



81

ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
MEETING



# Domain Name System (DNS) Abuse Updates

**ICANN 81 Annual General Meeting  
Istanbul, Türkiye**

13 November 2024



# Agenda

| Topic                     | Time (Estimated Duration) | Speaker               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Opening Remarks           | 13:15                     | ICANN GDS             |
| Updates on Domain Metrica | 13:15 (35 minutes)        | ICANN OCTO            |
| Updates on INFERMAL       | 13:35 (35 minutes)        | ICANN OCTO - KOR Labs |
| Closing remarks           | 14:05                     | ICANN GDS             |

# ICANN Domain Metrica

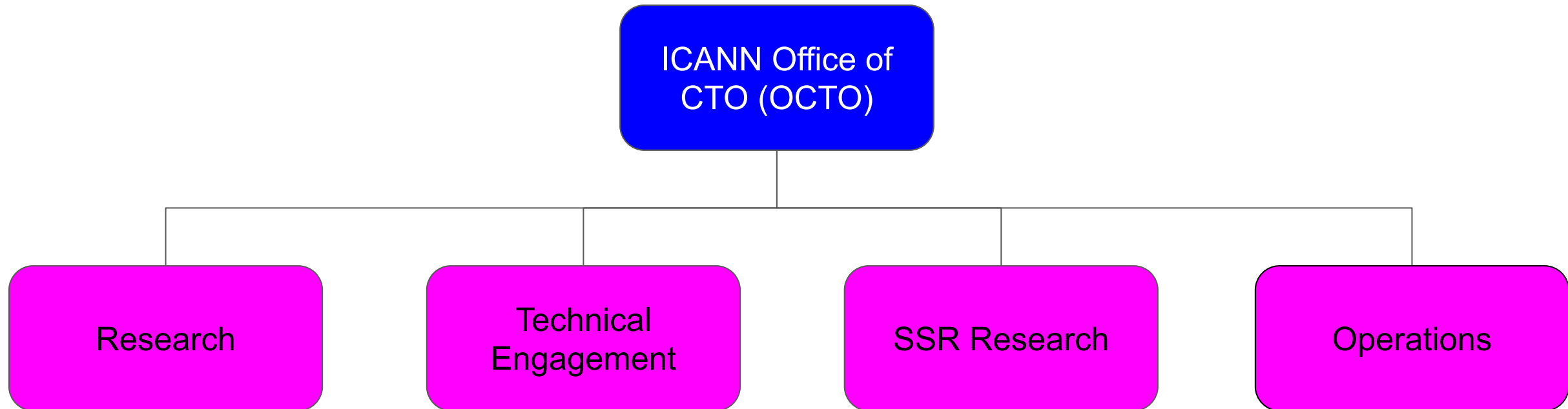
Dr. Siôn Lloyd  
Dr. Samaneh Tajalizadehkhoob  
SSR Research  
ICANN Office of CTO (OCTO)

Nov 12th, 2024



**ICANN**  
Domain Metrica

# Who We Are, Where We Fit



# Who We Are, Where We Fit

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SSR Research

# Who We Are, Where We Fit

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SSR Research

Samaneh  
Tajalizadehkoob

# Who We Are, Where We Fit

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SSR Research

Samaneh  
Tajalizadehkoob

Carlos Gañán

Sam Cheadle

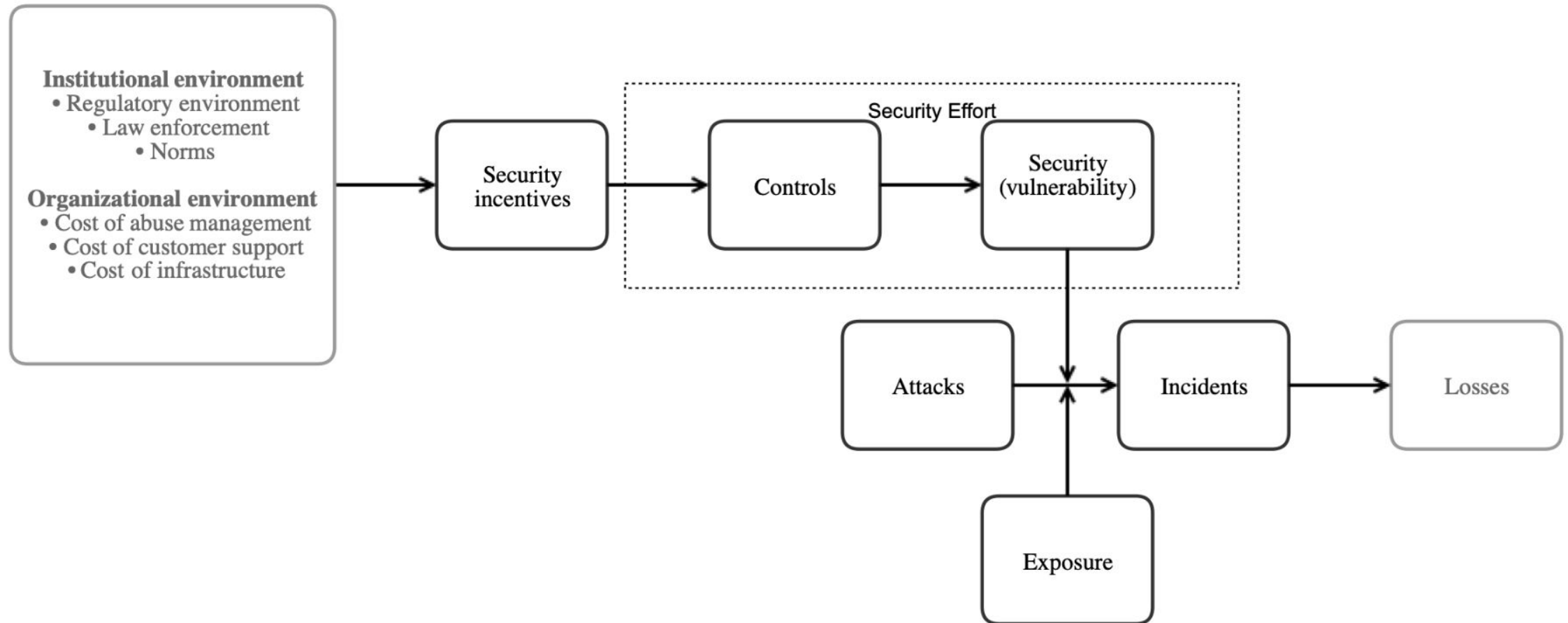
Siôn Lloyd

# Security Stability & Resilience (SSR) Research

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- Think Tank that mostly do **research** and **development** on **Internet identifiers**
- We look to use **data** and **scientific** methods to answer questions of interest to the community
- Our goal is to
  - Increase **reliability** of the [existing] metrics that are used to measure (e.g., security, insecurity, abuse, etc.)
  - Develop [new] metrics/method **from scratch**

# SSR Research Conceptual Framework



# Security Efforts - Example of DNS Abuse

- **Where is DNS Abuse Concentrated?**
  - Counts of **reported** domains appear in RBLs
    - What domains? [Report vs. incident]
      - “**Reports**” or reported domains, lack corroborating evidence whether they “became” an attack.
      - “**Attacks**” attempts of using reported domains to create damage
      - “**Incidents**” are materialised attacks which cause some form of loss (either tangible or intangible)
- **What are the mitigation measures?**
  - Reactive measures [take downs, any action after RBL appearance]
  - Proactive measures [controls, policies, configurations, things to do to not be attractive/avoid abuse concentrations]

