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ICANN80 | Prep Week – Registration Data Request Service (RDRS) Update - From Pilot Program Launch to May 2024

Wednesday, May 29, 2024 – 06:30 to 07:30 PM KGL

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

... RDRS update from pilot program launch to May 2024 on Wednesday the 21st of May 2024. Interpretation for this session will include English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and Portuguese. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak, if speaking a language other than English. Please speak at a reasonable pace. During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod located at the bottom of your Zoom window. I will read them aloud during the time set by the chair and moderator of this session. If you would like to ask your question or make your comment verbally, please raise your hand. When called upon, you will be given permission to unmute your microphone. As a reminder, those who take part in the ICANN multi-stakeholder process are to comply with the expected standards of behavior. And with this, I will turn it over to Lisa Carter. Please begin.

LISA CARTER:

Thanks, Michelle. Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, everyone. Thank you for joining us for today's webinar. My name is Lisa Carter, and I am a Senior Program Manager and Project Owner for the Registration Data Request Service, also known as RDRS. Next slide, please.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

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Here's the agenda for today's session. We will review some of the engagement and outreach event highlights for RDRS since launch, discuss RDRS metrics, RDRS system enhancements, and our first RDRS quarterly survey. And then we will open the webinar up for any questions from attendees. Next slide, please.

RDRS is a two-year proof-of-concept pilot program for individuals and entities with a legitimate interest in non-public registration data. Outreach using the letter from the interim CEO was sent to governments, law enforcement, cybersecurity professionals, and intellectual property organizations with the goal of garnering support for RDRS by key requester communities.

Subsequent to sending this letter, ICANN engagement teams covering the five geographic regions established their own specific approach to outreach and education. Europe began RDRS webinars in April with the goal of having one per month. Asia Pacific, our APAC region, is conducting webinars on demand by request. Latin America and the Caribbean webinars are scheduled once a month. The first one took place in April, and the next was scheduled for late in May this month. North America also has a webinar event scheduled for June. The following slides include some details on which organizations ICANN was focused on engaging with to spread awareness for RDRS. Next slide, please.

Our global stakeholder engagement and trust in public safety engagements teams have performed outreach to key threat intelligence, incident response, and law enforcement communities and

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constituencies across the five regions. We've received feedback from these constituencies on RDRS over the past several months, requesting such things as an increase in character limits in the request form, clarification about which fully qualified domain names are supported in the system, and requests to provide an application programming interface or API to facilitate identity validation for law enforcement requesters. Next slide, please.

These are some of the key trust in public safety constituents we focused on reaching as potential requesters for RDRS. Europol has 26 member countries. Interpol has 196 member countries. The National Cyber Forensics and Training Alliance is made up of 54 cybercrime units and has many law enforcement agencies, including US and international, has 255 cybersecurity and threat intelligence companies. Messaging Malware Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group has 196 members, including the cybersecurity and threat intelligence communities, academia, and nonprofits. Threat intelligence groups consists of around 1300 researchers who work for the most relevant cyber security and threat intelligence companies, as well as law enforcement. Next slide, please.

ICANN has conducted many one-on-one engagements in the regions through various community events. We've presented information about RDRS at events like INTA, Middle East DNS Forum, the recent Contracted Party Summit, and hosted various trainings for registrars and requesters. This list is just a sample of the events that have taken place since launch of RDRS last November. Next slide, please.

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I'll move on now to review some of the RDRS usage metrics and reporting. The metrics are published at the request of the GNSO Council to the RDRS page on ICANN.org. The metrics we are reporting were agreed to with the Council small team, and we continuously consult with the Standing Committee on improvements, some of which we have already implemented and will be reviewed later in the presentation. Gathering this usage and demand data will inform the ICANN Board's consideration of consensus policy recommendations related to a system for standardized access disclosure, otherwise known as SSAD, for non-public domain name registration data, and also inform ongoing consultations with the GNSO Council. All reports include introduction, a summary of data requested by the GNSO Council, and charts representing the 17 metrics, which include user data, request type data, request transactional data, outcome data, and the list of participating registrars. To date, we've published five RDRS usage metrics reports. The most recent was published on the 15th of May, covering the 1st to the 30th of April, 2024. Next slide, please. One more slide. Thank you.

