



Domain Naming

Guidelines for UK Government Websites

Illustrated Handbook for Web Management Teams: Section 1.9

This section is kept under review and comments or suggestions should be forwarded to naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk

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This document contains hypertext links

1.9.1 Background

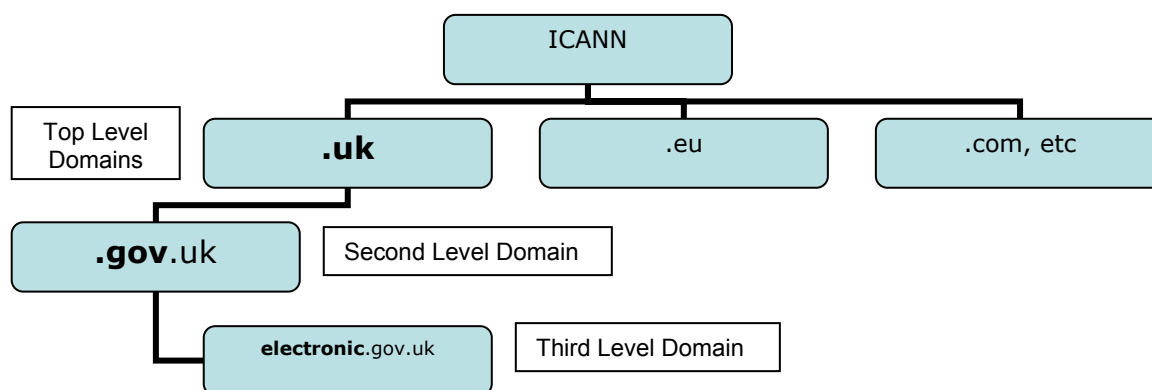
1.9.1.1 What is a Domain Name?

A domain name is the user-friendly form of an Internet address. They are commonly used to find websites, for example, **www.cabinet-office.gov.uk** is used to find the Cabinet Office website. A domain name also forms the basis of other methods or applications on the Internet, for example, email addresses (naming@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk), and for file transfer – ftp addresses.

1.9.1.2 The Domain Name System

The Domain Name System (DNS) comes from the early days of the Internet when it was a small network for defence and academic research purposes. The DNS system that we use today was introduced in 1984. The system is essentially a global addressing system. It is the way that domain names are distributed, located and translated into Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and vice versa; a process known as 'resolution'. A domain name is a unique alias for an IP address (a number for example, IP 212.24.85.85), which is an actual physical point on the Internet. For example, your PC if you have an internet connection.

The DNS forms a hierarchy with Top Level Domains (TLDs), Second Level Domains (SLDs), Third Level Domains (3LDs) and so forth. The Top Level Domains (TLDs) are administered internationally by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) which is also the overall body for providing the Uniform Domain Resolution Policy.



1.9.1.3 Administrative bodies

The Top Level Domain names are divided into various types, for example:

- the generic top-level domains (gTLDs) such as

.com

.net

.org

.info

- and the country-code top-level domains (ccTLDs), such as

.uk

.eu

.fr

.de

ICANN does not act as the Registry for domain name. Each of these Top Level Domains has its approved Registry that manages the administration and registration formalities for the domain according to published regional or national policies. In the UK the ccTLD **.uk** registry is controlled, managed and operated by the private not-for-profit company Nominet.uk and in Europe the non-profit organisation EURid is the registry for the ccTLD **.eu**.

1.9.1.3.1 Restricted gTLDs

Many of the generic Top Level Domains have eligibility limitations of some kind, for example:

.int is a reserved domain used only for registering organisations established by international treaties between governments, for example, the United Nations (***www.un.int***) and NATO (***www.nato.int***). The .int domain registry is administered by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) – ***www.iana.org/int-dom/int.htm***.

.eu is a new domain name and broadly every organisation, company or person established in the European Union will have the right to apply for a .eu domain name. The Public Policy Rules were agreed in April 2004 but public registration is not yet open. This is being administered by a central registry – the European Registry for Internet Domains (EURid) – ***www.eurid.org***.

.net broadly seen as intended to have been used by telecommunications organisations, Internet Service Providers (ISPs). It is administered by VeriSign Global Registry Services – ***www.verisign-grs.com***.

.org is for organisations whose primary focus is non-commercial, for example, charitable organisations, cultural institutions, foundations, volunteer groups etc. It is administered by the Public Interest Registry – ***www.pir.org***.

1.9.1.3.2 Unrestricted gTLDs

The generic Top Level Domains, for example **.com** and **.info**, are seen as unrestricted because owners do not need to satisfy any geographical requirement or be of a specific type or from any particular sector. Interestingly, many assume that **.com** means that it must be from the USA. Worldwide over 45% of all registered domain names are from within the **.com** domain.