# ICANN Domain Metrica

The next generation of ICANN  
measurements

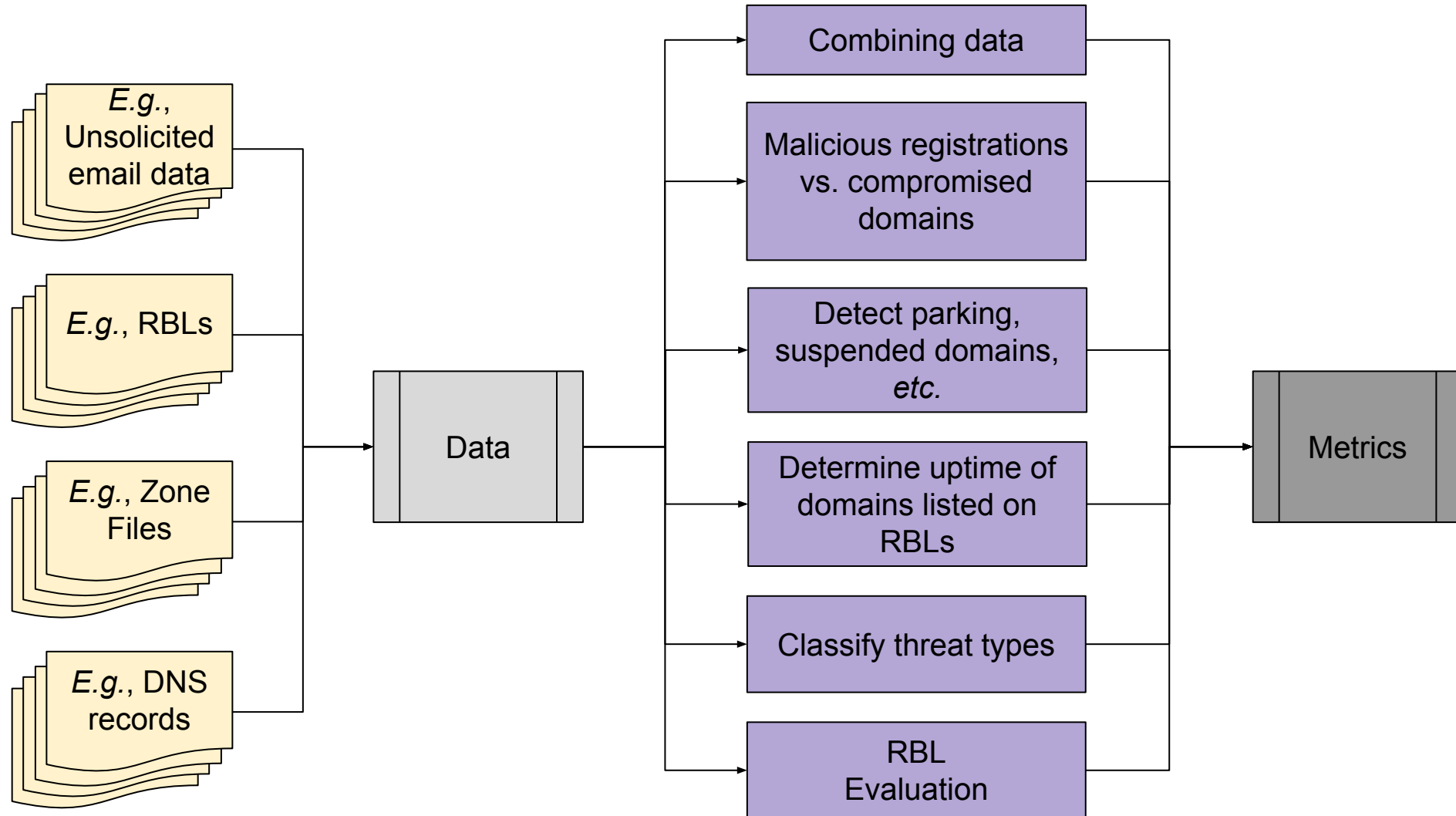


**I C A N N**  
Domain Metrica

# ICANN Domain Metrics - General Idea

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- A system to **collect**, **combine** and **compare** any metadata related to domain names.
- The platform has a **dynamic dashboard** with relevant **statistics** and visualisations; alongside an API to access raw data.



# ICANN Domain Metrics - Design Principles

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## **Modular**

Contain metadata about domain names added over time as modules  
The output of OCTO research projects can feed in

## **Flexible**

It can be used in multiple ways depending on the user  
Built to be updated as new requirements arise  
The system remains relevant over time

## **Transparent**

Methodologies and sources used will be public  
Data will be shared (where allowed by licencing)

# ICANN Domain Metrics - the Team

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## Who?

**ICANN SSR** Research providing the vision and science.

**ICANN E&IT** providing development resource.

## Why is ICANN doing this?

Requests from the community and reviews for more detailed data

# What Metrica Module 1 Measures so far

- **Where is DNS Abuse Concentrated?**
  - Counts of **reported** domains appear in RBLs
    - What domains? [Report vs. incident].
      - “**Reports**” or reported domains, lack corroborating evidence whether they “became” an attack.
      - “**Attacks**” attempts of using reported domains to create damage
      - “**Incidents**” are materialised attacks which cause some form of loss (either tangible or intangible)
- **What are other attributes of the reported domains?**
  - Geo location of hosts
  - Which types of domains [popularity]
- **What are the mitigation measures?**
  - Reactive measures [take downs, any action after RBL appearance]
  - Proactive measures [controls, policies, configurations, things to do to not be attractive/avoid abuse concentrations]

## Module 1 : DNS Abuse Reputation and Domain Popularity Ranking

1. Data and statistics for **gTLDs** and **registrars**
2. **Searchable** for gTLDs, registrars and domains / **Metadata** on searched terms
3. Shareable **domain-level** data
4. **Interactive visualisations** and comparisons [allows to filter on dates and add gTLDs to compare]
5. **Abuse map** - abuse hosts geolocation [[Maxmind data](#)]
6. **Domain Popularity Ranking** [[Tranco list](#)]

MoSAPI:

Access to lists of reported domains (contracted parties)

A separate API for (the rest of the ICANN community)

# ICANN Domain Metrics

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**24th September:** Pilot release to small user group [aim was to ask for feedback]

**29th October:** Rr/Ry User launch (MoSAPI on 30th October)

**4th December:** General launch [subject to change]

## Feedback from pilot and early use

- Spam - definition too broad
  - Doesn't match contracts - we are addressing this
- Performance issues
  - Looking at bottlenecks, *etc.*
- Documentation
  - Expand FAQs - More “in-line” help

# ICANN Domain Metrica - Module 1

## General Data and statistics for gTLDs and registrars

ICANN Domain Metrica

### Search

Fields marked with \* are required

Select Domain, Top-level Domain (gTLD), or Registrar \*



### Welcome to ICANN Domain Metrica

Below are the aggregate statistics collected across all gTLD domains. For more information on how the data is collected and processed, please view the [FAQs](#).

To search for specific domains, gTLDs or registrars, please use the search box above.

#### Statistical Overview for 06 Nov 2024

|                         |                       |                                            |                                                   |                                 |                                                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>217.2M</b>           | <b>1,103</b>          | <b>2.039M</b>                              | <b>494</b>                                        | <b>2,729</b>                    | <b>2,419</b>                                           |
| Total number of domains | Total number of gTLDs | Total number of domains with abuse reports | Number of gTLDs with one or more reported domains | Total number of registrars seen | Number of registrars with one or more reported domains |

#### Current Reported Abuse

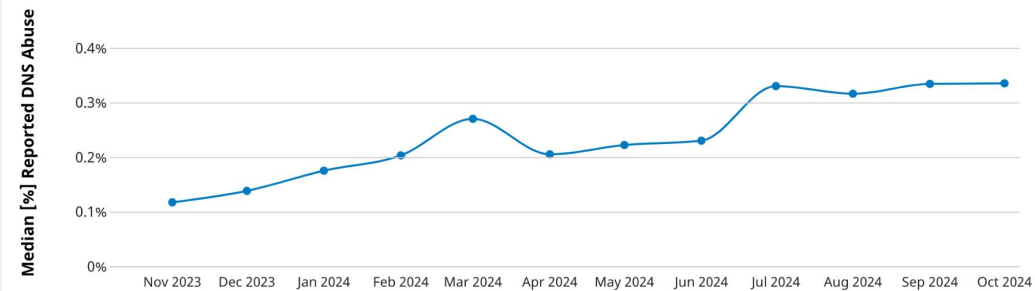
##### Summary of the Latest Reported Abuse Updated Daily

| Reported Abuse Type | Unique Domain Counts | Percentage of gTLD Domain Count |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Phishing            | 368492               | 0.170%                          |
| Malware             | 16140                | 0.007%                          |
| Spam                | 1721672              | 0.792%                          |
| Botnet C&c          | 537                  | 0.000%                          |

