

Short Domain Names to be released in December

Posted on 02/12/2010 by [Gus Hazel](#), and [Dawson Liu](#)

According to Nominet, the registry for domain names which end in ".uk", application to register a "short" domain name will be available from 12:00pm GMT on 1 December 2010 until 12:00pm GMT on 17 January 2011.

This means 2,831 very short domain names, including those consisting of just each letter of the alphabet or number digit (such as .a.co.uk, .ip.co.uk, .1.co.uk etc) will become available for registration. These domain names were previously held back due to technical and policy reasons, but Nominet has now changed its stance following public consultation and policy reviews. It should be noted, however, that short domain names which correspond to existing .uk second level domain names (e.g. .net.co.uk, .me.net.uk etc) are still prohibited.

The release of these short domain names will be separated into three stages:

1. The registered rights "Sunrise" stage, where registered rights holders (e.g. owners or licensees of trade marks) will be allowed to register between the above period between December 2010 to January 2011, if their registered right (such as a trade mark).

- a. Is in force in the United Kingdom (including UK national, Community trade mark as well as international registration designating the United Kingdom) and registered on or before 1 January 2008;
 - b. Matches the domain name being registered exactly (excluding suffix .co.uk, .org.uk etc), which does not need to be a word mark; and
 - c. Has been put to use in the United Kingdom in connection with bona fide offering of goods and services on or before 1 January 2008.
2. The unregistered rights "Sunrise" stage, where applicants with unregistered rights can apply for short domain names which correspond with its rights, or for those registered rights holders who has simply missed the deadline for stage 1. The criteria for the applicant's unregistered rights are the same as that for stage 1, with more details to be released in early 2011.
3. The final "Landrush" general release stage where all unregistered domain names remaining from the last two phases will be available for registration by all interested parties on a first come first served basis.

If two organisations have equal rights to a name both apply concurrently, Nominet will auction the name to the highest bidder.

Many of these domain names will be hotly contested by major brands as well as many individuals and companies. After all, while there are room for variations

and flexibility in trade mark registration, there is only one domain name. Given the huge demand expected, trade mark owners should carefully review its branding strategy and identify any .uk short domain names which may be of interest.

For further information and advice on applying, contesting or registering domain names as well as any other related matters, please contact us.