1.9.1.3.3 Country Code Top Level Domain Names (ccTLDs)

There are over 250 Top Level Domain names organised on a country-by-country basis and based upon ISO 3166-1. For example:

.au (Australia)
.de (Germany)

.ca (Canada)
.uk (United Kingdom)

Some countries allow anyone to register a domain name in that country; others require a local connection, or if there is no such connection, that the domain name matches trademark registration within that country.

The design of the naming structure under a country code rests with the country manager (Registry). Some ccTLDs are only available with a second level domain (SLD) attached. For example, under the rules of the United Kingdom's country code manager it is not *routinely* possible to register [sample].**uk**; we are more familiar with our domain names divided into three levels

top-level (ccTLD)	--	.uk	.uk
second-level (SLD)	--	.gov.uk	.co.uk
third-level (3rdLD)	--	electronic.gov.uk	electronic.co.uk

1.9.1.3.4 United Kingdom Second Level Domains (SLDs)

The following are examples of available Second Level Domains:

.co.uk	for commercial use
.org.uk	for non-commercial use
.plc.uk	for public companies under the Companies Acts
.ltd.uk	for limited companies under the Companies Acts
.net.uk	for networks and ISPs etc
.ac.uk	for academic organisations
.sch.uk	for schools

See **www.nominet.org.uk** for further details on second level domains.
For information on the **UK public sector SLDs** see paragraphs **1.9.2** for .gov.uk and **1.9.2.5** for other public service SLDs.

.uk Top Level Domain rules
www.nominet.org.uk/rules.html

1.9.1.4 Registration

This is usually on a 'first come, first served' basis. This has led to problems such as 'cybersquatting'. However, in an attempt to reduce this, the recent introductions of new gTLDs have commenced with a *sunrise period*; a given period during which trademark and other rights owners are allowed some priority to register their names.

Registration of a domain name does not automatically means ownership of it for ever. Registrations are usually for a fixed period which has to be renewed. Initial periods are usually 10 years for gTLDs and 2 years for ccTLDs.

Risk management – public organisations wishing to maximise a web presence in relation to their name and/or their brands need to think about registration as soon as opportunities arise, and to plan defensive registrations to ward off similar domain names falling into the hands of others – see **1.9.5 Do you need a domain name strategy?**

.uk Top Level Domain Disputes Resolution Service
www.nominet.org.uk/ref/drs.html

1.9.2 The .gov.uk domain rules

1.9.2.1 Introduction

This guide sets out the national, that is, UK-wide, rules and principles for registering and managing a .gov.uk domain name. These rules are also known as the '*Eligibility Guidelines*'.

Follow the steps:

- Determine if you qualify to register and manage a .gov.uk domain name.
- Review the domain naming conventions and ensure that your proposed name complies.
- See paragraph 1.9.3 for a list of the information required to successfully apply for a registration.
- Be aware of the full Terms and Conditions that apply to the use of a .gov.uk name.

These guidelines apply to all new requests for registration of .gov.uk names. Some domain names were registered before these current rules were published. Such names should be regarded as exceptional, and not as setting a precedent.

Domain names are not automatically issued and not on a first come first served basis.

If you have any questions about these rules or specific candidate names direct them to naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk. Applications for registration **must not** be sent to this email address – see paragraph 1.9.3 **How do you apply for a .gov.uk name?**

1.9.2.1.1 Background to .gov.uk

The highest sub-domain underneath **.uk** is called a second-level domain (SLD). **.gov.uk** is such a second level domain. The Cabinet Office (eGovernment Unit), through the national Naming and Approvals Committee is responsible for the policy governing the **.gov.uk** domain and for managing these rules. The UK Education and Research Networking Association (UKERNA) administers the .gov.uk domain on behalf of the Cabinet Office, by providing the name submission, name modification, approval and registration systems, in effect our Registrar. A name registered within the .gov.uk, for example, *department.gov.uk* is known as a third-level domain.