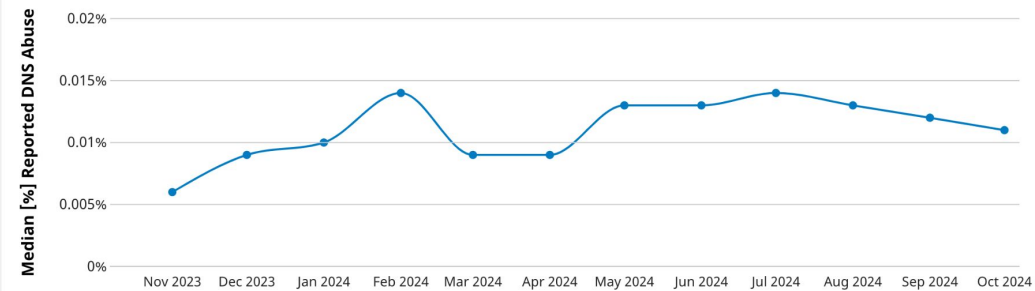
# ICANN Domain Metrics - Module 1

Trend Lines: Median Monthly Reported DNS Abuse in gTLDs

## Phishing

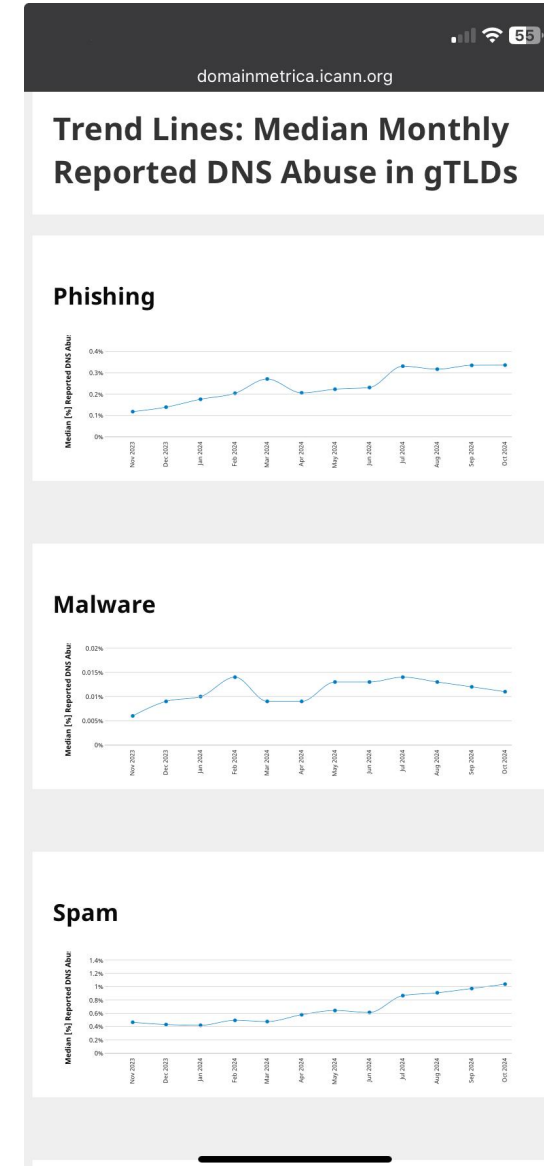
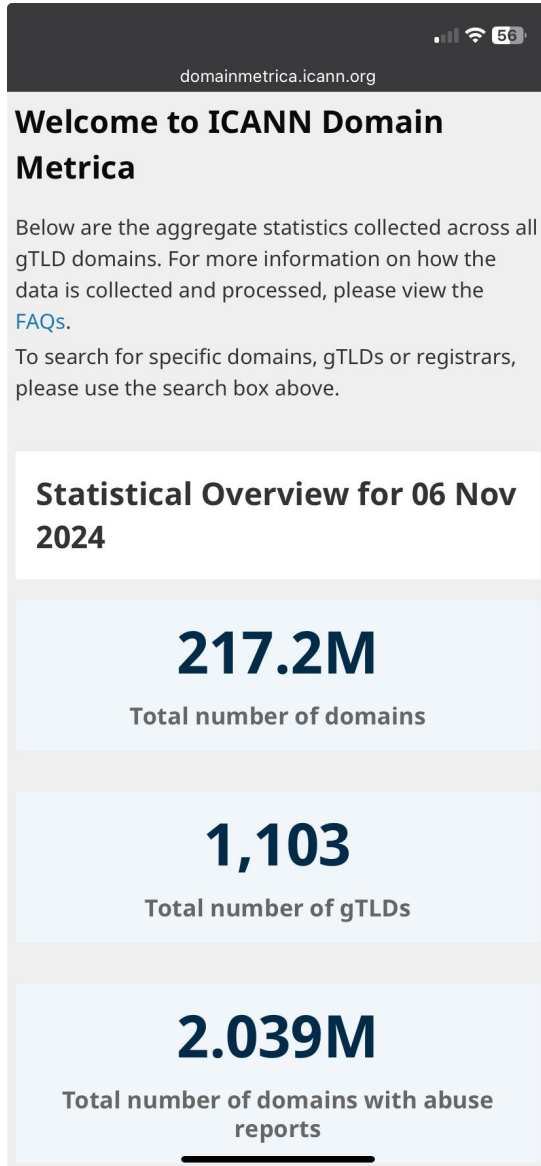


## Malware



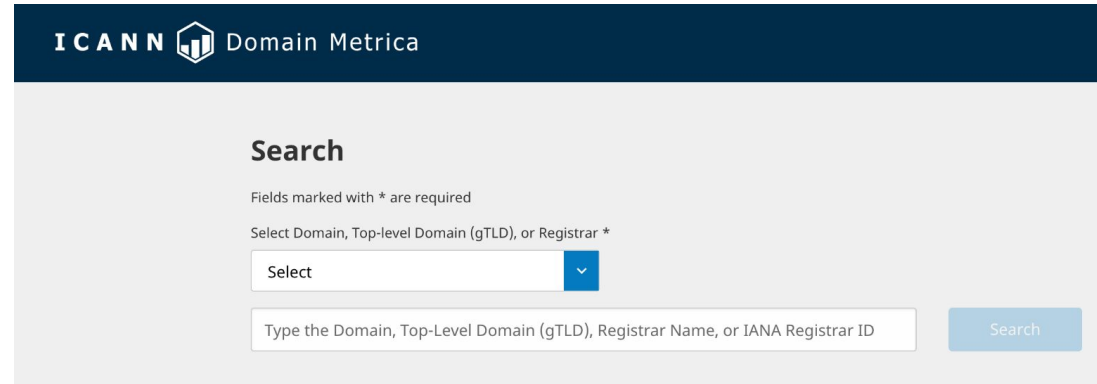
Data and statistics for **gTLDs** and **registrars**

# ICANN Domain Metrics - Module 1

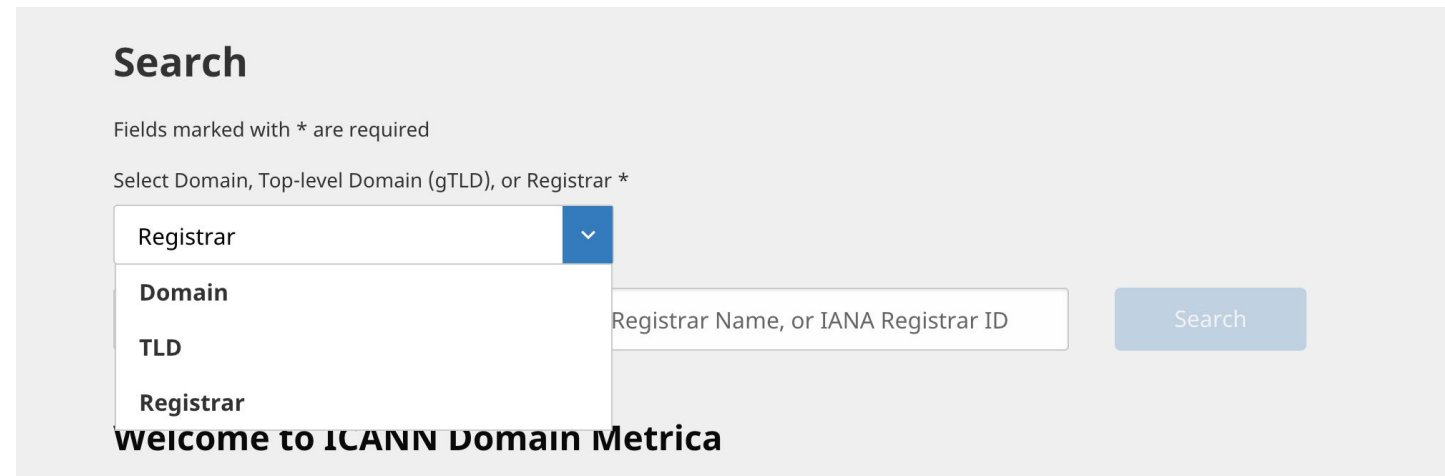


# ICANN Domain Metrics - Module 1

**Searchable** for  
gTLDs, registrars and  
domains



The image shows the top section of the ICANN Domain Metrics search interface. It features a dark blue header with the ICANN logo and the text "Domain Metrics". Below the header, the word "Search" is displayed in bold. A note states "Fields marked with \* are required". Below this, a prompt says "Select Domain, Top-level Domain (gTLD), or Registrar \*". There is a dropdown menu with the word "Select" and a blue arrow icon. Below the dropdown is a text input field with the placeholder text "Type the Domain, Top-Level Domain (gTLD), Registrar Name, or IANA Registrar ID". To the right of the input field is a blue "Search" button.



