

Nominet to run Tier 1 registry for UK ENUM

Nominet, the .uk domain name registry, has been awarded the contract to run the Tier 1 registry for UK ENUM, a standard that will unify the telephone numbering system with the Internet's Domain Name System.

ENUM is potentially an important part of the convergence of regular telephone services and Internet telephony and it may enable businesses to benefit from cheaper or even free telephone calls in the near future. It is a suite of protocols that makes it possible to relate a domain name to a telephone number, and then use that domain name to identify various communications devices such as fax, mobile phone, voice-mail, email, IP telephony addresses or web pages.

The Tier 1 registry contract for UK ENUM was awarded to Nominet by the UK ENUM Consortium (UKEC), a limited company set up with the recognition of the BERR (formerly the DTI) to administer the UK ENUM top level domain. Nominet won the contract based on its understanding of the issues and challenges relating to best practice management of a top level domain. As part of the process of establishing the registry Nominet will be joining the International Telecommunication Union, Telecommunication Standardization Sector, ITU-T.

ENUM - What is it and how does it work?

ENUM will make it possible to link different VoIP servers so that telephones within businesses that use VoIP technology can connect to other businesses who use other VoIP providers via the Internet. As a result, telephone calls between businesses using this technology will be much cheaper or possibly even free, because there will be no need to connect to the telephone network for the call.

Lesley Cowley, Nominet's CEO says: "We are delighted that we have been given the opportunity to run the UK ENUM Tier 1 registry. Now the real work begins and we hope that this exciting development will result in cost reduction benefits for businesses and consumers".

About Nominet

Nominet UK is the national registry for all Internet domain names ending in .uk. Its purpose is the careful and impartial management of this central database, providing stability, security and accessibility for all users of .uk domain names. Nominet is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It has members not shareholders, pays no dividends and its charges only cover its running costs. Anyone with an interest in the Internet may become a member. Nominet has over 2,800 members representing all areas of the Internet industry and is recognised as the .uk domain name registry by the Internet industry and the UK Government. It is not a governing or regulatory body, but provides a public service for the .uk namespace on behalf of the UK Internet community.

About ENUM

Telephone Number Mapping (ENUM or Enum, from TELEphone NUmber Mapping) is a suite of protocols to unify the telephone numbering system E.164 with the Internet addressing system DNS by using an indirect lookup method, to obtain NAPTR records. The records are stored at a DNS database.

Although it facilitates calling VoIP users from IP and PSTN networks, ENUM is not a VoIP function and should not be confused with common VoIP routing based on SIP, H.323 or IAX protocols with a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI).