

**IE Domain Registry Limited**

**Policy Advisory Committee**

**Minutes from the January 17<sup>th</sup> 2017 Meeting**



**Identifiably Irish**

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Ireland's Domain Registry

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# Minutes of the Meeting held on January 17th 2017

**Meeting Location:** Annesley Suite, O'Callaghan Alexander Hotel, Dublin 2

**Meeting Time:** Called to order at 10:40am by the PAC Chairman.

**Members present:**

Chair	Alfie Shaw
Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment	Brendan Whelan
Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation	James Kelly
Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation	Joan Ryan
Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland	Fred Logue
.ie Accredited Registrar (Hosting Ireland)	Jonathan Bate
.ie Accredited Registrar (Register 365)	Kelly Salter
HEAnet	Brian Nisbet
Small Firms Association	Linda Barry
IE Domain Registry (IEDR)	Jimmy Joyce

**IEDR Representatives:**

David Curtin
Oonagh McCutcheon

**PAC Secretariat:**

Sarah Keegan
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## 1. Apologies - Members not present:

- Judy McCullough – Association of Patent & Trademark Attorneys in Ireland
- Michele Neylon – Blacknight Solutions
- Richard Browne - Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment (pre-arranged)
- Paula Maguire – Enterprise Ireland
- Kevin Thomas – Irish Computer Society (pre-arranged)
- Conor Moran – Irish Domains
- Joe Kane – Law Society (pre-arranged)

## **2. Minutes from the October 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 PAC meeting**

It was confirmed that the Minutes from the October 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 meeting were published online within the agreed timeframe, and that no further comment was received in relation to their content.

## **3. Review of action points from the October 25<sup>th</sup> 2016 PAC meeting**

### **3.1. IDN**

A summary of the release was provided, and it was confirmed that, in accordance with the action points from the last meeting: -

- Landrush had ended, as planned, on November 16<sup>th</sup> 2016
- Successful IDN applications from the Sunrise and Landrush registration phases went live on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2016
- General Availability launched on November 17<sup>th</sup>, as expected

#### ***Release Feedback***

Accredited Registrar representatives on the PAC queried if registrants had reported any technical issues regarding IDN usage and the IEDR added that no feedback of this nature had been received. However, it was further noted that as IDNs are a relatively recent introduction to the dot IE namespace, feedback could be more likely to arise as their usage grows. The IEDR confirmed that it would share any relevant feedback with the PAC in due course.

#### ***Promotional Activities***

It was confirmed that no dedicated promotional campaign had been launched to support the introduction of IDNs, however, the IEDR noted that the potential existed for the release to be incorporated into the IEDR's 'identifiably Irish' marketing campaign in future promotional activities.

It was then suggested that existing IDN registrations were ideal for promotional purposes, as they demonstrated that IDNs work without any significant technical issues. The IEDR acknowledged this, and confirmed that it had no objection to Registrars promoting registered IDNs under their management in their marketing activities.

#### ***Policy Change Conclusion***

As the implementation of this policy change has since been finalised, there was agreement for the PAC Secretariat to draft a policy conclusion template on this matter, which would be distributed to the PAC.

### 3.2. Secondary Market

A brief summary of the policy change and its progression to date was presented by the IEDR. It was confirmed that, in accordance with the action points from the last meeting: -

- Supporting materials on the operational mechanisms for Secondary Market were issued to all Registrars in advance of the release
- Secondary Market activities launched, as expected, on November 19<sup>th</sup> 2016, once the relevant technical updates were completed

#### ***Registrar Communications & Promotional Activities***

The IEDR added that it had also communicated relevant information to Registrars via its quarterly e-bulletin, additional email correspondences, and in some instances, by telephone.

It was confirmed that no marketing campaigns had yet been launched to support the introduction of Secondary Market operations, but that Registrars were encouraged to promote the release, should they wish to do so.

The accredited Registrars on the PAC further noted that their staff had begun receiving queries regarding the release from their clients, and discussion centred on registrar operations, and on considerations for designing potential processes to support future releases.