This image shows the same search interface as the previous one, but with the dropdown menu open. The dropdown menu lists four options: "Registrar", "Domain", "TLD", and "Registrar". The "Registrar" option is currently selected. Below the dropdown menu, the text "Welcome to ICANN Domain Metrics" is visible. The rest of the interface, including the "Search" button and the input field, remains the same.

# ICANN Domain Metrics - Module 1

## example.com

**Registrar** RESERVED-Internet Assigned Numbers Authority

**Created Date** 14 Aug 1995

**Expiration Date** 13 Aug 2025

**NS Records** A.IANA-SERVERS.NET  
B.IANA-SERVERS.NET

**IP Addresses** 93.184.215.14  
(07 Nov 2024) 2606:2800:21f:cb07:6820:80da:af6b:8b2c

**Signed?** true

**Metadata** on searched terms

## com

**Last Updated** 06 Nov 2024

**Registry** <http://www.verisigninc.com>

**Type** generic

**Delegation Date** no data available

**Zone Size** 154,248,821

**Size Change (since 05 Nov 2024)** +8,036

**Number of Signed Delegations** 6,310,786

# ICANN Domain Metrics - Module 1

RBL Name

Select

Reported Abuse Type

Select

Reset

[CSV](#) | [JSON](#)

Note: the list shown here will not contain all reported domains. The number of results we can return is limited by our license agreements, we also only display fresh reports, that is, reports first seen in the previous 24 hours. See the [FAQ](#) for more details.

1 - 20 of 45 results

Last updated 12 November 2024

| Domain       | RBL Name  | Reported Abuse Type | URL Count |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| ████████.net | spamhaus  | Malware             | 1         |
| ████████.com | surbl     | Phishing            | 1         |
| ████████.com | spamhaus  | Phishing            | 1         |
| ████████.com | spamhaus  | Phishing            | 1         |
| ████████.com | spamhaus  | Phishing            | 1         |
| ████████.com | phishtank | Phishing            | 2         |
| ████████.com | apwg      | Phishing            | 1         |
| ████████.com | surbl     | Spam                | 1         |
| ████████.com | surbl     | Spam                | 1         |
| ████████.com | spamhaus  | Spam                | 1         |
| ████████.com | spamhaus  | Spam                | 1         |

Shareable  
**domain-level** data

(For registry and registrar users only)

# ICANN Domain Metrics - Module 1

[Reported Abuse Trends](#) > Reported Abuse Counts:

Start Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

01/09/2024

End Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

07/11/2024

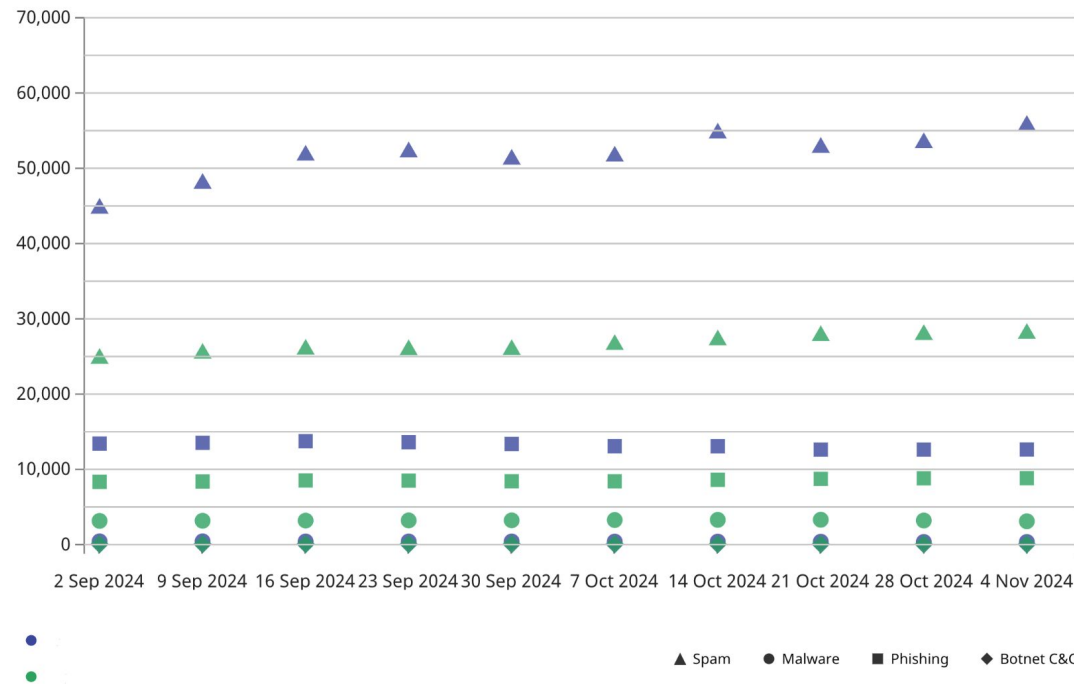
Apply

## Reported Abuse Counts

[CSV](#) | [JSON](#)

Reported abuse grouped by abuse type

Weekly, monthly, and quarterly views are aggregate views of reported abuse



Interactive visualisations  
filter on **dates** and add **gTLDs**  
to compare

# ICANN Domain Metrics

Interactive visualisations  
filter on **dates** and  
add **gTLDs** to compare

## [Reported Abuse Trends](#) > Percentage Of Reported Abuse Counts:

×

Add TLD to Compare

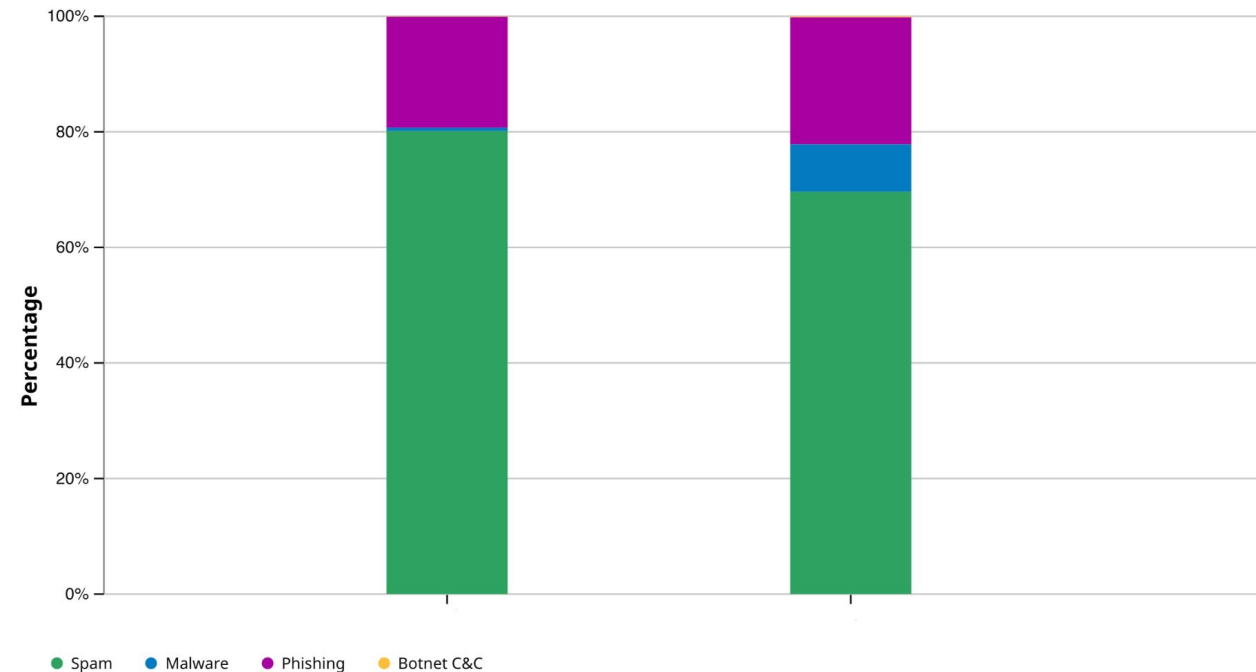
Start Date (dd/mm/yyyy) 09/10/2024 📅 End Date (dd/mm/yyyy) 07/11/2024 📅

