



2015 Annual Report on WHOIS Improvements

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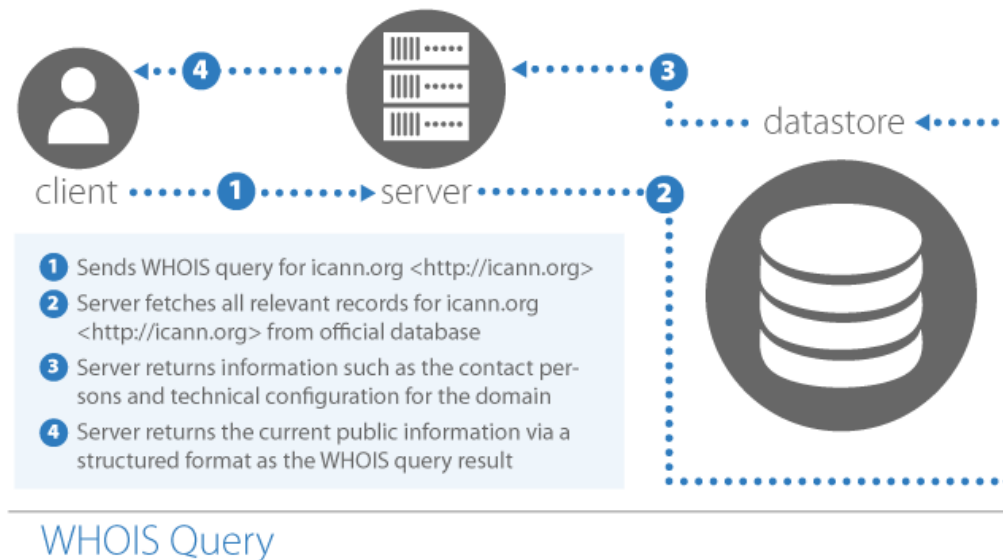
Background

Under the Affirmation of Commitments (AoC), ICANN is committed to making decisions in the public interest that are accountable and transparent, and to undergoing reviews performed by the community in key strategic areas. One of the four AoC reviews focuses on “(e)nforcing its existing policy relating to WHOIS, subject to applicable laws”.

This annual Report highlights activities from 2015 and illustrates how ICANN continues to fulfil the Board’s mandate to improve WHOIS, as ICANN prepares for the commencement of the second review of the WHOIS program, which is scheduled to begin in late 2016.

WHOIS - a Continued Priority for ICANN

2015 marks the third year of progress towards fulfilling ICANN’s commitment to improve WHOIS. By dedicating resources to this important program, ICANN achieved several key milestones in 2015 as noted in the timeline below and continues to be on track to deliver on the remaining commitments stemming from the 2012 WHOIS Review Team’s recommendations.



Board Acts on Community-Driven WHOIS improvements

The [Action Plan](#) adopted by the Board in 2012 in response to the WHOIS Review team set in motion several GNSO policy initiatives aimed at refining the WHOIS program. Many of these policy development activities came to a close in 2015. Others are expected to conclude in 2016.

Recognizing the importance of this topic, in July, the Board established a Board Working Group on Registration Data Directory Services (BWG-RDS) to liaise with the GNSO on the policy development process to propose policies to support the creation of the next generation registration directory services, using the recommendations from the Expert Working Group's Final Report as a key input. In addition, this Board Working Group oversees the implementation of the remaining projects arising from the [Action Plan](#).

In September 2015, the Board adopted a new consensus policy developed by the GNSO, that, for the first time targets requirements to enable the internationalization of WHOIS contact data. This new WHOIS policy, that addresses the issues related to translation and transliteration of contact data, introduces additional fields in the WHOIS record to

help identify the language and script used by the registrant.¹ Implementation planning is underway.

WHOIS – Current issues

ICANN’s requirements for domain name registration data collection, access and accuracy for gTLD registries have undergone some important changes. Yet there is still a need for improvements and reforms to address WHOIS related issues and services.

Comprehensive WHOIS policy reform remained the source of continuing discussion in 2015 as the Community debated issues such as accuracy, national privacy laws, transition to “thick” WHOIS registries, as well as anonymity, and language.

¹ See discussion below for additional information.

WHOIS and ICANN Contractual Compliance

WHOIS, an important tool to safeguard consumers and benefit the Internet ecosystem, has been a priority for Contractual Compliance to ensure that ICANN's contracted parties fulfill the requirements set forth in their agreements.

