

Press Releases

Government seeks public views on administration of ".hk" Internet
Internet domain names

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) today (May 4) issued a consultation paper on the review on administration of Internet domain names in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for OGCIO said that at present, the management and administration of ".hk" Internet domain names was undertaken by a non-statutory and non-profit making corporation, Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited (HKIRC).

The spokesman said that since the current arrangements were put in place, there had been a number of developments which may impact on the administration of Internet domain names.

"As the proportion of country-code Top Level Domain name registrations has continued to grow, the Government's role is observed to be increasingly important. Technological advancement has also brought new challenges to the country-code Top Level Domain governance regimes."

The Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) commissioned a consultancy study in 2006 to review the institutional framework and corporate governance for the administration of ".hk" Internet domain names in Hong Kong. "Taking into consideration the consultant's recommendations, as well as the overall ICT strategy and scope of practical implementation in Hong Kong, we have set out the recommended changes for public consultation before finalising the proposals on the changes and arrangements for the administration of '.hk' Internet domain names," the spokesman said.

The major recommendations are:

- delegation by the Government of the country-code Top Level Domain management function to an arms-length, not-for-profit organisation, i.e. HKIRC, should be retained;
- HKIRC should establish a consultative and advisory panel that engages a broad set of stakeholders to advise the board on major country-code Top Level Domain issues and facilitates the interaction of the board with the stakeholders in general and with specific interest groups;
- with the strategic engagement of key stakeholders being undertaken via the new consultative and advisory panel, the number of directors on the board can be reduced to allow more effective strategic and operational management;
- HKIRC should publish a comprehensive Corporate Governance Framework established with the Government and through stakeholder consultation;
- HKIRC should introduce, following consultation with all interested stakeholders, a "registry-registrar" model, whereby appropriate bodies may provide ".hk" users with registrar services on an equal and competitive basis with HKIRC;

- HKIRC should collaborate with the Government on a formal review of their Memorandum of Understanding, to be undertaken five years after execution.

Pursuant to a task force and public consultation in 2000-01, the Government and the HKIRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Management and Administration of Internet Domain Names in Hong Kong in April, 2002, in which the Government designated the HKIRC to manage and administer all Internet domain names under ".hk" country-code top level domain.

The HKIRC is a member-based, not-for-profit company. It is governed by a board of 13 non-executive directors comprising members from six membership classes - User Class, Service Provider Class, IT Industry Class, Commerce and Industry Class, Tertiary Institution Class and Government Class.

The consultation lasts for six weeks until June 15. The consultation document is available for download from the website of the OGCIO: www.ogcio.gov.hk. All views and comments should be sent to the OGCIO by post to 15/F, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong; by fax to (852) 2802 4549 or by email to domainreview@ogcio.gov.hk.

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