

# Pros and cons of introducing .uk domain names

At the moment, domain names in UK can only be registered at the third level, that is under .co.uk or .org.uk. Nominet proposes to open up registrations at the second level, directly under .uk, meaning domain names such as example.uk will be available for the first time.

This represents a radical change to the current structure of the UK internet, which has served UK businesses so well over the last two decades.

Nominet's proposal outlines one way .uk could be rolled out. Before responding to that proposal, a fundamental question needs to be answered first: "Should we have a .uk *at all*?"

In other words, what are the potential rewards, and what are the inherent risks that would stem from the introduction of .uk (regardless of how it is introduced)?

## PROS OF .UK (vs .CO.UK)

- Simple and logical
- Easy to remember
- Shorter than .co.uk and potentially more visually appealing
- Gives a stronger sense of national identity
- More desirable than .co.uk (for all the reasons above)
- Puts the UK on a par with other countries
- Makes more domain names available
- Allows people to register desirable names that they missed out on previously
- Added revenue for Nominet and its partner registrars

## CONS OF .UK (vs CO.UK)

- The system ain't broke – don't fix it!
- No technical reasons to change the current structure
- 3,000,000 businesses already marketing .co.uk web addresses
- Multiple organisations with same name coexist at the same level (co.uk, org.uk, plc.uk, ltd.uk, sch.uk etc) - no extension is superior to the other
- Using .UK and .CO.UK alongside each other for businesses creates confusion
- Businesses will be forced by the fear of confusion to maintain both registrations, regardless of cost
- Higher annual renewal fees (2 domains rather than 1)
- Astronomical rebranding costs for UK plc to change cards, stationery, website etc
- High marketing costs to inform customers about the.co.uk/.uk confusion
- Increase in phishing attacks, and higher probability of success because of confusion
- Misdirected emails intended for .co.uk end up at an unrelated .uk name
- Potential privacy breaches, loss of trade secrets, etc. because of emails gone astray
- Technical setup costs for running two domains and redirecting emails and traffic
- Loss of confidence in .co.uk as .uk takes off
- Push from all organisations at the third level to be present at the second level i.e. .org.uk organisations will also want to be at the .UK level, as will schools, etc
- All or nothing decision – no new domain extensions (e.g. .com.uk or .shop.uk) can be launched in future to meet new market demands