ICANN-accredited registrars have several WHOIS obligations, including:

- Provision of free public WHOIS service on Port 43 and via web with output appearing in the required format and according to certain service level requirements;
- Submitting all required data elements to the registries;
- Obtaining, retaining and updating data elements in a timely manner;
- Escrowing data elements;
- Providing for bulk access to WHOIS data in accordance with the required bulk access agreement;
- Taking reasonable steps to investigate, and where appropriate, correct inaccuracies upon discovery of information or notification suggesting an inaccuracy exists; and
- Providing annual WHOIS data reminders to registrants.

Similarly, registry operators also have contractual obligations related to WHOIS, including:

- Provision of free public WHOIS service on Port 43 and via web with output appearing in the required format and according to certain service level requirements.

As a result ICANN undertakes various activities to ensure compliance with contractual obligations; some of the activities are a result of publically generated complaints, some are a result of internal monitoring and others are audit-related.

Highlights of the Contractual Compliance activities related to WHOIS in 2015 include:

WHOIS Inaccuracy, Abuse and WHOIS Quality Review (QR)

Approximately seventy-five percent of complaints submitted by the ICANN community in 2015 are for alleged inaccurate WHOIS data. Under the 2009 and 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreements (RAA), registrars are required to maintain accurate and up-to-date WHOIS data. Additionally, the WHOIS Accuracy Program Specification (WAPS) of the 2013 RAA, requires registrars to validate and verify any new or updated WHOIS data, and to suspend domain names that are not properly verified. ICANN enforces those obligations by requiring registrars to provide documents and information to ICANN to demonstrate compliance with WAPS, and failure to do so may result in a notice of breach published on icann.org.

In addition, the Contractual Compliance team provided feedback that was incorporated in the Clarification to the [2013 RAA WHOIS Accuracy Specification](#).

In 2014, ICANN launched a WHOIS quality review process referred to as “WHOIS QR” - the objective is to determine if registrars continue to comply with the WHOIS Accuracy obligations as specified in the 2009 and 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreements (RAA), with an emphasis on previously closed WHOIS inaccuracy complaints because the domain name was suspended. Staff conducts internal monitoring on regular basis to ensure that registrars are complying with their obligations when removing domain name suspension.

WHOIS Format

The Registration Data Directory Service (WHOIS) Specification of the 2013 RAA specifies the required WHOIS output format. In addition to monitoring registrar WHOIS format, Contractual Compliance receives community complaints about WHOIS format. In 2015, the Contractual Compliance team participated in the drafting of the [WHOIS Clarifications](#) and [Additional WHOIS Information Policy](#).

As part of WHOIS format compliance, ICANN Contractual Compliance ensures that registrar WHOIS includes mandatory email and telephone numbers to submit abuse complaints to the registrar.

WHOIS Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The [2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement](#) (RAA) requires ICANN-accredited registrars to provide Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS or WHOIS) at specified levels of availability, response time and update time. Details can be found in the [Whois Service Level Agreement \(SLA\) Matrix](#). These requirements only apply to registrars under the 2013 RAA. Similarly, registry operators must provide RDDS services in accordance with the requirements of Specification 10 of the new Registry Agreement (RA). ICANN Technical Services monitors service level parameters and refers instances of non-compliance to Contractual Compliance.

WHOIS Accuracy Reporting System (ARS)

The Contractual Compliance Department worked with ICANN's Global Domains Division (GDD) to help develop testing criteria for Phases 1 and 2 of the production version of the WHOIS ARS, which transitioned from a pilot project to an ongoing activity in 2015. This collaboration was initiated in attempt to align the validation criteria with the contractual obligations of the RAAs and applicable Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) RFCs. The Contractual Compliance Department is currently reviewing results from the validation tests and using the actionable data for compliance follow-up on potentially inaccurate records processing.

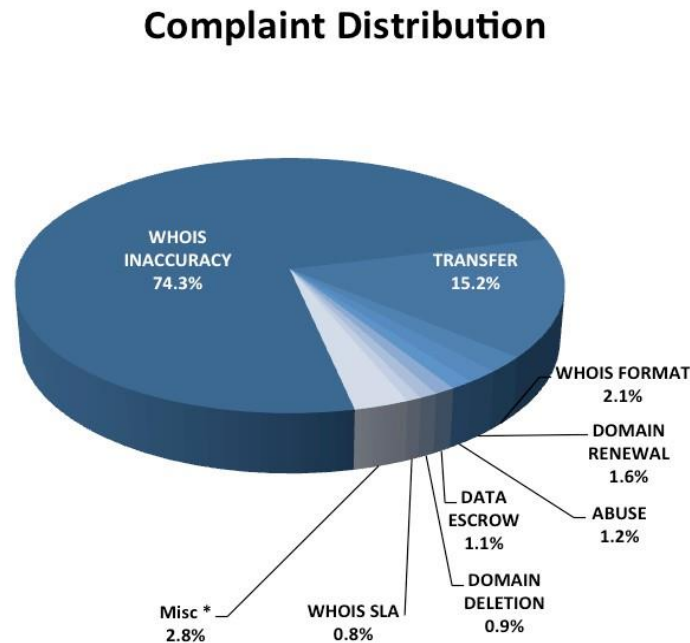
Educational Outreach and Global Training

An important initiative of the Contractual Compliance Department involves providing [outreach and training](#) to registrars and registry operators across the globe on contract requirements. In 2015, multiple sessions were held at the international ICANN meetings and in regional settings to provide this specialized training.

