

From: [redacted] s40
Sent: 06 December 2012 11:55
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted] s40
Subject: FW: Briefing from Nominet for Ed Vaizey
Attachments: Minister's briefing draft direct.uk.docx; Nominet's Dispute Resolution Service.docx; The work of the Nominet Trust.docx

[redacted] s40, all:

To see – Nominet have provided briefing for Ed on various issues he discussed with Lesley Cowley at the IGF in Baku.

[redacted] s40

From: Alan Blomster [redacted] s40 [mailto:Alan.Blomster@nominet.org.uk]
Sent: 03 December 2012 13:08
To: [redacted] s40
Subject: Briefing from Nominet for Ed Vaizey

Hi [redacted] s40,

Lesley Cowley, CEO of Nominet, recently met Ed Vaizey at the Internet Governance Forum in Baku. The Minister asked for specific further briefing on three areas:

- An update on the work of our charitable foundation the Nominet Trust;
- Nominet's Dispute Resolution Service; and
- A consultation we are running at present on 'direct.uk'.

Lesley is currently travelling but has asked me to send through this briefing in her absence. Are you the right point of contact for this?

Kind regards,

[redacted] s40

Nominet UK

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Consultation on 'direct.uk'

Nominet is currently undertaking a three month public consultation on a proposed change to the structure of the '.uk' domain space.

At present, .uk is organised under a hierarchical structure in which consumers and businesses register at the **third level**, such as example.co.uk or example.me.uk. From time to time, Nominet has been asked why it is not possible for consumers or businesses to register at the **second level**, such as example.uk. This would mirror the simpler structure of .com and most other country code Top Level Domains.

The current hierarchical structure was decided on at a very early stage in the development of the UK internet and it seems likely that a uk registry starting from scratch would simply take registrations at the second level. However, we have over 10 million registered domains under the current structure, and Nominet considers that simply force-migrating all of those existing users into a new second-level structure would impose unacceptably high costs on users, for instance through the need for rebranding.

As the Minister is aware, Nominet is also concerned to improve levels of trust and security in the .uk space. In particular we want to ensure that further growth in online trading/e-commerce, a major source of economic growth, is not stymied by either insecurity or the perception of insecurity.

Therefore, the proposal which we have published for consultation is for a new, second-level structure that we are calling **direct.uk**, sitting alongside the existing .co.uk, .org.uk and so on, which would come with additional security features that would enhance end-user trust and hence make the product particularly attractive to those wishing to trade online.

The security features we have suggested include an obligation to implement the DNSSEC security feature, the provision of a malware scanning service, stricter procedures for validating data provided by registrants at the point of registration, and a 'Trustmark' that the registrant could use on their website. We are also proposing to restrict eligibility to companies with a UK presence, as this gives the customer some comfort that UK consumer laws would apply to transactions from the site in question.

The final price of the new domains has not been settled. But, recognising the need to cover the cost of the additional security features, this would necessarily be greater than for an existing .co.uk registration. We have suggested that the price would nevertheless be below £20, which would make direct.uk registrations still price competitive with many other TLDs.

Reactions received so far

Initial reactions to the consultation suggest that there is support for the proposals from some business and civil society sectors. However, existing

owners of .co.uk domains, and in particular firms which speculatively acquire large portfolios of such domains ('domainers') are much less happy with the proposal at this stage. They have expressed two principal concerns:

- Introducing this additional product will undermine the value of existing .uk domains, which will automatically assume 'second class' status in the minds of consumers. A variant of this argument is that if Nominet markets direct.uk as more secure, this will be interpreted as meaning that .co.uk domains are insecure, and all businesses will feel duty bound to migrate in order to retain consumer trust.
- We have suggested a launch process in which those with intellectual property rights such as trademarks get the first entitlement to secure the direct.uk term which is equivalent to that trademarked term. This, they argue, is unfair to existing owners of .co.uk domains, who should be entitled to have example.co.uk 'grandfathered' across to 'example.uk'.

The consultation process

In line with Nominet's not for profit status and public interest constitution the Nominet Board is committed to the widest possible engagement and, if possible, the establishment of a consensus on the way forward. Nominet would only proceed with direct.uk if we considered that there was sufficient support from a broad cross-section of stakeholders to do so.

We are conducting Nominet's most extensive public consultation exercise ever, combining proactive outreach to specific constituencies and open meetings. The consultation has been designed to reflect Cabinet Office guidelines on best consultative practice and to be as accessible as possible by:

- Making the consultation available in a variety of forms: interactive pdf, hard copy with freepost return, and an online survey that can be saved and returned to prior to completion.
- Providing a full-time secretariat to collect feedback via email, phone, individual meetings, and to respond to requests for information on the proposals. All requests are responded to. We provide a dedicated telephone number for the consultation.
- Proactive targeting of particular communities, including business and industry individually and through representative bodies, public authorities including law enforcement, second level domain managers, the registrar channel to market, consumer organisations, security and identity assurance experts, and civil society.
- Working with particular groups to support them in reaching out to their own members and stakeholders such as the FSB or specialist organisations by providing news stories or briefings for their members.
- A series of public roundtable events open to attendance from all stakeholders. These include
 - 4 x public meetings in London for stakeholders across business and industry, public authorities, registrars, civil society, consumers, and others;
 - An "Open House" for 7 hours in London

- Public stakeholder meetings in Cardiff and Glasgow in November; roundtables in Belfast and Manchester have been scheduled for December;
- A conference for our registrar community attended by some 50 registrars, with a live webcast for another 50 registrars
- Senior members of the Nominet management team have been present at all events to hear feedback. We have stated that all inputs will be reviewed and a full summary of the feedback received will be published after the close of the consultation and when it has all been considered.
- Significant awareness raising of the consultation via the media.
- In excess of 600 submissions in writing or by phone have been received to date, in addition to the various roundtable and face-to-face briefings.

We will take the specific concerns mentioned above into account in deciding whether to proceed with this proposal and if so in what form.

Government involvement in the process

Government is a vital stakeholder in this process both as regards the importance of promoting economic growth in the digital economy but also in the context of the Government Cyber-Strategy and the specific calls to action within that strategy to industry to address trust and security issues. We have extensively briefed officials at DCMS, BIS, Cabinet Office, the Intellectual Property Office and the law enforcement community on this proposal and look forward to receiving their comments during the consultation period. We stand ready to provide additional briefing to Ministers if this is required.

Nominet
November 2012