Apply

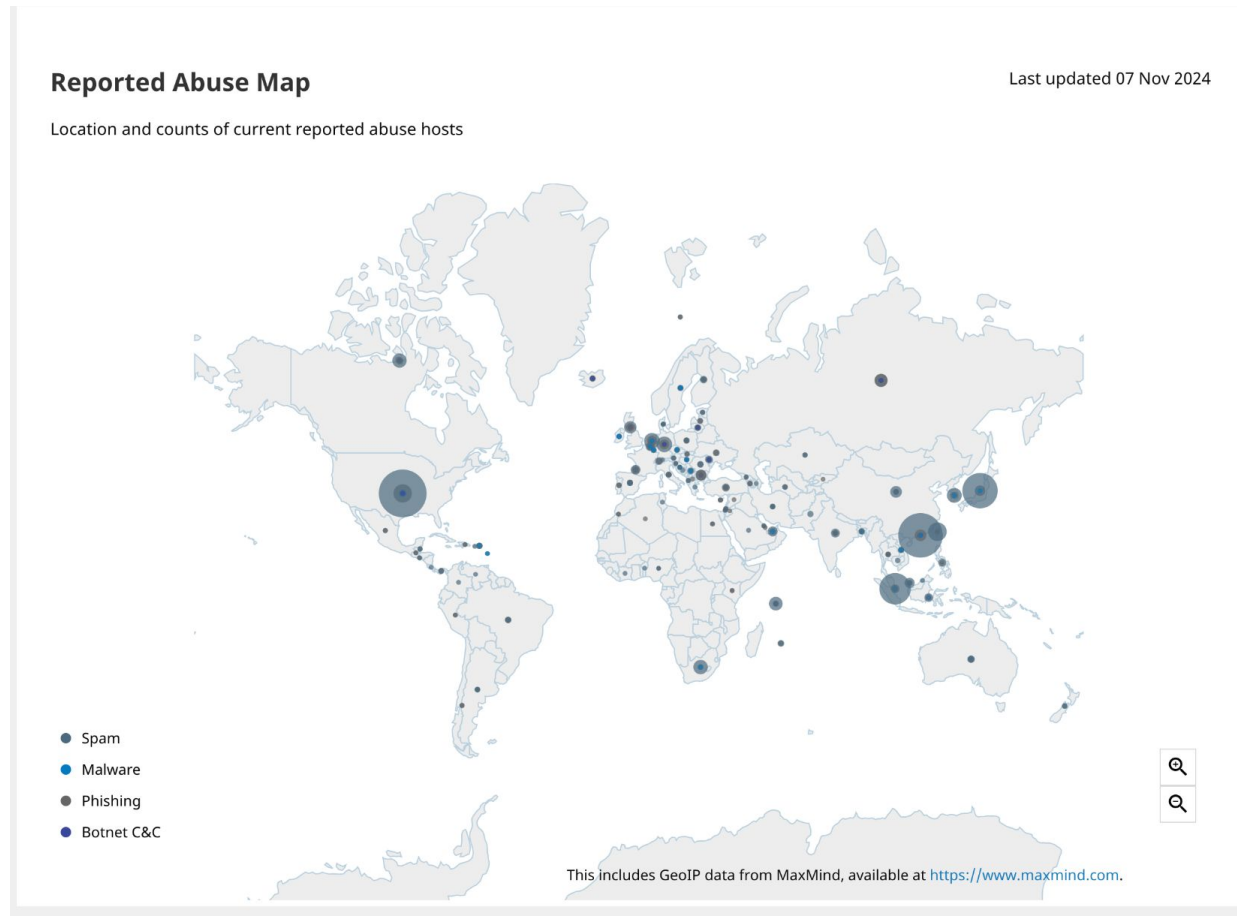
### Percentage of Reported Abuse Counts

[CSV](#) | [JSON](#)

