



## **Response to Nominet's Consultation on a new .uk domain name service**

UCISA, the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association, is a membership organisation representing those responsible for delivering information management systems and technology services in universities, colleges and other institutions. UCISA membership is institutional and has almost 100% coverage within the higher education sector.

UCISA's response to the consultation relates exclusively to the impact a new .uk domain might have on the higher education sector, especially the .ac second level domain. Commentary on the political or strategic direction of the over-arching proposals to enhance the ability of businesses to get online has not been included as this is not within the scope of the Association.

This response has been prepared with the assistance of the UCISA Networking Group, a specialist interest group whose remit is to consider all aspects of networking and network security within the academic and research community. [www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/ng](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/ng)

We note:

- Broadly, UCISA welcomes Nominet's intention to increase consumer protection and confidence in using the Internet. However we are concerned about the potential impact of the proposed new domain on universities and colleges.
- We would therefore strongly support a Nominet-led system of protection which proactively prevents obvious misuse in the educational and research arena. It would be unreasonable for establishments to have to purchase additional names simply to avoid malicious imitation, cyber squatting, phishing and other threats.
- Thus, as an example, only the University of Anytown should be allowed to register, if it so wishes, [universityofanytown.uk](http://universityofanytown.uk) or [anytownuniversity.uk](http://anytownuniversity.uk). This should only be made available to the institution referred to. The *sunrise period* system clearly shows that this is possible; UCISA would recommend that it is extended indefinitely for such clear cases.
- Whilst it is recognising that proactive protection cannot extend to every possible combination of spelling or misspelling of domain names, Nominet must also implement a swift, free system to allow for removing any misappropriated domains. These issues are not only consistent with Nominet's stated aim of consumer protection, they are a necessary pre-requisite for such a system to be effective.

- Without these measures the proposed new domain could result in the UK's universities and colleges purchasing unnecessary and unwanted domains. Further expense would result from having to attend to domains which others have misappropriated.
- UCISA commends steps to increase the adoption of DNSSEC and would encourage Nominet to promote its adoption in other domains and registries in the UK.
- UCISA welcomes Nominet's proposals to monitor the direct.uk domain for malware and viruses but requests clarity on the extent of monitoring, and on the potential impact of domain suspension.
- UCISA notes that a trust mark may offer a sense of security to some internet users but we note that its deployment needs to be strongly policed to prevent unauthorised use.
- UCISA works closely with Janet, the administrators of the .ac.uk domain, to promote best practice on network security throughout the higher education sector. We support the Janet response to this consultation.

Peter Tinson  
Executive Secretary, UCISA  
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