Enhanced Reporting

[Contractual Compliance Reports](#) are produced quarterly and contain information on WHOIS accuracy complaints. The Contractual Compliance team also provides updated information in the monthly dashboard report that includes up to date reporting on the number of complaints filed and the status of those complaints. The complaints are received by ICANN upon submission by complainants using the [web forms](#). General questions can be submitted via email to compliance@icann.org, but complaints must be submitted using the web forms.

Figure 1 YTD Compliant Distribution Chart



Contractual Compliance Audit Update

The audit program is an integral part of the ICANN Contractual Compliance function. The goal is to ensure that contracted parties, registrars and registries, comply with their agreements and the consensus policies while proactively addressing any potential deficiencies. To learn more about the audit function including the frequently asked

questions and the communication templates please click at this link:

<https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/audits-2012-02-25-en>.

Registrar Accreditation Agreement Audit Program

A Registrar Audit round was launched on 14 September 2015 with a sample of 65 registrars. Audit tests were conducted to confirm that WHOIS output via webpages and Port 43 were operational and corresponding data elements were displayed.

The Audit is currently underway with target completion in March 2016. For more information about this audit round please click on this link:

<https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/compliance-registrar-audit-21sep15-en.pdf>

New Registry Agreement Audit Program

In March 2015, ICANN launched a second round of the new Registry Agreement Audit; it was completed in September 2015. Eleven registries were audited. Among other areas, ICANN tested Registries' WHOIS output to ensure WHOIS output appeared when queried, including required fields, and that registration data shown was consistent with data in escrow files. All new gTLDs selected for audit had functioning WHOIS output with all mandatory fields present; five new gTLDs selected for audit had discrepancies between the information in the WHOIS output and the data escrow file that were eventually corrected. To learn more about the audit and the results please click on this link: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/compliance-reports-2015-04-15-en>

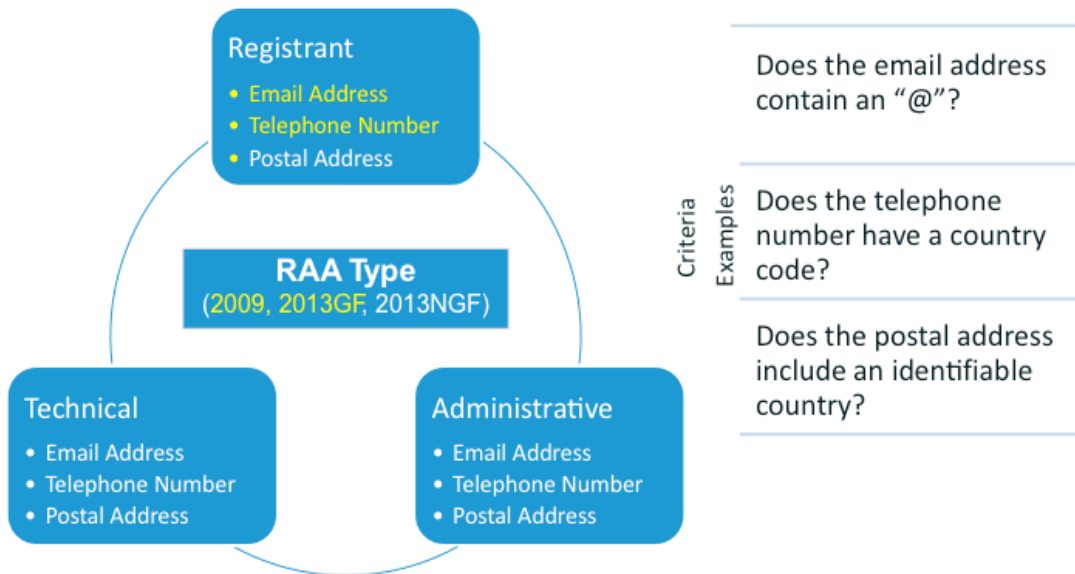
Focus on WHOIS Accuracy

The WHOIS Review Team's report expressed concerns with accuracy levels of WHOIS contact information in gTLDs. To address these concerns, and concerns related to proper safeguards for new gTLDs expressed by the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) in past Communiqués (notably the GAC Beijing advice regarding WHOIS verification and checks). To address these concerns, ICANN committed to proactively identifying potentially inaccurate WHOIS contact data in generic Top Level Domains (gTLD) and forwarding potentially inaccurate records to gTLD registrars for investigation and follow-up, and publicly reporting on its findings.

