

Whois Studies Update

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Goals of gTLD WHOIS studies



- WHOIS policy debated for many years
- GNSO Council decided in October 2007 that study data was needed to provide objective, factual basis for future policy making
- Identified several WHOIS study areas that reflect key policy concerns
- Asked staff to determine costs and feasibility of conducting those studies
- Staff used an RFP approach to do so
- Studies are approved and are now (mostly) underway



WHOIS Misuse Study (Study 1)

Cost: \$150,000
(USD)

Awarded to
Carnegie Mellon
U., Pittsburgh, PA,
USA

Status: Initiated
in mid-2011

Time estimate:
initial results in
mid - 2013

Study is assessing whether public WHOIS significantly increases harmful acts and the impact of anti-harvesting measures. Two approaches :

1. Experimental: register test domains and measure harmful messages resulting from misuse

2. Descriptive: study misuse incidents reported by registrants, researchers/ law enforcement

3. Survey A IRB approved/new invites sent, survey B & experiment underway



Registrant Identification Study (Study 2)

Cost: approx.
\$180,000 (USD)
(revised due to
change in study
terms). Awarded
to NORC at the U.
of Chicago.

Time estimate: 1
year

Status: Launched
late October 2011,
target initial
results in late
2012



1. Study is examining info about how domain name registrants are identified and classifying various types of entities that register domains, including natural persons, various types of legal persons and Privacy and Proxy service providers.
2. Study has been recast as an “exploratory” data-gathering effort that is not hypothesis-driven. This will also provide more consistency with related GAC proposals offered in 2008.
3. *Draft report due directly post-Toronto, but key findings will be presented at Whois Update session.*

Privacy and Proxy “Abuse” Study (Study 3)

Cost: \$180,000
(USD)

Time estimate: 1
year

Status: *Just being
launched by the
National Physical
Lab of the UK.
Initial results are
expected in mid-
2013*

This study will compare a broad sample of Privacy & Proxy-registered domains associated with alleged harmful acts to assess:

1. How often bad actors try to obscure identity in WHOIS
2. How this rate of abuse compares to overall P/P use
3. How this rate compares to alternatives like falsified WHOIS data, compromised machines, and free web hosting
4. *Currently starting phase 2 of their work*



WHOIS P/P Relay & Reveal Study (Study 4)

Cost: \$80,000
(USD) for Pre-
study Survey
Awarded to
Interisle
Consulting
Status: Launched
in September
2010, results
published August
2012

The original study would analyze communication relay and identity reveal requests sent for Privacy & Proxy-registered domains:

1. To explore and document how they are processed, and
2. To identify factors that may promote or impede timely communication and resolution.

Potential bidders were unsure of the feasibility of this study, especially obtaining a sufficient data sample, so the Council opted to conduct a pre-study to survey potential participants to determine if launching a full study is feasible to do.



Study 4, continued

Lack of responses suggested that the extensive analytical study (full study) described in the RFP might not be feasible

- availability of data
 - willingness to participate
 - validity and verifiability of results
- *Final study published: A full study of WHOIS privacy and proxy reveal and relay could, if defined in such a way as to resolve identified barriers, provide some—but not all—of the data anticipated by the GNSO Council. Next step requires action by GNSO Council.*



Important Links



[*WHOIS Proxy/Privacy Reveal & Relay Feasibility Survey Webinar 2000 UTC*](#)

Final Study 4 report posted shortly, minor changes from draft report:

[*Whois Proxy/Privacy Survey Draft Report*](#)

[*Whois Update - Toronto, Wednesday 11:00-12:30*](#)



Questions

One World

One Internet



Thank You