Reported abuse counts as a percentage of total of reported abuse



# ICANN Domain Metrics



**Abuse map - abuse hosts geolocation**

## 5- Domain Popularity Ranking ([Tranco list](#))

### example.com

**Registrar** RESERVED-Internet Assigned Numbers Authority

**Created Date** 14 Aug 1995

**Expiration Date** 13 Aug 2025

**NS Records** A.IANA-SERVERS.NET  
B.IANA-SERVERS.NET

**IP Addresses** 93.184.215.14

(07 Nov 2024) 2606:2800:21f:cb07:6820:80da:af6b:8b2c

**Signed?** true

### Current Reported Abuse

Summary of the latest reported abuse updated daily

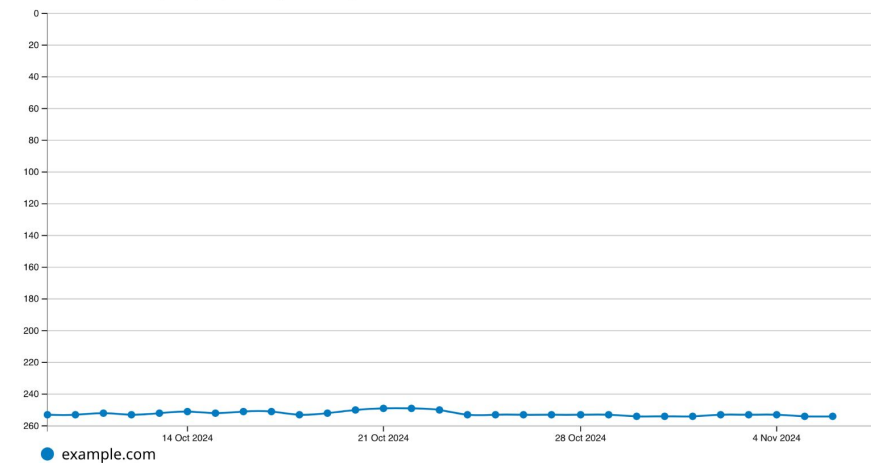


No current active abuse reports found

### [Tranco Popularity Ranking](#)

A Research-Oriented Top Sites Ranking Hardened Against Manipulation ⓘ

Click the chart title to download, compare, or change date range



# ICANN Domain Metrics

Tranco Popularity Ranking > example.com

Add Domain to Compare

Start Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

09/10/2024



End Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

07/11/2024

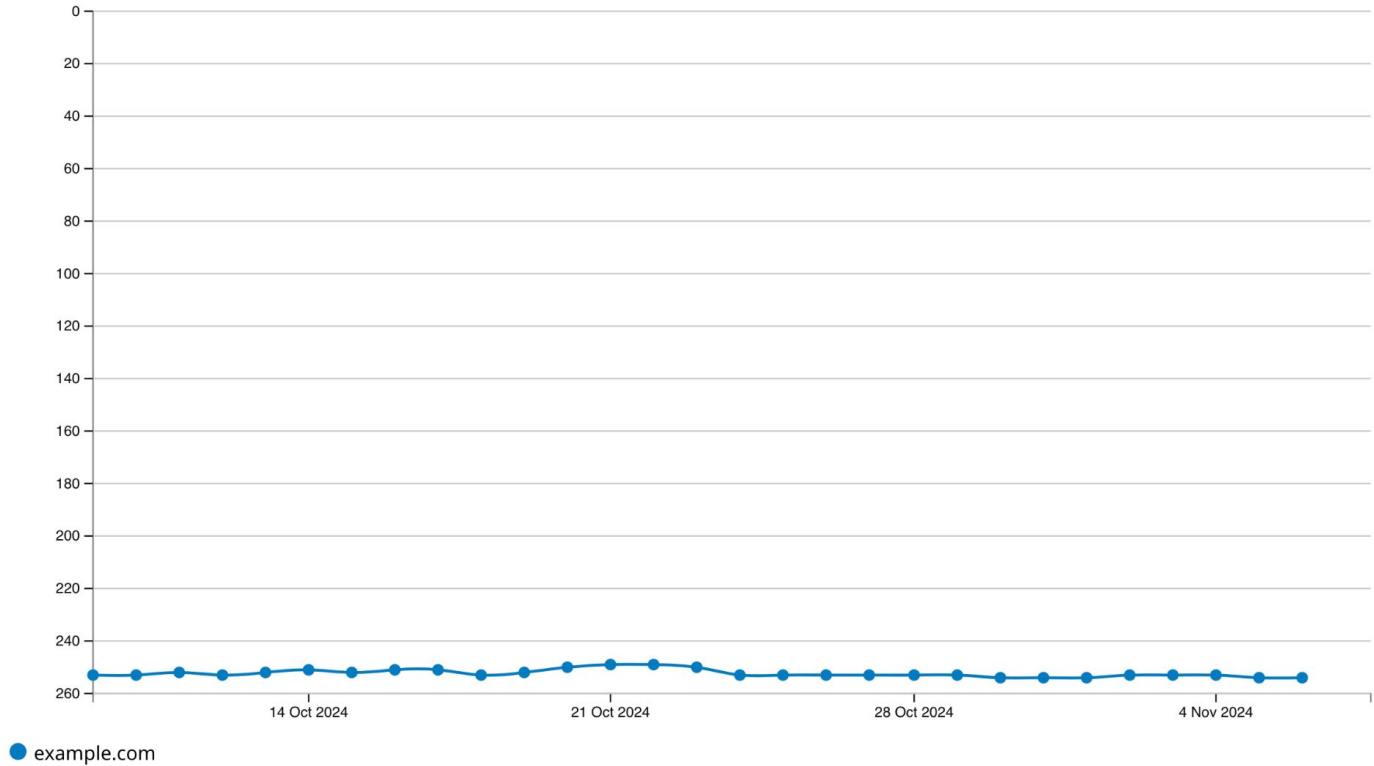


Apply

## Tranco Popularity Ranking

[CSV](#) | [JSON](#)

A Research-Oriented Top Sites Ranking Hardened Against Manipulation ⓘ



# ICANN Domain Metrics

Tranco Popularity Ranking > example.com

icann.org

×

Add Domain to Compare

Start Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

09/10/2024

📅

End Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

07/11/2024

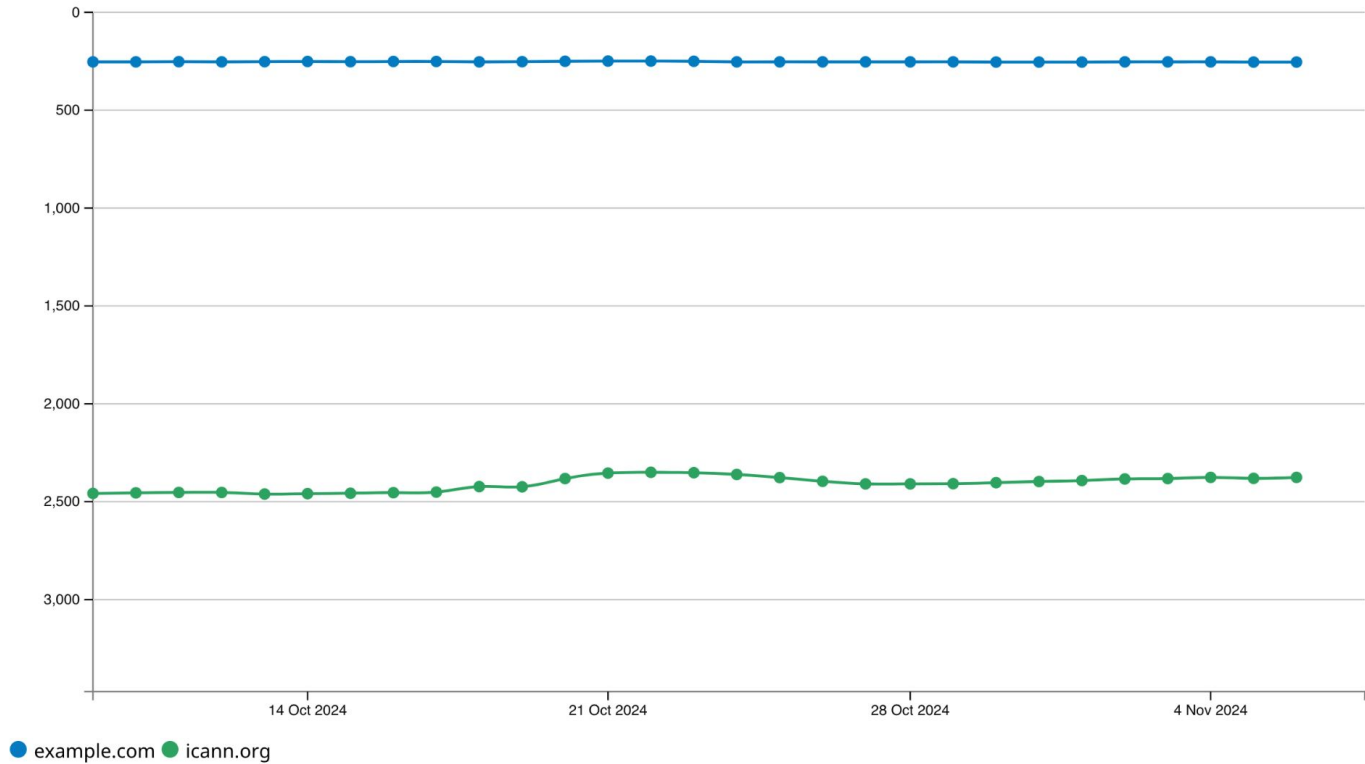
📅

Apply

Tranco Popularity Ranking

📄 CSV | JSON

A Research-Oriented Top Sites Ranking Hardened Against Manipulation ⓘ



What does/will Domain Metrics **add to existing systems?**

- Dynamic interactive dashboard - allows for filters [time/abuse type]
- Time series data, allows **narrowing down up to “date”**
- Download **underlying data** via an API - or **exported from UI**
- Includes NS and delegation **metadata** and **flags** on searched terms
- **Check against the zone on daily basis** (if domain is not delegated, not included in the counts, mitigations are acknowledged)
- Provide **underlying domain names**
- Provides **Tranco domain popularity ranking** (research indicates a relation between the domain abuse and popularity)

# ICANN Domain Metrica - Future Outlook

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Domain Metrica is not “**finished**”

- I. It is planned to evolve through its existence
  - A. Reflect feedback, new use cases, *etc.* [improvements to module 1]
  - B. Build on the foundations we have
  - C. Yearly evaluation of the inputs lists we use [RBLs using our RBL evaluation methodology **OCTO037**]

## Future modules and metrics?

- I. Research the science/metrics within the SSR Research team
- II. Build prototype
- III. Productionise and add to Domain Metrica as future modules

# Q&A on Domain Metrics

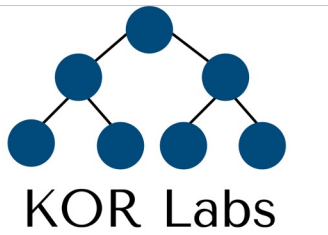
## ICANN Org Funded Projects: INFERMAL

A new research project called Inferential Analysis of Maliciously Registered Domains (INFERMAL).

The study aims to systematically analyze the preferences of attackers and possible measures to mitigate malicious activities across domains, top-level domains (TLDs) and registrars in a proactive way.

Study Funded by **ICANN Org**  
Study Conducted by **KOR Labs**





# INFERMAL: Inferential analysis of maliciously registered domains

Yevheniya Nosyk, **Maciej Korczyński**, Sourena Maroofi, Jan Bayer, Zul Odgerel, Andrzej Duda

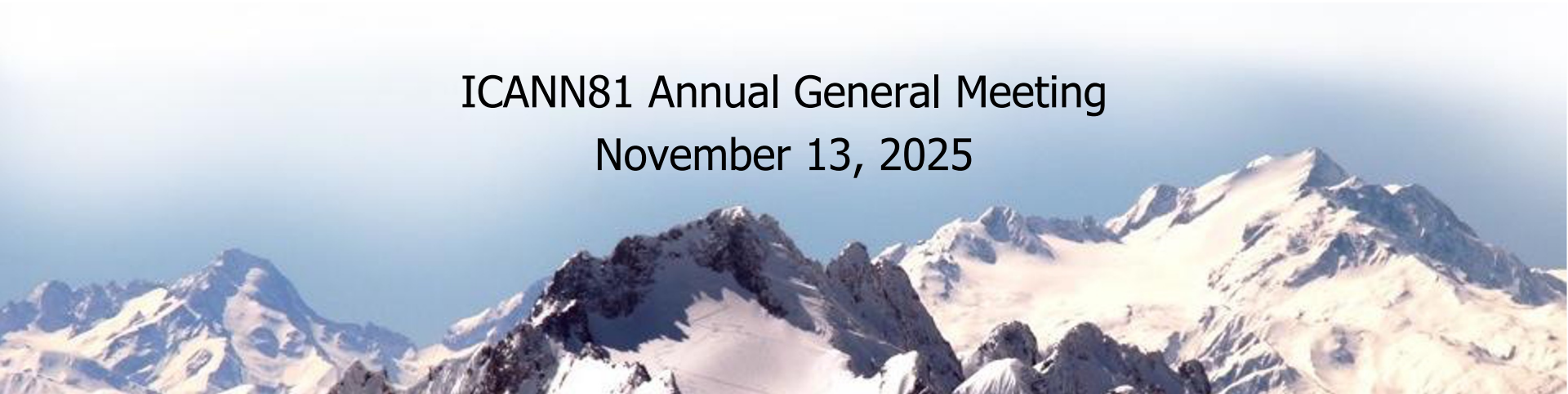
KOR Labs / Grenoble Alpes University

ICANN Org Project Coordination:

Samaneh Tajalizadehkhoob, Carlos Gañán

ICANN81 Annual General Meeting

November 13, 2025



# Motivation

- Cybercriminals exploit domains for: phishing, malware, spam, botnets
- Constantly register new domains to fuel attacks
- Prior studies show high abuse in specific registrars and TLDs
- No comprehensive research on factors influencing malicious registrations

# Goal

- Investigate domain abuse from the **attacker's perspective**
- Identify factors driving malicious domain registrations

# Approach – overview

- Scope: Maliciously registered phishing domains
- Features: 73 features encompassing three latent factors:
  1. Registration attributes
  2. Proactive verification
  3. Reactive security practices
- GLM regression analysis:
  1. Relationship between features and the concentration of phishing domains at the registrar-TLD level
  2. Features are favored by attackers alone or also by legitimate users

# Datasets

- Phishing: APWG, PhishTank, OpenPhish
- Benign domain names: ICANN CZDS, Google CT logs, etc.
- Features:
  1. TLD-List (e.g., domain registration costs, discounts, free features) \*
  2. Manually collected data (e.g., free API, API create user account, API register domain, restrictions)
  3. Active measurements (uptimes)
- Active WHOIS and DNS measurements

\* <https://tld-list.com/>

# Maliciously registered phishing and benign domains

- 534 K bloclisted URLs (Aug 2023 – Jan 2024)
- **108 K** domain names
- Excluding domains of benign services
- Active measurements (DNS, WHOIS) over one month to verify if the takedown occurred
- **28 K** registered maliciously
- Mapping between domains and daily-collected registration features
- **14 K** maliciously registered (165 TLDs, 31 registrars)
- Benign dataset of 15.4 K domains under 259 TLDs originating from 38 registrars

| Rank | Registrar     | TLD           | #Domains |
|------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| 1.   | NameSilo      | <b>top</b>    | 1,807    |
| 2.   | NameSilo      | <b>com</b>    | 852      |
| 3.   | GoDaddy       | <b>com</b>    | 832      |
| 4.   | Hostinger     | <b>online</b> | 764      |
| 5.   | NameSilo      | <b>info</b>   | 513      |
| 6.   | Hostinger     | <b>com</b>    | 479      |
| 7.   | Namecheap     | <b>com</b>    | 479      |
| 8.   | Alibaba Cloud | <b>com</b>    | 327      |
| 9.   | NameSilo      | <b>xyz</b>    | 233      |
| 10.  | Hostinger     | <b>cloud</b>  | 225      |
| 11.  | NameSilo      | <b>buzz</b>   | 222      |
| 12.  | Sav           | <b>com</b>    | 211      |
| 13.  | Alibaba Cloud | <b>shop</b>   | 197      |
| 14.  | NameSilo      | <b>us</b>     | 191      |
| 15.  | Hostinger     | <b>site</b>   | 179      |
| 16.  | NameSilo      | <b>life</b>   | 178      |
| 17.  | NameSilo      | <b>sbs</b>    | 171      |
| 18.  | Hostinger     | <b>shop</b>   | 156      |
| 19.  | NameSilo      | <b>cc</b>     | 149      |
| 20.  | Alibaba Cloud | <b>top</b>    | 148      |

20 most frequently observed registrar/TLD pairs in our dataset of maliciously registered domain names

# Selected features

## 1. Registration attributes

- **Free API:** the registrar APIs enable users to search, purchase, and manage domains
- **Free bulk search:** the capability to search domains in bulk
- **Available payment methods:** 24 boolean features for each payment method, including PayPal, Bitcoin, etc.
- **Pricing:** domain name registration prices
- **Discounts:** deducting a fixed amount or % from the regular price
- **Pricing terms:** might apply only to a limited number of domains or new customers
- **Free web hosting, free DNS, free email account:** included for free in each domain registration



# Selected features

## 2. Proactive verification

- **Operational validation of the registrant contact details:** Test whether contact details (email/phone) are verified during account creation or before domain purchase.
- **Domain registration warnings and restrictions:** three labels defined:
  - i. 9e86e6d5d4c676441da (the first 20 characters of the MD5hash of “DNS abuse”),
  - ii. office365-my-account
  - iii. facebook-login-page

For each registrar-TLD pair, we proceed to the payment prompt.

- **Registration restrictions:** 14 boolean features, e.g., local presence required, ID required, professionals only

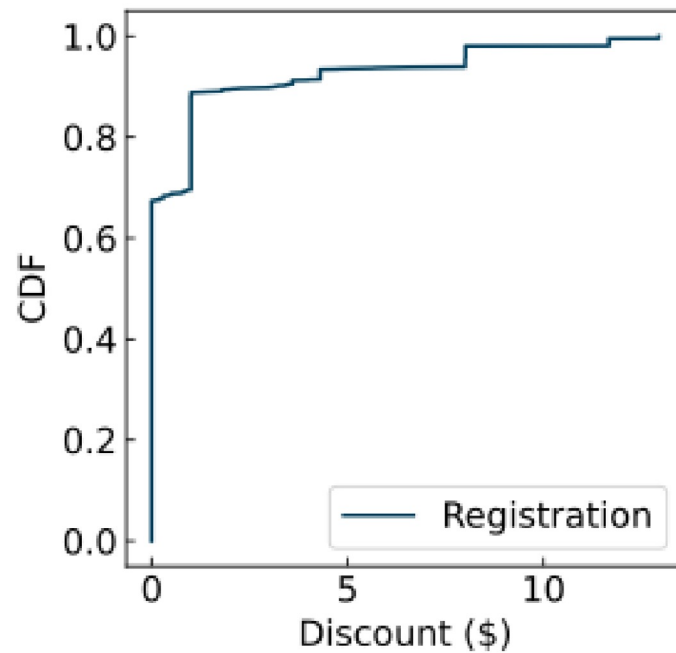
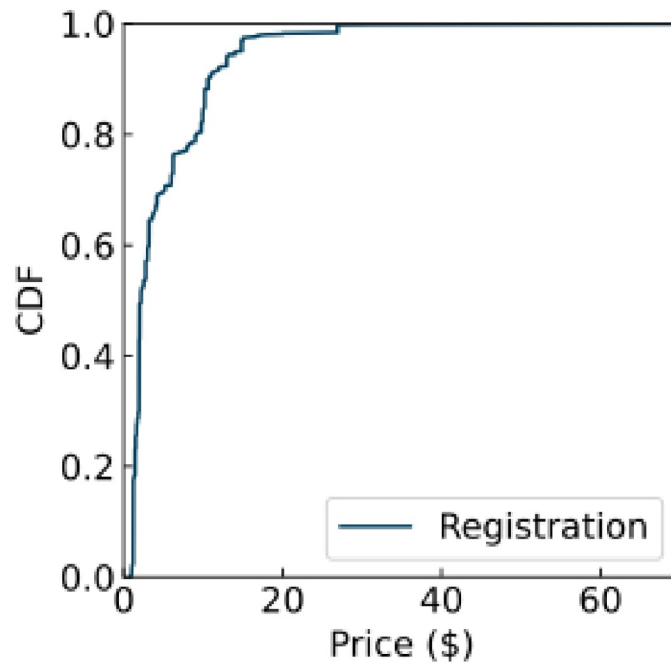
# Selected features

3. Reactive security practices: malicious domain name uptimes (with and without notifications)
  - WHOIS/DNS measurements
  - 5 minutes, 15 m, 30 m, 1 hour, 2 h, 3 h, 4 h, 5 h, 6 h, 12 h, 24 h, 36 h, and 48 h after blocklisting, and then every 12 hours
  - for a subset of maliciously registered domain names, notifications are sent to registrars

# Descriptive Analysis of Features

## Prices and discounts: Registration

- Prices range from \$0.78 to \$69, with nearly 50% costing \$2 or less



# Descriptive Analysis of Features

## Prices and discounts: Registration

- Examples of expensive domains include usps.bar (\$69), support-fb.sh (\$59.99), and dhlcenter.net (\$56)

The screenshot displays the USPS.COM website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for English, Locations, Support, Informed Delivery, and Register / Sign In. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for Quick Tools, Send, Receive, Shop, Business, International, and Help. The main heading is "USPS Tracking®", with "Tracking" and "FAQs" as sub-links. A button labeled "Track Another Package +" is visible. A promotional banner encourages tracking packages anytime, anywhere and mentions the free Informed Delivery feature. The tracking number "US9524901144737" is entered. The status section shows a red warning: "We have issues with your shipping address". Below this, a text box explains that USPS allows redelivery in case of failure and that the package can be tracked at any time. A progress bar is shown with the status "Status Not Available". At the bottom, there is a "Verify Address" section with the text: "First, we need to confirm your address is eligible for Informed Delivery."