To accomplish these commitments, ICANN developed the WHOIS Accuracy Reporting System (ARS) – a framework for conducting repeatable assessments of WHOIS accuracy; publicly reporting the findings, and providing resulting data to compliance for follow up with registrars on potentially inaccurate records. The ARS uses automated and semi-automated tools to sample gTLD WHOIS records and proactively identify inaccurate gTLD registration data. ICANN's Contractual Compliance department reviews the data and forwards any potentially inaccurate records to the registrar for action. ICANN is publishing semi-annual reports from the ARS which estimate the WHOIS accuracy rates for gTLD's as a whole and a variety of subgroups such as New gTLD's and regional data.

In 2015 ICANN completed development of the ARS. Publication of the [syntactic validation report](#) (Phase I) was issued in August 2015 and a second cycle (Phase II), which reported on both [syntactic accuracy and operability accuracy](#) was released in December 2015. Subsequent reports will be issued twice a year, with the plan to release reports in June and December each year. From this data as well as the repetition of the ARS cycles, including follow up by ICANN Contractual Compliance, ICANN expects the overall WHOIS accuracy to gradually improve over time. Figure 2 below highlights the data elements examined for the Phase 2 Report.

Figure 2 – ARS Phase 2 – Contact types, modes, and testing criteria



In addition to Syntactic and Operability (sometimes referred to as contractibility), some have considered if ICANN should attempt to validate the identity of the contact listed in the WHOIS record.

Figure 3 below highlights the various stages of the WHOIS ARS project



WHOIS and Internationalized Registration Data (IRD)

As ICANN continues to improve the WHOIS service, one important reform relates to the internationalization of WHOIS contact information. In 2012, the Board chartered a group of experts known as Internationalized Registration Data (IRD) Working Group to accommodate internationalized registration data. This group concluded its work by publishing its [final report in 2015](#) that listed requirements for internationalized registration data, including a list of three specific principles that are to be used to guide the internationalization of data. The IRD Working Group also produced a data model to match the data registration requirement. This group observed that Registrants should only be required to input registration data in languages or scripts that they are skilled at; and unless explicitly stated, all data elements should be tagged with languages and scripts in use, and this information should always be available with the data elements.

Since there may be policy implications raised by its proposals, the IRD Working Group recommended that the Board send its report to the GNSO for appropriate policy review and follow-up. As a result the IRD Working Group's recommendations may become the basis for further policy development and/or contractual framework for gTLDs in 2016.

Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information

Closely linked to the work of the Internationalized Registration Data Expert Working Group is the GNSO Policy Development Process (PDP) Working Group on Translation and Transliteration (TnT) of Contact Information as both groups are looking into ways to input, capture, display and validate localized and translated WHOIS data. This working group looked at the ways that contact information data, commonly referred to as 'WHOIS' are collected and displayed within generic top-level domains (gTLDs).

The TnT PDP looked at developing policy recommendations regarding the translation and transliteration of registration contact information. Among other things, the WG was

to consider whether it is desirable to translate contact information into a single common language or transliterate contact information into a single common script. The fundamental question that was considered was who should decide who should bear the burden of translating contact information to a single common language or transliterating contact information to a single common script. The resulting report also included a study on the commercial feasibility of translation and transliteration systems for internationalized contact data.

Ultimately the group concluded that it is not desirable to make transformation of contact information mandatory, and that data fields be stored and displayed in a way that allows for easy identification of what the different data entries represent and what languages/scripts have been used by the registered name holder. Additional recommendations addressed contact information data languages and scripts and recommended that the data fields are consistent to standards contained in the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA). Any WHOIS replacement system should remain flexible so that contact information in new scripts/languages can be added and can expand its linguistic/script capacity for receiving, storing and displaying contact information data.

The PDP Working Group's [Final Report](#) was [adopted](#) by the GNSO Council and then [approved](#) by the ICANN Board in September 2015 .