Each month, since the RDRS metrics usage report was published, we've made adjustments to the report based on feedback from the GNSO Standing Committee. We'd like to finalize any additional adjustments to the reporting in the next month so that we can provide consistent analysis and trends updates to the ICANN Board and community over the next 18 months. Next slide, please.

These are some of the general metrics from the RDRS usage metrics report, covering a summary of data from launch until the 30th of April.

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User data since launch includes 4,018 unique user accounts and 88 participating registrars, covering 57% of domains under management. Submission information includes 1,215 requests submitted, 1,096 requests were closed. Closed means that the registrar took an action to mark the request as complete in the system by marking the request as approved, denied, partially approved, or indicating the information was publicly available.

In terms of lookups, we had 3,024 as the number of times a domain was searched for in RDRS that resulted in a message indicating that the registrar managing the domain was not participating in RDRS. This represents 88 out of a total of about 3,770 registrar accreditations. The information for downloaded data request forms participating and non-participating registrars is interesting because requesters may use the form to submit a request to a non-participating registrar outside of the system or use it to record, to keep a record of the requests when submitting the form to a registrar that is participating in the pilot. Additional report details can be found on the RDRS page of ICANN.org. Next slide, please.

In the next few slides, I'd like to highlight some specific metrics that might be helpful to walk through. Metric 5, the chart displays the green line which tracks the total number of requests that were submitted to participating registrars since launch. That's the 1,215 number. The blue bars track the totals each month since launch. The number of new requests, as you can see, is beginning to level off. Next slide, please.

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Metric 7 highlights the priority of all requests, standard versus expedited. In the case of expedited requests, the requester decides whether they deem the request necessary to expedite. The registrar has the discretion to accept that prioritization or reclassify it to standard. Requesters are advised not to use the expedited function for emergencies such as but not limited to imminent threat to life, serious bodily injury, critical infrastructure, that's online or offline, or child exploitation. Requesters are advised to contact the registrar directly for immediate assistance. Next slide, please.

For disclosure requests by request type, this is the list of all the different request types in RDRS. You can see that the majority of requests have come from IP holders at 412, followed by other at 298, and law enforcement at 157. In the other category, we found various requester information, including from users who have not used the pick list provided and retype the request that already exists in the drop down menu. There's also been some domain owners found and then also brand protection vendors as well included in that other category. Next slide, please.

Metric 9 is a histogram, so I'd like to provide a little bit of explanation for this metric as it may need a bit more clarification for some. This chart displays the distribution of disclosure requests by requester since system launch. This histogram does not display cumulative totals, so the numbers will not add up to the total disclosure request indicated in metric 5. As you can see on the left side of the chart, or y-axis, we have the number of requests, and on the bottom of the chart, or the x-axis, we have the number of requesters. Reading the chart as is, you can see

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that 383 requesters submitted one or two unique requests, 55 requesters submitted two or three unique requests, 20 requesters submitted three or four unique requests, and so on. The chart reflects the majority of requesters submit one or two requests. As we continue to gather data over time, it will be useful to see whether there are growing groups of users who submit only a few requests at a time or in greater numbers. Next slide, please.

Metric 10 is the total number of domain lookups. This means there are 9,398 domain name searches in RDRS since launch. Domain not found at 15.2% means the domain names do not exist. Domain not supported at 19.8% includes, for example, ccTLD domain names or names for TLDs like mil, int, arpa, edu, or gov that are not supported in the RDRS system currently. Success means that the lookup for an existing gTLD name that is managed by ICANN participating registrar, it does not mean that the requestor's request was approved or that they received the data they requested, just to clarify what that term means. Note that the total number of success lookups will not match the number of request submissions, Metric 5, as users may look up a domain but not proceed to submitting a request. Next slide, please.

