

Nominet the .uk registry (www.nominet.org.uk) is a not-for-profit public purpose company who have managed a number of second level domains (SLDs) since 1996:

Nominet .uk Registry	
Second level domains managed by Nominet	Second level domains delegated to other organisations
.co.uk (Commercial)	.ac.uk (Universities)
.org.uk (Not-for-profit)	.gov.uk (Government)
.me.uk (Personal)	.mod.uk and .mil.uk (Military)
.ltd.uk (Limited companies)	.nhs.uk (NHS)
.plc.uk (Public limited companies)	.police.uk (Police)
.net.uk (ISPs)	.judiciary.uk (Courts)
.sch.uk (Schools)	.parliament.uk (Parliament)

For the past 17 years the namespace has run perfectly well using third level extensions. However in July 2013 Nominet has [launched a second consultation](#) to introduce “direct.uk” as a new second level domain name. This will mean hundreds of thousands of businesses will have to rebrand their business name to take the “.co” out of “.co.uk”:



The most important aspect of this proposal is “the oldest current continuous registration would be given priority” across .co.uk .org.uk .me.uk .ltd.uk .plc.uk .sch.uk and .net.uk. In around 500,000 cases the registrant will not be identical across the extensions, resulting in some big established business losing out on their matching .uk domain.

Consequences of the Nominet .uk proposals

Domain	.co.uk date	.org.uk date	.me.uk date	.ltd.uk date	.plc.uk date	.net.uk date	Winner
Windows.co.uk	19.05.05	09.05.04	14.01.02	12.01.05	n/a	n/a	Windows.me.uk
Dreams.co.uk	23.03.04	23.09.02	24.09.12	n/a	n/a	n/a	Dreams.org.uk
Hotmail.co.uk	23.10.03	02.09.99	14.01.02	n/a	n/a	n/a	Hotmail.org.uk
Sky.co.uk	25.10.95	30.06.06	23.04.06	n/a	n/a	16.11.94	Sky.net.uk

We believe if .uk is introduced in the way Nominet propose, there are unforeseen and damaging consequences that are likely to happen:

- 250,000 businesses may find they don't have the right to their equivalent .uk.
- 10,000's of businesses, after .uk is introduced, will forget to renew the .co.uk.
- Organizations that move over to .uk will incur huge rebranding costs
- Confusion will reign over what the different UK domain extensions mean compared to the order we have at present with .co.uk, .org.uk, .me.uk etc
- Moving from .co.uk to .uk will be very disruptive to search engine optimisation (SEO), which many businesses will not understand and will prove costly.
- Confidence in UK domains may be lost by the consumer in the way Nominet has handled the introduction, which may affect existing registrants/registrars.
- Confidence over time may be lost in businesses that maintain .co.uk and don't move over to .uk and so suffer commercially in the long term.
- It will be harder to find a new domain .uk if everybody wants the .uk, whereas before certain organizations used different extensions such as .org.uk.
- There will also be a wave of cybercrime based on .uk domain names including phishing, typo-squatting and pre-order / registration scams.
- Trust in existing "safe" extensions like .gov.uk and .police.uk will be undermined.

Proposed Solution

We believe there are two sensible options available to Nominet:

1. Do not open .uk at the top level and create more second level domains to provide more capacity and choice for registrants e.g. .bank.uk .shop.uk
2. Open .uk however give all .co.uk registrants first priority on .uk (free first refusal for two years). This is because most of .uk registrants are based in .co.uk & the other SLDs are restricted / intended for non-commercial use.