue influence…”
- “The actors who participated in the registry formation process were able to define … the constraints that would be placed on their domain name registration activities”
- “… virtually no government involvement in the registry formation process”

• The UK as one of the best places in the world for on-line business

• World-class Infrastructure

• Competitive environment

• The “good citizen” role of industry self-regulation
  – Subject to EU and national laws (data protection, fair trading, consumer protection, competition law): on-line as off-line
  – Responsive to concerns
The UK Regulatory Environment

- No ccTLD-specific regulation
- No formal DTI-Nominet agreement
- Industry self-coordination
  - Focussed on sector needs
  - Responsive to changing demands
  - No competing priorities
  - Can invest for the future

- A small but important strategic resource
  - Nominet turnover: £ 12 mn
  - ISPs’ turnover > £ 1 bn
  - eCommerce in the UK > £ 40 bn
Nominet’s Policy Advisory Board – another view

• Advisory
  – Does not take away company’s responsibility
  – But does help company understand issues and concerns

• Forum for discussion
  – Balance concerns
  – Changing environment

• Helps Nominet behave as a “good citizen”
Conclusions: Characteristics of the .uk model

- Industry self-regulation works well in fast-changing environment
- Benefits of local solutions to match needs of local stakeholders
- Responsible registries, responsive to all stakeholder needs, not only the industry.
- Off-line laws apply
- .uk: a successful model of informal, co-operative partnership between private sector and government