For Metric 13, we see that out of the 1,215 requests mentioned previously, 1,096 total were closed. Closed means that the registrar took an action to mark the request as complete in the system and either approved, denied, or took another action as represented in this chart. However, as you can see, about 19% of these requests were approved. 1% partially approved, 8% were closed due to data being publicly available, and the remaining 71% were denied. I would like to dig in a

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bit deeper in the next slide into the 71% denied number. Next slide, please.

For Metric 14, denial by reason type, the denial reasons most commonly used include incomplete information or other corrective action is needed and the contracted party cannot disclose information due to applicable law. In the other category, we found that the most common reasons are misuse of the service, meaning requests for such things as UDRP cases, domain registration technical support, compliance requests, and data subject removal requests or test requests. I'd like to reiterate that this is almost six months of data at this point and we'll be keeping an eye on these figures to look for any noticeable trends. Next slide, please.

As you can see here, the response time for partially approved request takes registrars the longest amount of time to disclose the data with an average time of approximately 18 days. It would be interesting to hear registrar feedback on the process for partially approved requests. Also, where the information is publicly available, registrar response time is the shortest. Next slide, please.

This grid shows the response time distribution by request status. The values represent the number of days. This reflects the same average data as the previous slide, but shows the distribution percentiles with 50th percentile being the median. Next slide, please.

For this slide, we can see that the confidentiality requests are increasing and likely correlate to the increase in law enforcement requests we saw for metric eight. We also note that we have received some feedback

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from registrars that some requesters are identifying themselves as law enforcement when they are not. Next slide, please.

We've recently released several system enhancements based on GNSO Standing Committee feedback and are working on the next round of enhancements. Registrar and requester FAQs and user guides have also been updated. In addition, we're discussing with the GNSO Standing Committee the request for registrars to have the ability to recategorize request types as in law enforcement and IP attorney as we've had indications, as mentioned previously, that some requesters are incorrectly categorizing their requests, which affects the registrar's assessment for disclosure. Next slide, please.

We have recently published the official survey results to the RDRS page of ICANN.org, but I wanted to explain a bit more about how the survey was distributed to requesters and then walk through some of the key data points. Surveys are sent to the requester after each request case is closed via a survey link in the email. Keep in mind that there's a low response rate indicated here and that we want to be careful about drawing conclusions given the small number.

861 is the total number of RDRS surveys sent for each closed request. Again, closed means the registrar took an action to mark the request as complete in the system by either marking it as approved, denied, partially approved, or indicating the information was publicly available. Of the 861, only 17 surveys were completed, which is approximately 2% response rate, which is quite low as surveys go. Overall, the RDRS

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experience rating is 2.1 on a scale of 1 to 5. RDRS ease of use rating on the scale of 1 to 5 is 3.2.

In addition, we've received feedback both in surveys and conversation with requesters that there's a need for registrars to provide more clarification on the documents required to substantiate trademarks, particularly where there's suspicion of fraud. We've also heard in various meetings and fora that there's a bit of request or confusion when a request is closed and the information is noted as publicly available when the domain is with the proxy service. In cases where the data is indicated as publicly available, the proxy provider is the registrant, so the information displayed in the WHOIS is the registrant data.

Lastly, we'd like to encourage requesters to complete the surveys they receive after each request is closed. This helps ICANN gather the data needed to inform the board's consideration of the consensus policy recommendations for the system of standardized access disclosure for non-public domain names registration data. Next slide, please.