#### ***Release Supporting Documentation – Operational Mechanisms to support implementation***

In particular, the supporting material prepared by the Secretariat outlining the Secondary Market operational mechanisms, which was issued to all Registrars before the release was discussed. It was noted that the content was of a very high standard, was well received, and was particularly helpful for Registrars in preparing and training their staff.

For future releases, it was proposed that the PAC could collectively review similar supporting materials for Registrars to determine if any additional, helpful information could be included, particularly as the accredited Registrar representatives on the PAC are uniquely placed to offer informed practical advice, due to their wealth of experience.

There was consensus amongst the PAC for this, and it was confirmed that future supporting materials on policy implementation will be reviewed by the PAC.

#### ***Policy Change Conclusion***

As the implementation of this policy change has been completed, there was agreement for the PAC Secretariat to draft a policy conclusion template on this matter.

### 3.3. Geographical Place Names

An overview of the policy change and its progression to date was provided for the PAC. It was noted that, in accordance with the action points from the last meeting: -

- The 90-day notice period completed on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2016
- The restriction on registering .ie domains which corresponded to geographical place names in the island of Ireland was removed on December 20<sup>th</sup> 2016

The IEDR noted that there had been relatively low uptake of ‘geographic’ domain names since the removal of the restriction, with approximately 13 successful applications received so far. However, it was further acknowledged that no promotional activities supporting the removal of the policy restriction had yet been launched.

As an aside, the question of whether Local Authorities and Government Bodies had registered many domains relevant to place names under their management was queried, and the IEDR commented anecdotally that many well-known place names were still available for registration, indicating that Local Authorities had not registered all of the townlands etc. under their management.

#### ***Policy Change Conclusion***

As the policy removal has since been finalised, there was agreement for the PAC Secretariat to draft a policy conclusion template, which would be submitted to the PAC.

### 3.4. To remove restrictions on .ie domains corresponding to TLDs

The action points from the last meeting were outlined, and these are detailed in Section 5.

### 3.5. Shortened versions of a person’s first name

The action points from the last meeting were outlined, and these are detailed in Section 6.

### 3.6. Request to restrict .ie domains including the term ‘architect’

A brief summary of the policy change request proposal was outlined, and it was noted that, in accordance with the action items from the last meeting, the PAC Secretariat had formally contacted the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) to:

- i. notify them of the PAC’s decision to reject their policy change request
- ii. provide information on the alternative protocol arrangements through which their concerns around the incorrect / illegal use of this term could be addressed.

It was noted that the RIAI had expressed their gratitude to the PAC for taking the time to review the request and for the provision of information on alternative mechanisms through which their concerns might be more suitably addressed.

### ***Policy Change Rejection***

As the policy change request has been rejected by the PAC, there was agreement for the PAC Secretariat to draft a policy conclusion template on this matter.

### **3.7. Fast Track Request: WHOIS Policy & Acceptable Use Policy**

The proposed changes were summarised for the PAC, who were reminded that there was approval in principle for the inclusion of the Billing Contact information in the WHOIS facility at the last meeting, and that the IEDR had been asked to share the proposals with the wider Registrar channel, to ensure no objections existed.

The IEDR noted that it was due to share these proposals with the wider Registrar channel later in January 2017, along with a drafted visual aid outlining the proposed new WHOIS display.

The accredited Registrars on the PAC requested that the IEDR proposals should include a recommendation that Registrars ensure the proposals are reviewed by senior technical staff within each Registrar organisation, in addition to senior legal and management staff. The objective is to minimise the potential for technical or legal disclosure issues to arise with Registrar websites adopting the proposed new WHOIS display.

### **3.8. Fast Track Request: Privacy Policy**

The proposed changes to the policy were briefly summarised, and it was noted that the accredited .ie Registrars on the PAC were currently reviewing the specific text of proposals with their legal advisors.

The IEDR noted that once all of the feedback had been compiled, the proposal will be reviewed further, and shared with the wider Registrar channel for consideration.

## 4. Policy framework proposal

### *a. Policy Statement, Process, Procedures, and Rules, Guidelines (PPPRG)*

#### *b. Combining registration and naming policies*

The PAC was reminded of their request for the IEDR to: -

- i. ensure that all policies were available in one dedicated area on the IEDR website
- ii. clarify the Registration Policy and the Naming Policy.  
This was requested because there was some confusion about the “true policy”, given the “legal” policies on the website, the “user-friendly policy guidance” on the menu bar and the perception of an IEDR “offline policy” reflecting years of incremental movements, as exceptions were morphed into an implementation of a perceived informal policy drift.

#### ***Consolidation of IEDR Policies & clarification of Registration & Naming Policies***

The IEDR confirmed that its policies have since been made available on a dedicated page on the IEDR website, <https://www.iedr.ie/about-the-iedr/our-policies/> and that it had completed a draft baseline document which provides clarification on the registration and naming policies. The Registration Policy and Naming Policy are currently available at <https://www.iedr.ie/p30/registration-policy/> and <https://www.iedr.ie/p30/naming-policy/> respectively.

#### ***Policy Framework Proposal***

The IEDR provided a presentation on the proposed new policy framework, which illustrated the challenges faced in addressing this matter. This presentation can be viewed at <https://www.iedr.ie/p30/policy-development/>

The PAC was advised that they were being asked to consider and accept the proposed new framework for the Registration and Naming Policy, and the proposal document as the baseline from which future changes can be made.

The policy framework within the proposal is as follows: -

- **Policy** – In the form of a statement
- **Processes** – Each process relevant to the life cycle of a domain registration (e.g. registration, renewal, voluntary non-renewal, deletion, modification etc.)
- **Procedures** – Steps on how to complete each process
- **Rules** – Details on what a registrant / applicant ‘must’ do
- **Guidelines** - On the documents required

The IEDR advised the PAC that it met with the accredited .ie Registrar representatives on the PAC in October 2016 to discuss the proposed framework and initial draft proposal to combine the two policies, to ensure that the logic was solid and that it contained no errors or omissions. Further, it

was confirmed that the proposal was shared with the wider Registrar community in early January 2017.

### ***Content Display***

Discussion centred on how the content within the proposal document would be displayed on the IEDR website. The IEDR clarified that it is their intention to make a final version of policy document available on the dedicated policy page on the website, but will work internally to decide on a user-friendly layout to ensure that the convenient “user journey’s” currently on-site are preserved, and that information is available to users in bite-size pieces.

### ***Additional Domain Registration Contacts***

The potential requirement for the introduction of a new domain contact role, which would specifically be filled with information about the registrant was briefly considered.

It was noted that under the IEDR’s current rules, the administrative contact role on a .ie domain registration must reflect either the registrant, or their legal counsel, and it was questioned whether there was a legitimate need for a new role on the basis of this clarification.

However, it was agreed that the need for this additional contact role could be evaluated at a later stage.

### ***Pricing***

Discussion then turned to the matter of fees associated with registering a .ie domain, and whether these should be listed on the IEDR website.

The IEDR advised that it no longer displays the Direct pricing on its website. The IEDR noted that its Registrars operate a variety of different business models and pricing structures, which would make it impractical and challenging to include such content on the IEDR website.

There was discussion on the need for clear pricing so that those setting up new commercial ventures at the brand protection stage can see that the price of registering a .ie domain is affordable.

The IEDR further noted that whilst it has never carried Registrar pricing on its website, there is a dedicated webpage on the IEDR website which provides detailed information on the services each Registrar offers to assist users in finding a suitable Registrar.

The accredited .ie Registrar representatives on the PAC added that they would find it challenging to keep the IEDR informed of its pricing, particularly due to promotional pricing offers, and package bundling discounts.

Further clarification on this was considered, and it was clarified that businesses need more than a domain name alone to succeed online, and often require additional services such as website

design, hosting, email, etc. It was added that due to the variety of services available, some Registrars offer discounts to clients who purchase product bundles, which would complicate the listing of prices on the IEDR website.

The accredited Registrar representatives on the PAC concluded that there is little appetite amongst the Registrar community for the IEDR website to carry pricing. The IEDR noted this, and agreed that it would review ways to indicate that the value of a dot IE website address is affordable. An opportunity to do so could emerge in a future re-design of content on the IEDR website.

