

2007 NAMES POLICY PANEL

First Meeting
6 March 2007, 2.00-5.00pm
Rydges Carlton Hotel, Melbourne

MINUTES

Present:

Philip Argy, Michael Bouy, Darrell Burkey, Grace Chu Te, Simon Delzoppo, Brett Fenton, Peter Firminger, Sally Foreman, David Goldstein, Graham Ingram, Amin Kroll, Jo Lim, Andrew McCullough, Bennett Oprysa, George Pongas, Holly Raiche, Tony Steven, Bruce Tonkin, Derek Whitehead, Alex Woerndle

Teleconference:

Kim Heitman, Jeff Marr, Jamie Murphy, Paul Szyndler

Apologies:

Bruce Arnold

Actions:

- DW and JL to follow up suggested research questions.
- DW and JL to frame the next meeting's agenda to allow discussion of all three issues in the Terms of Reference.
- JL to circulate auDA survey questionnaire.

Discussion:

1. Welcome and introductions

Panel members introduced themselves and declared relevant interests.

2. Panel operating procedures

The Panel noted and agreed the operating procedures (attached).

The Panel further agreed that members may bring observers to a meeting, provided that the member gives reasonable notice and subject to meeting room capacity constraints. Observers must abide by the Panel's operating procedures.

3. Introduction to .au domain space

JL gave a presentation covering the history of .au, the role of auDA and the specific auDA policies to be reviewed by the Panel.

4. Panel process and deliverables

The Terms of Reference require the Panel to undertake two public consultations before providing its final report to the auDA board. Previous Panels have released an issues paper for the first consultation, and draft recommendations for the second consultation.

5. auDA market research

JL advised that auDA has commissioned a survey of .au registrants and Internet users about the questions contained in the Terms of Reference. The survey method and questions are yet to be finalised. It is expected that initial survey results will be available for the Panel to consider at its next meeting, and there will be an opportunity for the Panel to request follow-up surveys if necessary.

It was suggested that resellers and large corporations should be included in the market research sample.

JL agreed to circulate the survey questionnaire to the Panel.

6. Panel Terms of Reference – general discussion of policies and issues

Apart from the market research being commissioned by auDA, the Panel will have access to statistical information from the AusRegistry database, eg. number of registrations, number of deletes, number of registrant transfers and so on.

Panel members suggested additional research questions that might be useful input to the review:

- What has been the experience of other TLDs in opening up to direct registrations, or choosing not to open up to direct registrations?
- Why do people choose to register in .com or another TLD instead of .au?
- What are the domain name penetration per capita rates for Australia and comparative countries?
- How many .com registrations have an Australian contact address?
- What is the general public's understanding of ".au"?
- In TLDs with a secondary market, what effect has the secondary market had on the price of domain names?
- How do people navigate the Internet, and what do they expect to find?

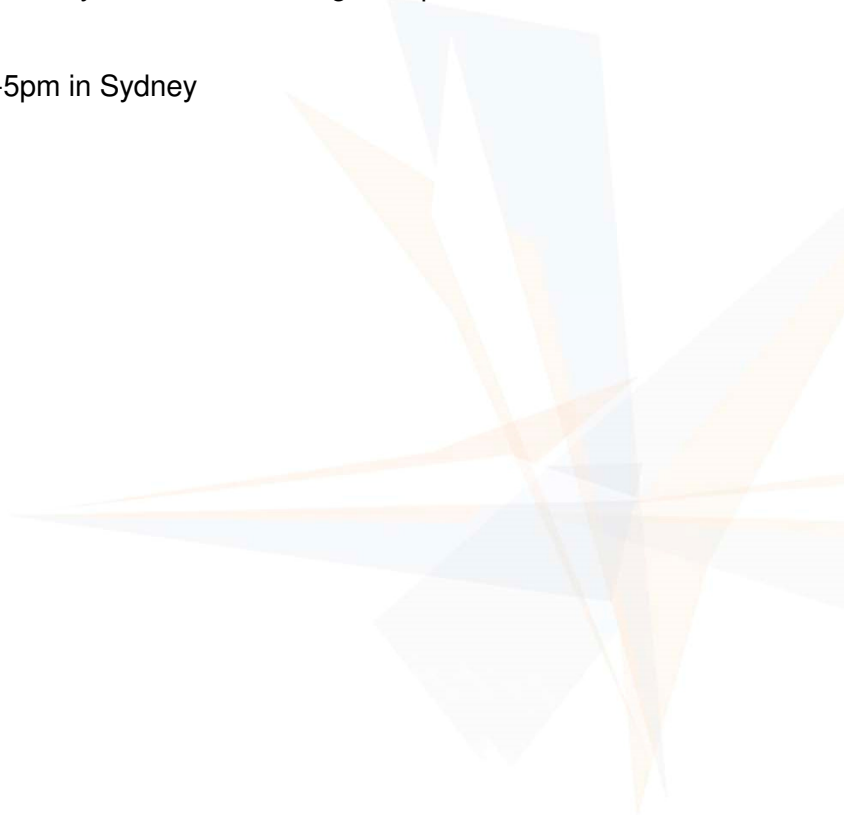
Panel members also raised the following issues and concerns during discussion:

- Allowing people to register domain names directly under .au is not the same as creating new 2LDs. However, it would be technically possible for the registrant of a domain name under .au to set up a "pseudo 2LD" and offer 3LD registrations in their own registry. This type of activity could be addressed through policy rules and/or licence conditions.
- There are currently just over 700,000 com.au domain name registrations, compared with over 65 million .com registrations. This indicates that there is still ample room for growth in .com.au.
- Is an increase in the number of domain name registrations necessarily a good thing? There are other factors that should come into play in an assessment of "community benefit".