Update on WHOIS Requirements and National Law Conflicts

The continued evolution of privacy and data protection laws around the world have led to concerns regarding how to reconcile WHOIS obligations with these laws. A [WHOIS National Law Conflict Procedure](#) (WHOIS Procedure) was developed and implemented in 2009. Last year a [review](#) of this procedure was launched on 22 May 2014. This was initiated to solicit community feedback on the effectiveness of ICANN's national law

procedure as numerous concerns have arisen from contracted parties and the wider community regarding potential conflicts between WHOIS contractual obligations and local law. A GNSO Implementation Advisory Group was formed to develop possible proposals and recommendations to modify the procedure. The IAG issued an Initial Report and Proposed Revisions to the ICANN Procedure for WHOIS Conflicts with Privacy Laws [report](#) on 5 October 2015. The Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) report underwent a [public comment](#) period on its proposed revisions to the existing WHOIS Conflicts Procedure and then posted its final report. The IAG will submit a final report to GNSO Council for its consideration to confirm that the proposed changes are consistent with the underlying policy. The proposed changes may also be presented to the ICANN Board of Directors for their review in 2016. Staff will then develop implementation plans.

Privacy and Proxy Services

The Community came together for the first time and reached agreement on a broad framework from which to apply standard policies in the areas of privacy and proxy services. The Board requested a GNSO PDP to develop policy recommendations to guide ICANN's implementation of an accreditation program for privacy and proxy service providers. This topic was identified during the 2013 RAA negotiations and recommended for community policy development. GNSO closely examining this issue and published its initial report in May with the [Final Report](#) published in December 2015. The Board is expected to consider this new consensus policy in early 2016 after the GNSO Council approval of the Final Report. Pre-implementation planning has commenced as the transition period for interim specification on privacy/proxy services is in effect until 1/1/2017 to allow for the privacy/proxy accreditation program to be developed based upon Board adopted PDP recommendations from the GNSO.

Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP)

In 2012, The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) chartered the WEIRDS (Web Extensible Internet Registration Data Services) working group to determine the needs of the community. This working group concluded in early 2015 with the publication of several Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Request for Comments (RFCs) specifications, which defines the behavior of the Registry Data Access Protocol (RDAP), a standardized replacement for WHOIS. Contracted parties operating according to an agreement, which includes a clause to implement a successor protocol to WHOIS, are required to deploy RDAP.

ICANN is determining how to implement the new protocol in the gTLD space. On 28 September 2015, ICANN [published](#) a proposed draft of the RDAP operational profile for gTLD registries and registrars for discussion with the community. Several members of the community provided valuable inputs that have been incorporated in the version on the RDAP Operational Profile for gTLD Registries and Registrars that is out for [Public Comment](#). The purpose of this profile is to specify the RDAP requirements that are in line with current WHOIS service requirements. This profile is built from the IETF RFCs, requirements from the gTLD Registry Agreement (RA), Registrar Accreditation Agreement 2013 (RAA), WHOIS-related advisories and consensus policies published by ICANN.

Reinventing WHOIS - Next-Generation gTLD Registration Directory Services

The Board launched a two-pronged response to address the WHOIS Review Team's recommendations in 2012. One track focused on improving WHOIS in the short term, with several significant initiatives under implementation as described above. However, recognizing the limitations of WHOIS, the Board simultaneously called for a second

track, through the creation of the Expert Working Group, to redefine the purpose of collecting, maintaining and providing access to gTLD registration data, and consider safeguards for protecting data, as a foundation for new gTLD policy and contractual negotiations. The Board further called for a GNSO policy development process (PDP) to examine the policy implications of the EWG's recommendations.

In 2015, the GNSO Council collaborated with the [Board](#) to develop a framework for conducting a comprehensive policy initiative to examine the EWG's recommended model as described in its Final Report and propose policies to support the creation of the next generation registration directory services.

This framework is described in the [Preliminary Issue Report](#) released in July 2015 to address the many significant and interdependent gTLD registration data policy areas that a PDP should address to determine if and why a next-generation Registration Directory Service (RDS) is needed to replace WHOIS. Following the publication of the [Final Issue Report](#), the [GNSO](#) approved the formation of a PDP Working Group in November 2015 and Charter to commence this PDP. A call for volunteers in January 2016 will be the start of a comprehensive analysis to determine if the current WHOIS policy should be replaced with new policies to support the next generation of registration directory services.

The Next Review of WHOIS

The mechanisms through which ICANN archives accountability and transparency are built into every level of its organization and mandate - beginning with its [Bylaws](#) and its [Affirmation of Commitments](#) (AoC). In July 2015 the ICANN Board reviewed the schedule for the AoC and Organizational Reviews Schedule and adopted modifications to the schedule to streamline AoC Review teams and Review duration.







Under this revised schedule, the next WHOIS Review (WHOIS2) is scheduled to

commence in October 2016.