1.9.2.2 Your eligibility for a .gov.uk name

To preserve the integrity of the .gov.uk namespace the registration/ownership of .gov.uk names is limited to:

- UK government and devolved administration departments and agencies,
- executive and advisory non-departmental public bodies and appropriate projects, and

- local and regional government bodies (including properly constituted town and parish councils).
- **The following are not eligible for a .gov.uk domain:**
 - individuals (included elected representatives);
 - associations representing public sector staff;
 - public sector pension funds;
 - stand alone 'arms length organisations' where staff are not public servants, eg, they are employees of a private or public company;
 - charitable, voluntary and privately owned organisations;
 - companies and organisations registered by Companies House (www.companies-house.gov.uk/index.shtml) that is, private companies (limited by shares or guarantee), private unlimited companies and public liability companies;
 - public, privately owned or charitable organisations *undertaking work or programmes within the public sector*;
 - public, privately owned or charitable organisations *undertaking work or programmes targeting the public sector*;
 - internet management and network related companies, including ISPs and hosting companies;
 - when a public sector organisation, with a .gov.uk domain name, undergoes a change of status that ordinarily would make it ineligible, for example, moving into the charity, voluntary, limited company or commercial sectors;
 - British overseas territories, see paragraph **1.9.2.6**; and
 - international organisations – see paragraph **1.9.1.2.1**.

1.9.2.3 Using fourth-level domains (also known as sub-domains)

Departmental, agency, regional and local authority departments, branches, services, initiatives, projects and what are termed as microsites, should generally be treated as a sub-domain (fourth-level) of their parent or sponsoring body, for example:

[fourth-level]	<i>housing.authority.gov.uk</i>		
	<i>project.department.gov.uk</i>		
[third-level]		<i>authority.gov.uk</i>	
		<i>department.gov.uk</i>	
[second-level]			<i>.gov.uk</i>
[top-level]			<i>.uk</i>

Fourth-level sub-domains enable you to develop a unique and additional website, if necessary within its own demilitarised zone, but are established by your Internet Service Provider and do not have to be registered via the Naming and Approvals Committee. Refer to paragraph **1.9.3.2.1f** Reserved names.

1.9.2.3.1 Using fourth-level names within the third level .gsi.gov.uk

The GSi (www.gsi.gov.uk/) is managed by OGCbuying.solutions. An application for an approved GSi name must be routed through your local ICT staff. General queries can be directed to the GSi Team at gsi@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk.

1.9.2.4 Use of unapproved names

You must not use a .gov.uk domain name on promotional material, printed material or other media until it has been correctly applied for and formal approval given by the .gov.uk Domain Naming and Approvals Committee.

The Committee will not be responsible for any project costs incurred by breaching this rule. Failure to secure approval prior to printing or communication errors is **not** a ground for appeal if the name is rejected. Project teams and their Internet Service Providers must ensure that approval is secured before authorising the use of a name. If a typographic error is made on promotional material the use of a temporary domain name may be approved for use until the error is corrected.

1.9.2.5 Other public sector Second Level Domains

There are a number of public sector areas that in some cases have dual-eligibility with their own domain and the .gov.uk SLD:

.mod.uk (and .mil.uk) – these SLDs are reserved exclusively for the Ministry of Defence and the UK Armed Forces. The registry (operating and administering authority) is the Defence Interoperable Network Services Authority (DINSA). DINSA can be contacted by email at dcsadinsa-helpdesk@mod.uk or by telephone on +44 (0)1225 813426.

.nhs.uk – this SLD is reserved exclusively for NHS organisations and services within the UK. It is administered by the NHS Information Authority www.nhsia.nhs.uk/nhsnet/pages/connecting/registrations/default.asp

.police.uk – this SLD is reserved exclusively for UK police services and organisations. The registry (operating and administering authority) is the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) www.pito.org.uk/index.htm

1.9.2.6 British overseas territories and International organisations

In order to avoid confusion a number of geographic and geopolitical areas have their own country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD). For example:

- Channel Islands – **gg** for Guernsey **.je** for Jersey

- Isle of Man – **.im**
- Falkland Islands – **.fk**
- Gibraltar – **.gl**
- South Georgia – **.gs**
- Pitcairn – **.pn**

Their administration departments, agencies and associated public sector organisations are not considered suitable the .gov.uk Second Level Domain.

1.9.2.7 Guidance on website security

a. **Are you an Internet Service Provider?** For technical advice an Internet Service Provider should refer to the NISCC Technical Note 06/03 'Guidance on Securing websites'. PDF version available from:

www.uniras.gov.uk/11/12/13/tech_reports/NTN0603.pdf

b. **Are you a website manager?** Government website managers should refer to the Guidelines for UK Government websites, section 1.11 Backgrounder on securing websites at: **www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/webguidelines**

c. **Additional queries** please email **lucky.afzal@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk**.

1.9.3 How to apply for a .gov.uk name?

Your application for a domain name **must** be submitted through an approved Internet Service Provider (ISP), (see paragraph 1.9.3.3) who will act as your registration agent with Janet Customer Services at UKERNA, using the appropriate templates. These are available online at:

<http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/registering-gov/gov-procedure.html>

Accuracy is important – you need to give your ISP sufficient information – a number of applications are being initially rejected with advice because the applicant has not read the rules, used the wrong template, or supplied misleading or inadequate information.