For this survey, registrars receive a set of survey questions on a quarterly basis. The survey is only sent to those registrar users who have actually processed requests within the designated quarterly timeframe. As you can see, the response rate for registrars is much higher than requesters. We sent the survey to a total number of 29 users, 15 of whom responded, which was response rate of 52%. The number of respondents likely to use RDRS again was indicated as 5. 2.9 was the

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overall RDRS experience rating on a scale of 1 to 5, 3.3 was the RDRS ease of use rating on a scale of 1 to 5.

We also have here a sample of survey feedback, including information such as the quality of requests received through RDRS is significantly lower than previously received for requests received outside of the system. We had some feedback indicating that the system was easy to use and a simple interface, likely coming from requesters, registrars who don't have an official way to process these types of requests. Then we also had some feedback that indicated the system was clunky and somewhat not seamless. Next slide, please.

We've actually reached the portion of the session that's for questions. So if we want to open it up for questions, thank you. Thank you very much, everyone. And we're open to any questions. Anyone?

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

And reminder, this is Michelle. You can raise your hand to ask a question or type your question in the Q&A pod located at the bottom of your Zoom window. Thank you so much. We do have two hands. Our first question is from Avri Doria.

AVRI DORIA:

Hi, this is Avri Doria speaking, and I have a question. I know a fair amount has been done in terms of trying to get registrars to participate in this. One thing I missed, and I was at an earlier meeting where the question came up, is what are they doing, what are you all doing to make an outreach to people that might make requests using the

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system? And I don't know if that was covered in your slides. I had varying attention, so I might have missed it, and if so, please. But it's just to get more people to use this in terms of the test, not registrars to support it, but people to make their requests. How do we go about trying to convince anybody that's got a question that this is the place to go ask the question?

LISA CARTER:

Thanks. Hi, Avri. This is Lisa Carter for the record. Yes, I actually covered in earlier slides that we have our global stakeholder engagement team and our trust and public safety teams doing outreach to various potential requesters through all of the threat intelligence agencies, the cyber security communities, etc. So they are actually on a cadence of doing consistent outreach and presentations for RDRS to educate and garner interest for requesters to participate. Thank you.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

All right. Our next question is from Kossi Amessinou. please go ahead.

KOSSI AMESSINOU:

Okay. Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I don't know if you can hear me very well. I'm Kossi Amessinou from Benin. I thank you for this very good presentation. Just know if there are some supports you can provide to ladies from my country, for example, need to become registered, but they don't, we have a lack of knowledge now, how we can help them, how we can support by providing the relevant

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communicator to support some webinars specifically for them, to let them become some register for our region or also globally.

LISA CARTER: Kossi, sorry, can you reconfirm, are you asking about how to become a registrar?

KOSSI AMESSINOU: How you can train, you can support ladies who need to have more knowledge to see how to become a registrar and also contribute.

LISA CARTER: Yes. Thank you for the clarification. Yes. We have an accounts team that can work with you on how to become a registrar and you can actually send an inquiry to ICANN for that and someone can reach out to you to help you.

MICHELLE DESMYTER: All right. Thank you, Lisa. Our next question comes from Gabriel Andrews, please go ahead.

GABRIEL ANDREWS: Hi. I am co-chair of the Public Safety Working Group and I think, Lisa, you had another slide here. I just wanted to commend you for some of the outreach you're doing. I don't know if it was prior to or immediately following the slide that you're on now of seven, but it listed some of the organizations you've done outreach to such as Interpol, NCFTA,

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M3AAWG, and it must have been the one prior. I don't know. I think it's the previous slide to the one that was just coming up. There we go. Excellent. I just wanted to first say that this is a good list of folks to reach out to, M3AAWG first for [inaudible] incident responses. I used to work with the FBI team that's plugged into the NCFTA. They have a lot of engagement with folks that do operational work in the public and private sectors both, so really good list.