For more information on the WHOIS program in 2015, please refer to [Annex A](#) for a detailed list of WHOIS Review Team milestones. In addition you can track progress against the WHOIS Review Team recommendations on the [WHOIS wiki](#).


Annex A – Detailed Chart of Milestones Achieved

Detailed Quarterly Implementation Report on WHOIS Improvements

Details on the Implementation Status of the <i>Board Approved</i> ² WHOIS Review Team Final Report Recommendations As of 30 December 2015		Key: Complete √ or  In Progress ○ or  In Planning ◇ or 	
	Topic	Summary of Implementation Activities	Milestones & Due Dates ³
	WHOIS - Strategic Priority		
1.a 	WHOIS as a strategic priority	WHOIS emphasized in Strategic Plan as part of Strategic Objective 2.1 and funded in FY16 Operating Plan and Budget ; WHOIS Program supervised by Strategic Initiatives Team and implemented through a cross-departmental effort.	√ Registrars signed new 2013 RAA (2013 - 2018); List of Registrars on the 2013 RAA available here . √ New gTLD Registries now sign new registry agreements. List of registries available here . √ WHOIS Accuracy Specification of 2013 RAA to be reviewed annually √ First 2013 RAA Whois Accuracy Program Specification Review concluded in 2015
1.b 	ICANN Staff incentivization	WHOIS projects identified in both WorkForce and the Halogen management system. CEO compensation based on the overall goals and objectives of the entire organization set forth in WorkForce.	
1.c 	Board involvement in WHOIS improvements	Board updated, on a trimester basis on the status of WHOIS related activities and implementation.	√ ICANN Board resolution on July 28, 2015 creating a new Board working group to liaise with the GNSO on the policy development process and oversee the implementation of the remaining projects arising from the Action Plan adopted by the Board in response to the first WHOIS Review Team's recommendations. √ ICANN Board resolution on April 26, 2015 created a new Board working group to address Registration Directory Services and follow up on WHOIS RT-related implementation √ ICANN Board Response to GAC Los Angeles Communiqué – 22 Jan 2015 √ ICANN Board Response to GAC London Communiqué – 3 Nov 2014


² This Summary highlights ICANN's progress in 2014 measured against the [Action Plan](#) approved by the ICANN Board in its [8 November 2012 meeting](#). In some instances, the [Action Plan](#) adopts an alternative approach to implementing the recommendations from those proposed in the [WHOIS Policy Review Team Final Report](#).

³ See Annex A of the [Whols Improvements 2014 Annual Report](#) for previously completed Milestone and Due Dates.