- Entries in the 'to represent' field **must** reflect the organisation or project that the requested name will represent and not the domain owner or sponsoring organisation or project if this is different. This should be included in the 'domain owner' field.
- Entries for **Admin-c** – must be name/address of the person or contact point designated to receive communications from the Registrar/Naming and Approvals Committee related to the administration of the domain name. This person can be with the ISP or with the proposed domain name owner.
- Entries for **Tech-c** – must be name/address of the person or contact point designated to handle technical issues associated with the domain name.

- Entries for **Reg-c** – must be the name/address of **public sector employee** (or elected representative) of the domain owner (Registrant) designated to handle communications related to the ownership of the domain name.

1.9.3.1 Your application must describe your organisation

If the information requested in a, b and c below is not provided the application will automatically be rejected.

a. To be considered for a UK government domain name you *must* clearly describe how the status of your organisation (as domain owner) and the purpose of the domain name you are applying for.

Include:

- the status of your organisation (for example, central government, executive agency, borough council, parish council);
- the role and objective of your organisation;
- the status of your staff (for example, civil servants, local government officials or employees)
- the source of your funding (for example, central taxation, CMF, council tax);
- to whom your organisation is accountable (for example, Secretary of State for...).

b. **Purpose of the domain name** -- you *must* outline the primary purpose and planned content of your proposed domain name, for example, for:

- an information website (see section 1.1 of the Guidelines for UK Government websites)
- a transactional website (see section 1.1 of the Guidelines for UK Government websites)
- a campaign website (or discussion group) (see sections 1.1 and 1.6 of the Guidelines for UK Government websites)
- an educational website, eg, aimed at children/schools
- a redirect page, or a name being used for 'defensive' or 'typosquatting' and being redirect to; you must include the address to which the redirect is going
- for email purposes only.

c. Who is the **audience** for your website? You *must* identify to us what is seen as your primary audience eg, educationalist, pensioners, general public, your council tax payers, etc

- d. **Using abbreviations within your application.** Not everyone on the Naming and Approvals Committee may know what your abbreviations stand for. Spell them out when you first use them within your application.
- e. The Naming and Approvals Committee reserves the right to check the details you provide and to contact named individuals about any individual application.

1.9.3.2 Appealing against *rejection* of your application

If your application is *rejected* it will be with advice explaining why the Naming and Approvals Committee has taken this decision.

You have the right to appeal against the decision. Your appeal should include new information on why you feel you should have the name you originally requested. Simply repeating your original application is inadequate.

Failure to secure an approved domain name prior to, for example, printing publicity and similar material, is **not** a ground for an appeal (see paragraph 1.9.2.4 Use of unapproved names).

Many applications are rejected because they are made on the wrong template, or inadequate information is supplied. In these cases an appropriate *resubmission* is required *not an appeal*.

1.9.3.3 Using an approved Internet Service Provider (ISP)

The .gov.uk domain is not a commercial operation. Its management and registration are centralised, but the Cabinet Office does not provide advice on who is a suitable ISP. These are commercial activities trading in a competitive environment.

Advice on choosing an ISP is available from Nominet.uk at:
www.nominet.org.uk/RegisteringYourDomainName/ChoosingARegistrationAgentisp/

Detail of UKERNA's approved ISP scheme is available online from:
<http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/isp-account/approved-isp-index.html>

A list of ISPs on UKERNA's scheme is available online from:
<http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/isp-account/approved-isp-index.html>

1.9.3.4 How to make changes to or cancel your .gov.uk name

Information regarding changes to a registered domain name entry is available online at: <http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/modifying/procedure.html>

Information regarding cancelling a domain name is available online at:
<http://www.ja.net/services/connections/domain/cancelling.html>

1.9.4 The conditions of use for a .gov.uk name

There are conditions and conventions attached to the .gov.uk domain and the following paragraphs are intended to assist you in choosing a name and the conditions attached to the use of that name.

- a. The applications (Web, email, etc) using a .gov.uk domain name must comply with current UK legislation and support channels that provide accessibility for disabled people, members of ethnic minorities and those at risk of social/digital exclusion. Legislation includes Copyright, Data Protection Act and Disability Discrimination Act. Abuse of will result in the name being withdrawn.
- b. The acceptance of the name is conditional on that name being used specifically and exclusively for the organisation on whose behalf it is registered. The Naming and Approvals Committee expects that the use of an approved domain name on a web server will lead directly to the home page for that organisation and not to that of its ISP/hosting service or any other agent, ie, a page on a non-public sector domain. Abuse of this principle will result in the name being withdrawn. See **Appendix A**. Code of Practice for withdrawal of a .gov.uk name.