USPS.COM Quick Tools Send Receive Shop Business International Help

English Locations Support Informed Delivery Register / Sign In

USPS Tracking® Tracking / FAQs

Track Another Package +

Track Packages Anytime, Anywhere Get the free Informed Delivery® feature to receive automated notifications on your packages Learn More

Tracking Number: US9524901144737

Status :

**We have issues with your shipping address**

USPS Allows you to Redeliver your package to your address in case of delivery failure or any other case. You can also track the package at any time, from shipment to delivery.

Status Not Available

Verify Address

First, we need to confirm your address is eligible for Informed Delivery.

# Descriptive Analysis of Features

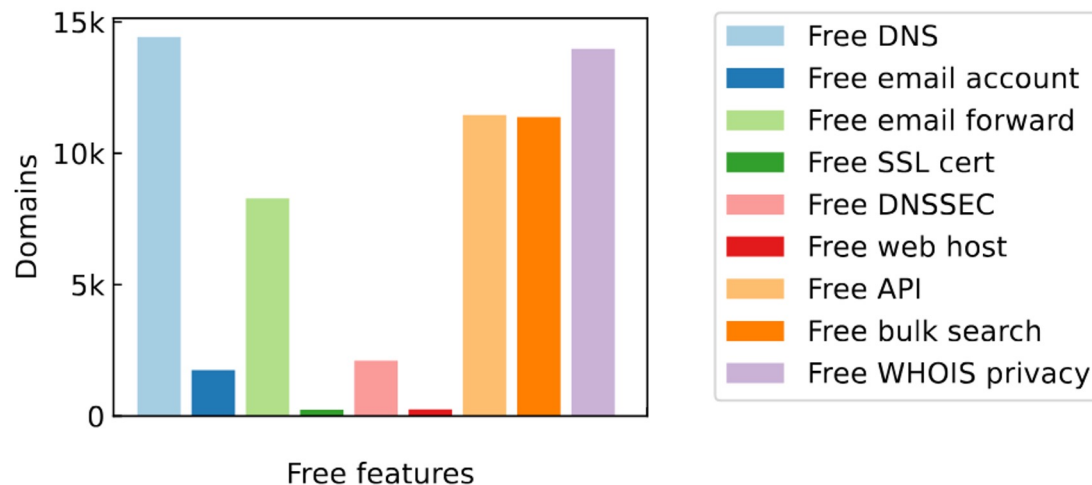
Registration prices and discounts:

- Registration prices may be subject to various terms (e.g., 4,423, reduced registration prices were valid for one domain), discounts to new customers only

# Descriptive Analysis of Features

## Free features

- A free API is offered by 16 of the 31 registrars we examined
- Four registrars permit the automated account creation (e.g., as a subaccount under an existing API user)
- 18 registrars offer a “bulk search” to check availability and prices for 20 to 10 K+



# Descriptive Analysis of Features

## Payment methods

- 13 are supported by the 31 analyzed registrars. Bitcoin supported in more than two-thirds of cases.

## Domain Name Registrant Data

- Phone verification is rare: 23 registrars check syntax, and only 6 validate operationally

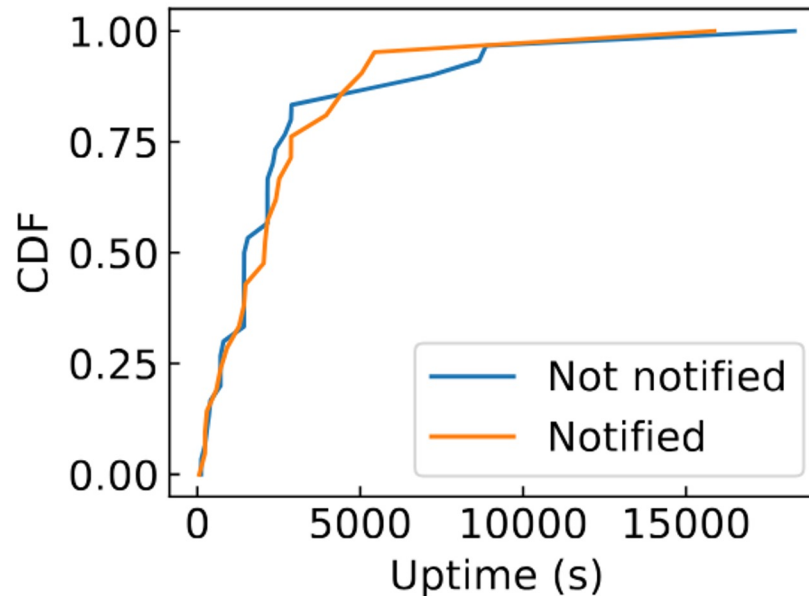
## Prevention of Trademark Infringement

- Two registrars blocked trademarked domains from being added to the cart

# Descriptive Analysis of Features

## Malicious Domain Uptimes

- Similar results at the domain and registrar levels



CDF of uptimes for notified and not notified registrars

# Driving Factors of Domain Abuse

Model 1: Relationship between features and the concentration of phishing domains at the **registrar-TLD** level

| Driver                                                   | Type      | Correlation with abuse counts | Increase     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Retail registration price                                | Numerical | Weak positive                 | 1\$↓ (6.6%↑) |
| Retail registration discounts                            | Numerical | Positive                      | 1\$↓ (49%↑)  |
| Cryptocurrency payment(s) available                      | Boolean   | Positive                      | 30%          |
| APIs to register domains or to create accounts available | Boolean   | Strong positive               | 401%         |

# Driving Factors of Domain Abuse

Our analysis suggests that while initial pricing plays a role, attractiveness to attackers likely results from a combination of factors

| Driver                                                                                   | Correlation with abuse counts | Correlation with abuse counts                        | Increase |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Free DNS service                                                                         | Boolean                       | Positive                                             | 205%     |
| Free hosting service                                                                     | Boolean                       | Positive                                             | 88%      |
| Presence of restrictions (e.g., commitment required, local presence, professionals only) | Boolean                       | Negative                                             | 63%      |
| Validation of email/phone present                                                        | Boolean                       | Negative                                             | 70%      |
| Shorter uptimes                                                                          | Numerical                     | Statistically significant but negligible correlation | ~0%      |

# Discussion and conclusions

- Key factors driving malicious domain registrations from the **attacker's perspective**.
- This study did not include instances of benign domains that have been compromised, for example, at the website or hosting level.
- Results should be interpreted with caution and may or may not be generalized into actions by registrars or TLDs.
- Some factors are combined and involve a variety of features.
- Attractiveness to attackers likely results from a combination of factors.
- It is essential to consider the economic implications, the impact on legitimate users, and the likely response of attackers to adjustments, the result of partial/full implementation.

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# Questions



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# Q&A on INFERMAL

# DNS Abuse: A Broad and Complex Issue

**DNS Abuse encompasses a wide range of problems, making it a multifaceted issue that requires diverse approaches.**

## **Need for Community Involvement**

- Addressing DNS Abuse effectively requires the active participation of the entire community, not just individual organizations.

## **Role of ICANN**

- ICANN is taking significant steps to tackle DNS Abuse, but it's just one part of a larger effort.

## **ICANN Community Engagement**

- Various stakeholders within the ICANN community are working on different aspects of DNS Abuse, reflecting a collaborative approach.



# Call to Action: ICANN Community Efforts

The ICANN community is best positioned to determine what policy recommendations, if any, may be needed to mitigate DNS Abuse.





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