„Phishing Domains“ and nic.at
Content

- „Phishing-Domains“
- nic.at and Phishing
- Spamhaus.org
- Local Internet Community + Board
Background

- .at-domains were registered through registrars (most based in US) that
  - had no meaning itself (e.g. gifof.at)
  - with an existing Domainholder
  - were then used in URLs (e.g. 
    http://www.bankofamerica.com.onlinebankingid999999999999999.gifof.at/session.cgi/
  - this URL led to a website that asked for bank details (maybe „Phishing Website“)
nic.at Involvement

- nic.at was contacted and requested to delete these domains

- nic.at reacted
  - by explaining the legal situation
  - by explaining the who-is-who, because doubts whether the “reporters“ understand the role of nic.at = REGISTRY and not a registrar
  - -> and did NOT withdraw the domains
Reasons for not-withdrawing

- not the domain is illegal
  - domain itself does not cause any harm
- not second level domain, but 5th, 6th, … SLD
  - not subject of contract between nic.at and domain holder
- potential fraud on website -> only content!
  - Austrian Supreme Court clearly states, that nic.at is not responsible for content on a website
- where to start and where to end with any illegal content (e.g. gambling, child pornography, …)
- nic.at should not take position of an „Internet Police“ or „Censorship Organisation“
- websites could be hacked (had various examples for that)
dispute with Spamhaus.org -> sent e-mail:

- “incl. list of domains that should be removed because of being used for phishing”
- “other Registrars and Registries regard the take-down of phishing domains as a high-priority obligation”
- “threat to take action, which could have an adverse impact on our connectivity, if domains will stay active”
we do in no case support potentially illegal activities e.g. spam, phishing or other crimes

explained reasons why we cannot withdraw a domain

Solution: if we receive a proof of wrong domain holders data, we could withdraw domain according to our T&C
Reply: „Spam Block List“

- various IP-ranges of nic.at were put on Spam Block List from Spamhaus.org
- consequence: majority of e-mails could not be delivered to our Domainholders, Registrars and others
- nic.at formally requested IP-range to be deleted from list
Contacting Spamhaus.org

- help from other registries and external persons to get in contact with spamhaus.org
- talking to Richard Cox (CIO of Spamhaus)
- UK lawyer contacting spamhaus.org on behalf of nic.at demanding immediate deletion of the entry on Spam Block List
- finally all IP-ranges were taken from list, no further technical blocking of nic.at
- nic.at is still listed as a “Spam supporter” in SBL
LIC-Feedback

- broad support from public for our policy
- numerous positive articles in the press
- nevertheless discussion with Austrian LIC and our Board on future behaviour of nic.at as registry regarding SPAM / Phishing
Final Board Decision

- nic.at does definitely not support any illegal activities on the Internet
- we do not block or cancel any domains, if it does not violate our T&C
- we follow Austrian Law and Court decisions
- new: we will inform the relevant registrar and domain holder
- new: we forward necessary (hidden) information from our database to reporter of spam or phishing to help them
- new: domain-abuse@nic.at
Goals for ccNSO

- Discuss this issue with TLD community
- Work together with „Spam-fighting-organisations“
- Set up a „best practise“ paper
- ...???
Any questions?
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