Note: In practice this means that if you have a .gov.uk domain name it should be your principal domain name and not used simply as a redirect to a non-public sector domain (eg, .co.uk, .org.uk, .info, .com). Of course the protective registration of a name in other Top Level and Second Level Domains that redirects to your .gov.uk name is common and the accepted practice.

- c. When you are using a .gov.uk domain name to deliver a web presence you are reminded that websites should comply with the **e-Government Interoperability Framework**, the **Guidelines for UK Government websites** and **Framework for Local Government** particularly on such issues as use of metadata, PICS labelling, accessibility and security.
- d. Having a .gov.uk domain name means you (the Registrant) have exclusive right to its use. Your organisation does not own the domain name outright, periodical renewals have to be undertaken to retain the right to use it.
- e. If after registration the original status of your organisation or project changes to, for example, charity, voluntary or commercial status, then your eligibility for a .gov.uk address ceases. You must inform us at **naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk** and negotiate a timescale for termination of the name.
- f. Protectively marked information must not be published under your domain name.
- g. A registration fee is levied on your Internet Service Provider. This covers a period of two years, after which a renewal fee is payable for each subsequent two year period.
- h. Registering a domain name does not mean that it is automatically a trademark. Refer to the Patents Office website at

www.patent.gov.uk/about/ippd/issues/domain.htm

- i. When your website goes live you must inform the .gov.uk Naming and Approvals Committee directly by email to ***naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk*** confirming (a) the .gov.uk URL of your home page, (b) the date that it went live as a public website, and (c) confirm that your website complies with and will continue to comply with the accessibility recommendation for public sector sites, that is, W3C WAI Level AA. Failure to comply with this may result in the name being withdrawn.

- (a) www.[sample].gov.uk
- (b) 02 January 2005
- (c) This website complies with and will be maintained to the accessibility recommendations for the public sector detailed in the Guidelines for UK Government websites

- j. It is recommended the managers of individual .gov.uk domain names establish and maintain a generic website team email address, for example:

webmaster@****.gov.uk or where appropriate postmaster@***

1.9.4.1 Withdrawal of a .gov.uk name

The following summarises conditions that may result in withdrawal of a .gov.uk domain name. See **Appendix A**. Code of Practice for withdrawal of a .gov.uk name.

- a. Non-conformance with the principle and practice of the rules and conditions.
- b. Persistent failure to maintain an accessible and functional website. For example, obsolete and de-commissioned domains – where there is persistent delivery of, for example, a code 404 page or a not found during the DNS lookup.
- c. Failure to renew the name.
- d. Change of status of the organisation or project that the domain name represents or change of status of the domain name owner. If you inform us at ***naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk*** a suitable timescale for withdrawal can be negotiated.

1.9.4.2 Choosing a .gov.uk name

1.9.4.2.1 The principles

This summarises, for e-communicators, web managers, web developers, corporate branding designers etc, the principles for determining what name your organisation may adopt:

- a. **Registration criteria**

Domain names must:

- comply with the **Guidelines for UK Government websites** and/or the **Framework for Local Government websites**;
- not point to anything other than your organisation's home page on the .gov.uk domain or to your home page if it is held on one of the public sector domains detailed in paragraph **1.9.2.5**;
- contain only standard ASCII alpha numeric characters A to Z; numerals 0 to 9 and/or hyphens;
- not contain less than three characters;
- not begin or end with a hyphen (-);
- not coincide with internet protocols, such as, www, ftp, dns, whois;
- not include postal codes, or pseudo abbreviations, such as, ltd, plc, gov;
- not contain more than 60 characters (including the .gov.uk) but excluding the prefix www;
- not imply a national (UK-wide) activity when in reality it is focused on or limited to a regional/geographic responsibility or activity;
- reflect the legal name or registered 'trading name' of your organisation;
- minimise risk of confusion with similar organisations, geographic areas or similar registered names and avoid the risk of inadvertent masquerading.

b. Internationalised Domain Names are currently not supported and xn- - names are not registerable. Where names contain letters that cannot be reproduced in standard ASCII – they can be reproduced by conventionally accepted spelling.

c Project names may be registered where they are genuinely pan-departmental or of national significance, for example to facilitate 'joined-up government' and where considered unsuitable as a sub-domain of the sponsoring or parent body (refer to paragraph **1.9.2.3**).

d. Generic names should be avoided for local, regional or intradepartmental initiatives, and used only for genuinely pan-governmental activities sponsored by the Prime Minister's Office or the Cabinet Office.