However, I have to say that as one of the persons that's been trying to raise awareness amongst my law enforcement counterparts, having tried this for six months now, I get the general sense that I am failing to sufficiently raise awareness amongst my counterparts across the globe that work in law enforcement and public safety. And I think that despite the great efforts from folks that are within ICANN, that are within my organization and others, I'm starting to come to an opinion that push messaging might not be sufficient. And I just want to raise this for folks to contemplate because I think that there's been a lot of really great work here to try to raise awareness and to teach people about this. And yet, every time I go in and I engage a new law enforcement group, I am consistently met with folks that still haven't heard. And I wonder if there is appetite to explore, rather than push messaging, putting the data where it's already being pulled. And I note that for decades, practitioners, whether you're investigators or sub-security researchers or what have you, for decades, we've been using existing WHOIS systems to get information about where the registrant is, who the registrant is. And I think it's those existing WHOIS systems and now with the new RDAP protocol, RDAP systems, I guess you could say that that

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really is the only place that we could be sure that folks are seeing the information when they want to see it. And I just raise this because I think that if we could explore with a collaborative mindset with our partners in the registry and register space to perhaps get some sort of messaging within those WHOIS returns, that we might actually really be far more effective at getting awareness to the people that need to know that RDRS exists. And it's just, I don't know, it's maybe half question, half comment, but whether or not we feel that that is as a community, that is something that we could participate in together, I'd be very grateful. Thank you, Lisa.

LISA CARTER:

Thanks, Gabriel. Definitely something we can bring to discussion in the GNSO Standing Committee, for sure, to discuss further. Thank you.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

Thank you, everyone. We do have a couple of questions in the Q&A pod. But before I get to those, kind reminder to please speak slowly for our interpreters so they can interpret all lines. Thank you so much. We do have a question in the Q&A pod from Jim Holland. The question is, “I realize this is slightly off topic, so understand if you don't feel it appropriate to respond or to leave it to the end of the session. The problem is that criminals will provide false information when registering a domain. What recommendations has ICANN made concerning steps to verify the accuracy of registration data?”

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ELEEZA AGOPIAN:

Michelle, I will tackle that question. Thank you. I'm also part of the project team working on this effort, as well as on some of our broader registration data efforts. Jim, thank you for the question. You are right in that it is a little bit off topic, although certainly registration data is essential to what we're talking about here. The RDRS, of course, is a way for requesters to connect with the relevant registrars to request registration data. The data that they receive is the data that they receive. It may be valuable, it may not be, it may be accurate, it may not be, but certainly, the data that comes through the system is what is available in the registration data records. Actually, I should say it doesn't come through the system. The registrars deliver directly to the requester outside of our service.

That being said, in terms of accuracy, this is a topic that has been kind of a hot topic of discussion within the ICANN community for some time. There is a group within the GNSO that has been looking at whether and how to scope a policy process on registration data accuracy. That work is still on hold. But just wanted to share that it is a little bit out of the reach of this project. Thanks.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

All right. Thanks, Eleeza. Our next question in the Q&A pod comes from [Felix Opele.] How does the RDRS update fit into the broader landscape of registration data access and compliance efforts, including initiatives such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR, and other relevant regulatory frameworks?

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LISA CARTER: Thanks, Felix. RDRS fits into that framework overall. It's sort of one of the components that is part of the broader initiative on GDPR, data protection and privacy, etc., it all kind of ties together. And this is one piece of it, obviously, as mentioned previously, this is specifically trying to address the details related to the system for standard disclosure. And so this initiative in itself is something that the ICANN board will have to decide about at the end of the 18 months that we have left in this project, in this pilot. But overall, it's sort of just one small component of the overall initiative for compliance in that area. I don't know if that answers your question.

MICHELLE DESMYTER: Thanks, Lisa. This is Michelle. We do have another question in the Q&A pod. David [inaudible]. "At its core, is RDRS aimed solely at what might be considered official bodies, law enforcement, registered cybersecurity companies, or is it intended for universal usage, including by private citizens?"

