

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 on [20th November 2013 Nominet approved](#) the introduction of “direct.uk” as a new second level domain name. This will mean from summer 2014 thousands of businesses will have to rebrand their business name to take the “.co” out of “.co.uk”:



Over ten million existing .uk customers will be offered the shorter equivalent of their current address, with five years to decide whether they want to use it in addition to, or instead of the domain they already have. At the end of this reservation period, all second level domains will be available on a first come first served basis.

Consequences of the Nominet .uk proposals

The right of refusal in the reservation period will be granted to the pre-existing holder of an equivalent .co.uk domain. Nominet will only extend the right of refusal to any uncontested third level domain names (.org.uk .me.uk .ltd.uk .plc.uk .net.uk) if there is no .co.uk registered. Also as Nominet does not run the registries of .ac.uk (Universities), .gov.uk (Government) etc they will not be able to apply for a .uk during sunrise.

Domain (Victim)	Victim	.co.uk registered by someone else?	.co.uk Registrant	.uk Prior Rights goes to:
Open.ac.uk	Open University	Yes	Open Limited	Open.co.uk
Tate.org.uk	Tate Gallery	Yes	Impellam Group Plc	Tate.co.uk
NUS.org.uk	NUS	Yes	NUS Consulting Group Limited	NUS.co.uk
Macmillan.org.uk	Macmillan Cancer Care	Yes	Macmillan Publishers Ltd	Macmillan.co.uk
Oxford.ac.uk	Oxford University	Yes	W B P Data Ltd	Oxford.co.uk
Oxford.gov.uk	Oxford City Council	Yes	W B P Data Ltd	Oxford.co.uk
BFI.org.uk	British Film Institute	Yes	Business Forums International Ltd	BFI.co.uk

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

- 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/registrar.
- 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.