e. Registered trademarks, trade names and third-party business names can sometimes mistakenly be used as generic terms. Apart from giving unnecessary publicity there is a risk of it being illegal. Where a trade name, trademark or business name is to be used then written proof of your authority to use the name or mark must be submitted. It may be useful to check the searchable Register of trademarks registered by the UK Patent Office and the searchable Company Names Index from Companies House:

- Trademarks online at: www.patent.gov.uk/tm/dbase/index.htm
- Company name online at: <http://ws2info.companieshouse.gov.uk/info/>

f. Reserved names – to reduce risk of public confusion the Naming and Approvals Committee has reserved some names and expressions for specific use. A copy of the current list is available on email request to – naming@coi.gsi.gov.uk

g. Email use only – if the domain name is to be used only for an email system you must say so within your application.

h. Typosquatting – is a name infringement that relies upon the common misspelling of your domain name to, for example, directs users to an alternative or inappropriate website or indeed simply delivers an error page. In maintaining the

integrity of government information and websites the proactive registering of common misspellings of your key 'names' is recommended. Such domain registrations must redirect to your primary .gov.uk home page. This is also a useful practice when dealing with 'machinery of government' changes to names and organisations.

i. Using other languages – the use in a domain name of a transliteration of an ethnic minority language must be avoided. Refer to the Guidelines for UK government websites – section 2.7 Use of other languages – www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/webguidelines

1.9.4.2.2 Using abbreviations

Three and four letter abbreviations or acronyms (TLAs/FLAs) will generally be considered **only** if:

- the domain name owner is a central Department of State (for example FCO); or
- the domain name owner is a central government body such that it is generally known by that abbreviation within the public sector, and to the wider public (for example MOD, NHS); or
- it can be shown that there is no reasonable and meaningful alternative;
- local authority bodies should avoid using initials, wherever possible, as these are generally reserved for central government.

The .gov.uk Naming and Approvals Committee will be the final arbiter of what is considered to be an acceptable TLA/FLA.

1.9.4.2.3 Naming conventions

Requests for registration are required to observe the following conventions:

a. Scotland. Civil Service departments, agencies and services within Scotland, frequently mirror national departments and services, eg, in 'Whitehall'. In order to minimise the risk of confusion to the public and to avoid inadvertent masquerading then geographic clarification **must** be considered.

For example: www.scottishproperty.gov.uk
www.property-scotland.gov.uk.

- **Gaelic language** – The Scottish Parliament has passed legislation – Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Departments, councils and agencies providing a service to the public in Scotland may where there is a difference between their Welsh and English names consider registering the Gaelic language equivalent. Applications for Gaelic language domain names must provide, for information, the English language equivalent.

For example: www.gaidhealtachd.gov.uk
and www.highland.gov.uk

b. Northern Ireland. Civil Service departments and agencies within Northern Ireland, frequently mirror departments and services, eg, in 'Whitehall', are required to use a geographic/regional indicator, for example this suffix (with or without the hyphen) '-ni'.

For example: ***www.niproperty.gov.uk***
www.property-ni.gov.uk.

c. Wales. Domain names should be in English. In order to minimise the risk of confusion and to avoid inadvertent masquerading then geographic clarification **must** be considered by departments, councils and agencies providing a service to the public in Wales.

For example: ***www.welshhousing.gov.uk***
www.housing-wales.gov.uk.

- **Welsh language** – this is the current exception for domain names. Welsh Language Board advise that departments, councils and agencies providing a service to the public in Wales should, where there is a difference between their Welsh and English names, consider registering the Welsh language equivalent. Applications for Welsh language names must include information on the English language equivalent.

For example: ***www.anglesey.gov.uk*** and
www.ynysmon.gov.uk.

- Where the full Welsh language title is not used the following **suffixes** may be used (with the hyphen):
 - '-cb' Cyngor Bwrdeistref (*Borough Council*)
 - '-cs' Cyngor Sir (*County Council*)
 - '-ct' Cyngor Tref (*Town Council*)
 - Cyngor Cymuned – there is no approved English language suffix for Community Council.

d. Local authorities within the UK. Local authorities generally use the format 'area.gov.uk', unless there is the possibility of confusion with another authority or service (for example, national, devolved, regional, county or city) then geographic clarification will be necessary.

For example: ***www.anyriver.gov.uk***
www.anyriveressex.gov.uk
www.anyriver-essex.gov.uk

- Where districts or town have the same name then county/geographic clarification is required, for example town-county.gov.uk
- Where the full title is not used the following **suffixes** may be used (with the hyphen):
 - '-bc' Borough Council
 - '-cc' County Council
 - '-dc' District Council
 - '-mbc' Metropolitan Borough Council

- ‘-ra’ Regional Assembly

For example: ***www.anyriverboroughcouncil.gov.uk***
www.anyriver-bc.gov.uk
www.anyriver-essex-bc.gov.uk

- Parish/town councils – where a domain name is to be operated by a ‘higher authority’ for collective website or email management of, eg, all the parish/town councils on a county-wide or other clearly identified geographic area then the following **suffix** can be used ‘...**parishes.gov.uk**’ – with no hyphen.

For example: ***www.norfolkparishes.gov.uk***

- Individual Town Councils – unless the full title ‘towncouncil’ is used the following **suffix** is required with the hyphen ‘-tc’

For example: ***www.anyrivertowncouncil.gov.uk***
www.anyriver-tc.gov.uk

- Individual Parish Councils – unless the full title ‘parishcouncil’ is used the following **suffix** is required with the hyphen ‘-pc’

For example: ***www.anyriverparishcouncil.gov.uk***
www.anyriver-pc.gov.uk

1.9.4.2.4 Using suffixes

Certain types of public sector organisations are required to use a **suffix** (unless the full title is used) (with or without the hyphen). These are:

- Associations of Local Councils/Authorities ‘-alc’ or ‘ala’
- Association of Parish and Town Councils ‘-aptc’
- Area Child Protection Committees ‘-acpc’
With effect from 01 April 2006
See ‘Local Safeguarding Children Board’
- Business Improvement Bid ‘-bid’
- Centre for Procurement Excellence ‘-cpe’
renamed as Centre of Excellence ‘-ce’
- Criminal Justice Boards ‘-cjb’
- Crown Prosecution Services region(s) ‘-cps’
- Digital Interactive Television ‘-tv’
- Educational networks ‘-edunet’
- Electoral Registration Office(s) ‘-eor’
- Electronic voting *see ‘voting electronically’ under prefixes*
- Embassies ‘-emb’
- Fire and Rescue Services ‘-fire’ or ‘-frs’
- Government Regional Offices *see under prefixes*
- Housing Authority Trusts ‘-hat’

- Joint Services Units 'jsu'
- Learning and Skills Councils *see under prefixes*
- Library and Education Boards (Northern Ireland only) '-leb'
- Library Services '-library or libraries'
- Local Education Authorities '-lea'
- Local Government Associations '-lga'
- Local Safeguarding Children Boards '-lscb'
- Magistrates Court Committees '-mcc'
- Magistrates Court Services '-mcs'
- Mobile services '-mobile'
- Museums '-mus' or museum or museums
- National Park Authorities '-npa'
- National Trails '-way'
- Parish/Town councils (collective) ...parishes (*with the hyphen*)
- Passenger Transport Authorities '-pta'
- Passenger Transport Executives '-pte'
- Police etc (excluding Police Authorities) '-police'
- Police Authorities '-pa'
- Port Health Authorities '-pha'
- Public Health Observatory '-pho'
- Prisons *see under prefixes*
- Probation and related services '-probation'
- Record Offices '-ro'
- Sea Fisheries Committees '-sfc' or '-seafish'
- Single Non Emergency Number -snen (*with the hyphen*)
- Street Works Registers '-swr'
- Television see Digital TV
- Valuation Joint Boards '-vjb'
- Virtual Private Network/system '-vpn'
- Waste Disposal Authorities '-wda'

1.9.4.2.5 Using prefixes

Certain types of public sector organisations are required to use a **prefix** (unless the full title is used). These are:

- Excellence in Cities initiatives 'eic-' (**prefix** rather than suffix)
- Government Regional Offices 'go-' (**prefix** rather than suffix)
- Learning and Skills Centres 'lsc-' (**prefix** rather than suffix)
- Prisons 'hmp-' (**prefix** followed by name)
- Voting electronically 'vote-' (**prefix** followed by name)

1.9.5 Do you need a domain name strategy?

Any organisation with or planning to have an Internet presence should adopt and exercise a centralised approach on planning the acquisition, management and use of appropriate domain names.

A domain name is intellectual property and accordingly may have both financial and strategic value.

The registration of a .gov.uk domain is undertaken within clearly detailed guidelines. An individual department or agency may wish, as part of a defensive strategy, to consider acquiring other, closely related host names, for example, in the **.org**, **info**, **.com** Top Level Domains. This may reduce the risk of similar domain names being registered by third parties, thereby leading to confusion amongst Web users. This also reduces the genuine risk of third parties acquiring names for vexatious purposes.