LISA CARTER: Thank you. Yes, this is actually not only for law enforcement, it is for anybody with a legitimate interest. So as kind of discussed earlier in the presentation, we have a lot of people that submitted requests that have fallen into the other category that are not indicated by what we provide in the drop down as a requester type. So that can kind of give you a sense of the fact that we do have other types of people submitting. Brand protection vendors seem to be quite a large category of requests

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that we receive that have fallen into that category. So it is for anyone with a legitimate interest overall. Thank you.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

Thanks, Lisa. And again, if you would like to ask a question, raise your hand or type in the Q&A pod or chat. Thank you. We do have a question. Avri's hand is up. Please go ahead.

AVRI DORIA:

Yeah, thank you. I want to go back to this question that we almost touched on a couple of times.. And that is the one to deal with the regular mom and pop user, the ones that all around me used to use WHOIS all the time, the ones when WHOIS was originally being curtailed were the ones that were up in horror. How will I know? How will I search? And it's those people. And I appreciate the answers that I've got that we're going to all these major organizations of big, important people who monitor the Internet and that we're doing outreach. But when you start to look at is this fulfilling the purpose, because, you know, there's still going to be the mom and pop that wants to know what company their daughter is communicating with online and want to be able to follow things up to make sure that it's not a, you know, a criminal situation or something. So there still is, you know, and you don't want to always have to go to the cops to ask the question. So, you know, there's going to be this this this other interest. And that's the one that I'm wondering that how does this program, you know, cover them? And partially because I'm hanging out with At-Large these days, that is all about the end user and how is it affecting the end user? Are they

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being reached? Are there questions? Does the system satisfy their legitimate needs at all? And yeah, these are all great people to reach out to. But how does it cover those others? So that's the question I keep sort of coming back to. Thanks.

LISA CARTER:

Thanks, Avri, for your comments. A very good point. This is just a pilot. So we're trying to reach as many audiences as possible. We could definitely use help reaching out as much as we can. But since it is a pilot sort of some of that, we're still working out the best places to do outreach, etc. And you do make valid points about the different types of end users that we could potentially be reaching as well. Thank you.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

Thank you. We'll give it another moment to see if anyone else has any questions. Looks like we just had another question from Jim Holland. "It seems very worrying that it can take days for responses to be received to requests. If a domain is being used or attacked by hackers, surely, we need very quick responses."

LISA CARTER:

Thanks for that comment. So I think in an earlier slide, I talked about the difference between the standard request and the expedite request in cases of emergency. I think in an earlier slide, I talked about the difference between the standard request and the expedite request in cases of emergency. Those types of requests should go directly through the registrar, not through the system that is RDRS. I don't know if that

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helps explain it, but any sort of emergency situation should not come through the RDRS pilot system. It should go directly to the registrar.

MICHELLE DESMYTER:

Thanks, Lisa. I'm just waiting another moment for any last-minute comments or questions. And we do have another question in the Q&A pod from [Felix Opele.] “Kindly, I am sorry, maybe I missed this, but how has the RDRS pilot program evolved since launch, particularly in terms of improving access to registration data while ensuring privacy and security?”

LISA CARTER:

So for this pilot, we're still it's very still early in the pilot. We're only six months in. We're still sort of gathering data, etc. But the registrars, because the assessments happen outside of the system, registrars receive the request through RDRS, but they then interface with the requester outside of the system for any other information required for them to weigh sort of in the balance what they need to provide. And so we actually don't have visibility into that process from registrars because it all takes place outside of the system. But as we move forward, we'll be getting more feedback from registrars and requesters on the process itself and the time it takes to get the information out and sort of when they are disclosing the data and when they are not, we'll be gathering that as we move forward.

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MICHELLE DESMYTER: Thank you, Lisa. Seeing no further questions or comments, thank you all very much for joining today. This does conclude today's registration data request service updates. Please enjoy the rest of your morning, afternoon and evening. Goodbye, everyone.

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