### ***Policy Framework Approval***

#### Proposal 1

The IEDR asked the PAC if consensus existed for the proposed new framework, and the PAC confirmed that the proposal was acceptable.

#### Proposal 2

The IEDR asked the PAC if they were agreeable to the combination of the Registration and Naming Policies into a single policy, and the PAC further confirmed their approval for this.

#### Proposal 3

After further discussion, it was proposed that the IEDR liaise directly with the accredited Registrar representatives on the PAC to determine if there was consensus that the text within the policy proposal document represents a suitable baseline. This proposal was raised on the grounds that the Registrars have the most direct engagement with IEDR policy implementation through their daily business operations.

The PAC confirmed that it was agreeable to this proposal, and to this end, the IEDR confirmed that it would notify the wider Registrar group that it would welcome feedback on the proposal for a further 14 day period and close off the baseline document on that basis.

## **5. Policy change – to remove restrictions on .ie domains corresponding to TLDs**

The PAC were reminded that consensus for this policy change was confirmed at previous PAC meetings, and that the Development Group responsible for reviewing this policy change were tasked with finding a suitable release mechanism for three domains which have historically been held by the IEDR on the grounds that they correspond to gTLD extensions.

It was confirmed that there had been no progression on this matter and that an update will be requested at the next PAC meeting.

## **6. Policy change – to allow shortened versions of a person’s first name with regard to Personal Name Domain applications**

The progression of this policy change to date was summarised, and the PAC were reminded that there was full consensus for the policy change in principle since its initial proposal at the December 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 PAC meeting.

The outstanding action item was to select a deterministic mechanism through which the policy change could be implemented.

It was noted that discussions on the matter had not progressed and that an update will be requested at the next PAC meeting.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **i. Industry related developments / relevant legislative changes**

#### ***Topics discussed included:***

- IANA functions Stewardship transition
- Legislative changes with regard to Data Protection
- E-Privacy Directive
- EU Consumer Rights Directive (focus on Distance Selling regulations)

### **ii. Irish Internet Association (IIA)**

The IEDR reminded the PAC that the IIA’s CEO and Board of Directors had resigned in 2016, and that as per discussions at the Extraordinary General Meeting of IIA Members and Stakeholders, work was being done to determine the future of the organisation.

It was noted that an independent consultant’s report had been commissioned to survey the opinions of past and future members on what role the organisation should take in future, and what its next steps should be.

A new Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer will likely be appointed later in 2017, only if a new mission, vision and strategy can be agreed by the members.

### iii. Annual Report

The PAC was asked to confirm if there was consensus for the creation of an annual report on its operations in 2016, which would be drafted by the PAC Secretariat, and if approved, distributed to the IEDR's Board of Directors.

The PAC confirmed that they were agreeable to this, and advised that in future years, the annual report can be prepared for the PAC's review without prior agreement from the PAC.

The PAC Secretariat confirmed that this would be drafted and distributed for review at the next PAC meeting in April 2017.

## 8. Next Steps

### ❖ PAC Secretariat will:

- Compile policy conclusion templates for the following policy change proposals: -
  - IDNs
  - Secondary Market
  - To remove the restriction on registering .ie domains corresponding to geographical place names in the island of Ireland
  - To restrict the use of the term 'Architect' in .ie domains
- Draft the annual report, and distribute for review to the PAC.

### ❖ IEDR will:

- engage with the accredited .ie Registrars regarding proposed changes to the WHOIS and Privacy Policies.
  - request feedback from Registrars on edits to the text of the new policy framework proposal and baseline document, allowing 14 days for final submissions. Thereafter, IEDR will provide the standard 30 day notification period, after which the website will be updated with the combined registration and naming policy.
- ❖ **TLD Development Group** are expected to continue their deliberations to determine how to release the domains corresponding to gTLDs that IEDR has agreed to release.
- ❖ **Personal Name Development Group** are expected to continue their deliberations to determine which operational mechanism is most suitable to support the implementation of this policy change.

## **9. Next Meeting**

PAC Secretariat will engage with wider PAC to set a date for the next meeting, expected to be held in late April 2017.