<p>1.d</p> 	<p>Public Status of Implementation</p>	<p>Public closely apprised of the implementation progress through regular updates, announcements on icann.org, blog posts, updates at ICANN meetings, and the new WHOIS website. The implementation status of WhoIs recommendations is updated quarterly and published on the wiki page for the WhoIs Review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Current WHOIS policy information √ Thick WHOIS Policy Implementation work documented to ensure that the resultant implementation fulfills the intentions of the approved policy recommendations. √ Draft Thick RDDS (Whois) Consensus Policy and Implementation Notes published 24 November 2015 √ Final Issue Report on a Next-Generation gTLD Registration Directory Service (RDS) to Replace WHOIS published 6 October 2015 √ Syntax Accuracy of WHOIS Data in gTLDs Presented in Accuracy Reporting System Phase I Report 24 August 2015 √ Publication of the Next-Generation gTLD Registration Directory Services to Replace WHOIS Preliminary Issue Report 27 September 2015 √ Framework for a PDP Working Group on the Next Generation RDS, approved by the Board 26 April 2015, to provide guidance to the GNSO PDP for the examination of the EWG's recommended models and principles for the next generation registration directory services to replace WHOIS. √ Completed first formal review of the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement's Whois Accuracy Program Specification, requirements to validate and verify certain Whois data and customer account holder information with a review of its terms by ICANN and the Registrar Stakeholder Group (RrSG). √ ICANN 54 Dublin WHOIS related sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RvSG - GEO TLDs • Whois Review Team International Registration Data Expert WG • Global Domains Division Update • New gTLD Program: Reviews and Related Activities • New gTLD Program Implementation Review: Report Discussion • Contractual Compliance Program Updates and Q&A Session • GNSO Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation Issues PDP WGM • GNSO Preliminary Issue Report - New gTLD Subsequent Procedures • Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) Implementation • Thick Whois Policy Implementation - IRT Meeting • GNSO IGO-INGO Access to Curative Rights Protection Mechanisms PDP WG Meeting • Contractual Compliance Registrar Outreach √ ICANN 53 Buenos Aires Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buenos Aires Consultations with the GNSO • WhoIs Accuracy Specification Review Discussion - 24 June 2015 • Registrars and Law Enforcement - 24 June 2015 • Registration Data Access Protocol: What's Next? - 24 June 2015
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GNSO Privacy & Proxy Accreditation Services Issues PDP WG – 24 June 2015 • Thick WhoIs Policy Implementation– 24 June 2015 • Contractual Compliance Registrar Outreach Presentation – 25 June 2015 • Next Steps for WhoIs Accuracy Reporting – 24 June 2015 <p>√ Public Comment: GNSO Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation Issues Working Group Initial Report - Opened 5 May 2105, Closed 7 July 2015</p> <p>√ Public Comment: 2013 RAA WhoIs Accuracy Program Specification Review - Opened 14 May 2015, and Closed 3 July 2015 and the Report of Public Comments 20 July 2015</p> <p>√ ICANN Singapore Sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ All Things WHOIS – 9 Feb 2015 √ GAC Meeting: WHOIS – 10 Feb 2015 <p>√ Status of Improvements published on new WHOIS Website</p> <p>√ Series of webinars have been completed and are planned for future updates.</p> <p>√ ICANN Blog on WHOIS: A Year in Review 15 Dec 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Public Comment on Initial Report from PDP Working Group on Translation and Transliteration of contact information – 16 Dec 2014, closed 1 Feb 2015 √ Staff Report published - 19 Feb 2015 <p>√ GNSO Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information PDP Webinar – 9 Jan 2015</p> <p>2015 Blogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHOIS Accuracy Reporting System Update - ICANN 01 Jun 2015 • WHOIS: Continuous Improvements in the Works - ICANN 09 Jun 2015 <p>WEBINAR: WHOIS Accuracy Reporting System Phase I Report 12 August 2015</p>
2	Single WHOIS Policy	A Single Page containing links to all WHOIS related agreements and consensus policies developed.	<p>√ Continued updates of the WHOIS Primer and the Knowledge Center:</p> <p>√ WHOIS ARS Phase 2 Cycle 1 Report: Syntax and Operability Accuracy published 23 December 2015</p> <p>√ WhoIs ARS Phase 1 Validation Criteria - 31 May 2015</p> <p>√ Registrar Stakeholder Group input on 2013 RAA WhoIs Accuracy Specification – 14 May 2015</p> <p>√ ICANN Staff Input on 2013 RAA WhoIs Accuracy Specification – 14 May 2015</p> <p>√ Framework for a PDP Working Group on the next Generation RDS – 26 April 2015</p> <p>√ Implementation Report on WhoIs Improvements – April 2015</p> <p>√ Implementation Reports on WhoIs Improvements are published quarterly.</p>
3	Outreach: ICANN should ensure that WHOIS policy issues are accompanied by cross-community	Requirements that link to Registrant Benefits & Responsibilities Document , written in simple language to educate registrants on obligations related to WHOIS, included in the 2013 RAA.	<p>√ ICANN Blogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHOIS: Continuous Improvements in the Works June 2015 • WHOIS Accuracy Reporting System Update June 2015 <p>√ The 2013 RAA introduced improvements to</p>