- The review should address the use of domain names for illegal activity (eg. phishing, spam). It would be desirable for auDA and/or the registrar of record to have authority under the policy rules to delete domain names that are being used for illegal purposes.
- Opening up .au to direct registrations may cause panic and confusion among consumers. Different implementation methods could help to ease these problems, eg. automatically replicating com.au registrations in .au.
- The relaxation of policy rules in the past – eg. aligning the eligibility criteria for asn.au and org.au – has forced many registrants to register multiple domain names in order to protect their online identity and brand. This is costly for registrants, especially not-for-profits and small businesses, and leads to a dilution of value of existing domain names.
- The domain name licence period is within scope, ie. the Panel may consider changing the current 2 year licence period.
- The technical implications of any changes need to be considered, to avoid problems such as those caused by registrants implementing wildcard resource records on TLD domain names (eg. com.com.au) when they were released after a change of auDA policy.
- The closed 2LDs (csiro.au, edu.au, gov.au) are excluded from the Terms of Reference, however the impact of opening up .au to direct registrations on the closed 2LDs needs to be taken into account. The closed 2LD managers will have an opportunity to comment through the public consultations.

Next meeting:

Tuesday 10 April, 2-5pm in Sydney



2007 NAMES POLICY PANEL

Operating Procedures

1. Meetings

The majority of Panel members are located in Sydney and Melbourne, therefore meetings will be alternated between the two in order to maximise attendance and participation. Panel meetings have been scheduled for the second Tuesday afternoon of each month (apart from the first meeting), in order to synchronise with the auDA Board's meeting schedule.

Tuesday 6 March, 2-5pm - Melbourne
Tuesday 10 April, 2-5pm - Sydney
Tuesday 8 May, 2-5pm - Melbourne
Tuesday 12 June, 2-5pm - Sydney
Tuesday 10 July, 2-5pm - Melbourne
Tuesday 14 August, 2-5pm - Sydney
Tuesday 11 September, 2-5pm - Melbourne
Tuesday 9 October, 2-5pm - Melbourne
Tuesday 13 November, 2-5pm - Sydney

Participation in meetings should be as equitable as possible, given that some members will be attending in person and some by telephone. Meetings of the full Panel may be supplemented by teleconferences or meetings of sub-groups if required.

2. Proxies

Panel members are permitted to send proxies to meetings where necessary. The Panel member must ensure that their proxy is sufficiently briefed to ensure continuity of Panel proceedings. Members cannot replace themselves by proxies on an ongoing basis; if a member cannot continue their position they should resign from the Panel.

3. Confidentiality

Panel proceedings are confidential. Members are free to canvass, discuss and debate the issues outside Panel meetings (eg. on public mail lists or with their constituencies) but not to disclose the proceedings of the Panel - ie. what is actually said and by whom. To do so is likely to inhibit free discussion and work against an outcome.

4. Consensus

Consensus has been defined by auDA as a 2/3 majority, although whether this means a 2/3 majority of members as a whole or 2/3 majority of members who are present at a meeting is yet to be determined. In the past, Panels have mostly been able to reach consensus without needing to call a formal vote on issues. There is an expectation that the Panel will provide a single recommendation to the auDA Board, however a significant minority opinion could also be presented to the Board as part of the Panel's final report.

5. Conflict of interest

All Panel members have, or represent, a particular stakeholder interest and in most cases the nature of that interest will be clear. However, if any members feel that they

need to clarify their interests in relation to particular issues under consideration, then they should do so.

6. Minutes, papers and submissions

Panel minutes will be published on the auDA website as soon as possible after each meeting. The minutes will record the Panel's discussion, but will not attribute comments to individual members unless expressly requested by the member. Panel papers are confidential until published on the auDA website. Papers will ordinarily be published unless the Panel decides that a paper should remain confidential, in which case the minutes will record the existence of the paper. All submissions to the Panel will be published on the auDA website unless clearly marked confidential.

7. Reporting and publicity

The Panel Chair will report to the auDA Board at each Board meeting. The Panel is independent of the Board in its deliberations, but the Board has the final say on what actually happens. The only official statements made on behalf of the Panel will be made by the Chair. Panel members are free to speak about the work of the Panel, but should make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Panel.

8. Panel mail list

The mail list for the Panel is panel-names@lists.auda.org.au. Discussion on the list is confidential, and posts to the list will not be published or archived.

9. Panel resources

auDA will provide secretariat support to the Panel. auDA will also, at its discretion, provide financial assistance to Panel members who require it. auDA will consider any reasonable request for additional resources that the Panel believes are necessary to complete the Terms of Reference (eg. market research surveys). Any such request should be made to auDA by the Panel chair.