When registering any name you should be aware of the need to avoid infringing existing trademarks and third party business names. If you wish to consider registering a domain name as a trademark, refer to the Patents Office website at www.patent.gov.uk/about/ippd/issues/domain.htm. Company names can be checked online using the Company Names Index from Companies House at <http://ws2info.companieshouse.gov.uk/info/>.

Web managers also should be aware of '**cybersquatting**', '**typosquatting**' and '**cyber smearing**'. Cybersquatting is seen as a practice of buying up domain names that reflect the names of existing organisations with the intention of selling the names back to you or for using them for 'bad faith' purposes, such as, passing off.

Typosquatting is a name infringement that relies upon the common misspelling of your domain name. Cyber smearing is where anonymous authors set up websites that spread alternative, false or disparaging information that dilutes your own Web identity. This particular practice has seen a remarkable increase over the past few years. See **section 1.2.6** Management documentation.

1.9.5.1 Managing your namespace

A small number of three and four letter acronyms may be considered as 'household names', for example, BBC, HSE, ITV, OFTEL, No10, However, to the broad majority of users acronyms are meaningless. Web managers should encourage a 'user focused' approach and register accordingly. For example, host names like education.gov.uk, environment.gov.uk and defence.gov.uk may be considered intuitive and unambiguous to a general user.

The use of different levels of directories and sub-directories in the construction of the website will result in the URL becoming longer or shorter. For example, if there were a sub-directory within 'webguidelines' called 'frames' the URL would look like this:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/webguidelines/frames/index.htm

The naming of directories should therefore be carefully considered. For example, your top-level directories may reflect organisational brands, projects or the editorial focus of the website. They should also be unambiguous when spoken and easy to type. As with domain names be aware of the need to avoid infringing trademarks and

third party business names. Using the names of well-known people may also present difficulties.

The Welsh Language Board advise that Departments required to provide a service to the public in Wales should, where there is a difference between their English and Wales names, consider registering Welsh language domain names. See paragraph **1.9.4.2.3c** Wales.

1.9.5.2 'Pseudo domains' – a cautionary note

A number of domains have been registered which, at first sight, might be mistaken for officially delegated country top-level domains. These domains are often referred to as 'pseudo-domains'. The registrants of these domains typically resell subdomain names that also may be mistaken for officially delegated domains. The most common examples include: uk.com, uk.net, gb.com and gb.net.

Appendix A Withdrawal of .gov.uk name, Our code of practice

The following is our code of practice on the withdrawal of and right to use a previously approved .gov.uk domain name

- **Renewal not confirmed:**
We assume that all .gov.uk domain owners will wish to renew. Therefore we restrict the effort we put into chasing an ISP for domain name renewal before using our right to terminate it. We will attempt to obtain confirmation of renewal twice over a 90 day period before withdrawal of the DNS entry.
- **Charges not paid:**
ISPs, upon joining the UKERNA's Approved ISP Membership Account agree to accept the responsibility to pay their UKERNA invoices in a timely manner. When registration/modification/renewal charges are not paid within 60 days of the date of the invoice we reserve the right to suspend the DNS entry and within another 30 days withdraw the DNS entry.

Where the ISP has indicated that it is not willing to accept responsibility for the renewal payment then within 60 days we will suspend the DNS and take reasonable steps to contact the named domain owner for instructions on a 'way forward'. If this is also unsuccessful then within another 30 days we will withdraw the DNS entry.

- **Decommissioned or faulty website:**
The minimum number of times and period over which we should attempt checking a domain name (a) for which we have received public complaints about its accessibility or the number of broken links, (b) that consistently appears to be decommissioned and/or (c) delivers nothing to the user, for example, a 404 page, three times over a 90 day period, then the DNS will be withdrawn.
- **Not conforming to the 'principle and practice':**
The minimum number of times and period over which we should attempt checking a domain name that is 'not conforming with the principle and practice, eg, commercial ISP holding page, before withdrawing the DNS, twice over a 60 day period.
- **Ineligible organisation**
The period of time that a .gov.uk domain name may continue to be used by any organisation or project after undergoing a change of status that makes that organisation or project ineligible for a government domain name should be negotiated with the .gov.uk Naming and Approvals Committee, around 90 days as a **redirect** to their new domain name before the DNS is withdrawn, should be seen as an average.

Definitions:

1. **Suspension** is taken to mean that the name will be switched off but after appropriate action or payment the domain name can be re-instated (re-delegated), usually with 24-48 hours.
2. **Withdrawn** is taken to mean that the DNS has been removed. To have it restored the registrant has to make a new application that will be subject to the rules and charges current at the time of the new application. This point is particularly important for local authorities where the use of suffixes is now mandated.

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