	outreach	<p>ICANN Staff conducted global outreach to registrars to educate them on new 2013 RAA requirements.</p> <p>ICANN Contractual Compliance Staff conducted outreach in Asia/Pacific, highlighting WHOIS obligations in native languages.</p> <p>New WHOIS microsite launched:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published in six languages; and • A one-stop-shop for those seeking information about WHOIS. 	<p>WHOIS data with stricter validation and verification requirements.</p> <p>√ Contractual Compliance updates regularly provided at the ICANN meetings. The latest one was held in Dublin at ICANN 54 October 2015, Singapore at ICANN 52 – Feb 2015 and in Buenos Aires, at ICANN 53 – June 2015</p> <p>√ Completed system, FAQ, forms and Staff training to ensure 2013 RAA readiness. Please refer to this link for more details.</p> <p>√ Implementation of a Communications Plan to commence with the WHOIS Website launch</p> <p>√ Frequent updates through social media, such as twitter and Facebook in all UN languages.</p>
4	Contractual Compliance: to managed in accordance with best practice principles	<p>New Compliance complaints handling systems and procedures have been implemented.</p> <p>Greater visibility on WHOIS-related metrics and improvements to Compliance processes and results has been achieved.</p> <p>New 3 year Compliance Program on key registrar/registry obligations, including greater visibility on WHOIS-related metrics and improvements to Compliance processes and results</p> <p>New Registry Agreement Audit Program put in place.</p> <p>Compliance Staffing levels increased substantially and resources were allocated for additional headcount.</p>	<p>√ ICANN Contractual Compliance Performance Dashboard for December and September provide performance metrics information to the community on compliance</p> <p>√ Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers Contractual Compliance Update – Quarterly Report – December, Quarterly Report, September 2015</p> <p>√ Contractual Compliance New Registry Agreement Compliance Monitoring Efforts</p> <p>√ Clarifications to the Registry Agreement and the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) regarding applicable Registration Data Directory Service (WHOIS) Specifications</p> <p>√ ICANN 54 Contractual Compliance participated in several sessions</p> <p>√ ICANN 53 Buenos Aires WhoIs Accuracy Specification Review Discussion - 24 June 2015</p> <p>√ Launched a WHOIS inaccuracy quality check on already resolved inaccuracy issues to confirm ongoing compliance</p> <p>√ Completed updates and additions to the complaint submission forms and FAQs for the 2013 RAA</p> <p>√ Compliance 2014 Annual Report published – Feb 2015</p> <p>√ Compliance Performance Reports now available</p> <p>√ Completed the plan and details for new Registry Agreement Audit program (New gTLD scope)</p> <p>√ Conducted 3 Audit outreach activities with registries.</p> <p>√ Updates to Audit page reflected new program and additional FAQ.</p> <p>√ Additional Compliance Department outreach activities.</p> <p>√ Compliance Staff levels published and updated regularly. Current Staffing covers the following languages: Arabic, English, French, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Uzbek.</p> <p>√ Compliance established in 3 regions; Los Angeles, Istanbul and Singapore.</p>
	Data Accuracy		
5	WHOIS requirements for accurate data	<p>Staff developed a WHOIS Informational Website to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide historical record of WHOIS; • Consolidate WHOIS policy documentation; 	<p>See answers to #3.</p> <p>√ Usage of the WHOIS microsite has grown since its</p>

	widely and pro-actively communicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mechanisms to teach people how to use WHOIS; • Provide mechanisms for people to submit complaints as they relate to WHOIS data; • Direct people to the appropriate channels to become engaged in the community on WHOIS related topics; • Educate registrants on WHOIS, their rights and responsibilities; and • Provide a Knowledge Center where key WHOIS related documents can be located. 	<p>launch. This quarter there were 1,628,358 page views, and 769,788 sessions. 70.4% were from new visitors and 29.6% were returning visitors.</p> <p>√ ICANN 53 Buenos Aires Registrars and Law Enforcement – 24 June 2015</p>
6	ICANN should take appropriate measures to reduce the number of WHOIS registrations that fall into the accuracy groups "Substantial Failure and Full Failure"	<p>To address this recommendation, the Board directed the CEO to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively identify potentially inaccurate gTLD data registration information in gTLD registry and registrar services, explore using automated tools, and forward potentially inaccurate records to gTLD registrars for action; and • Publicly report on the resulting actions to encourage improved accuracy. 	<p>See answers to #7 & 11 below for information on the statistics on accuracy to be gathered in connection with the new WHOIS Search Portal.</p>
7	Annual WHOIS accuracy reports	<p>Staff is developing a WHOIS Accuracy Reporting System based on the methodology developed by NORC at the University of Chicago.</p> <p>To accomplish the requested analysis, Staff's work is focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical methodology; • Access to WHOIS records; • Parser to automate contact data extraction; • Automated address verification; and • Call center to call sampled records. <p>In 2015 Staff launched the Accuracy Reporting System to conduct bi-annual studies in collaboration with NORC. The project is being operationalized in phases, based on the stages of WHOIS Accuracy verification described in SSAC 058 (Syntax, Operational, and Identity). The studies leverage the commercial validation services customized to ICANN RRA requirements to test the syntactical and operation accuracy of the email, telephone number, and postal addresses using actual data of approximately 10,000 WHOIS records per study and produces estimates for the gTLD space as a whole as well as specific segments of interest. All records found to be inaccurate are provided to ICANN Contractual Compliance for follow up with the registrar.</p>	<p>√ Publication of Final Pilot Study Report – 23 Dec 2014.</p> <p>√ Staff Report of public comments published – 3 Apr 2015</p> <p>√ Modifications to operationalize the Accuracy Reporting System – Apr – Jun 2015</p> <p>√ Accuracy Reporting System - Phase I (Syntactic validation) Report Published – August 2015</p> <p>√ ARS – Phase II (Syntactic + Operational) Criteria published September 2015</p> <p>√ WHOIS ARS Testing Criteria - UPDATED</p> <p>√ Conclusion of 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement WhoIs Accuracy Program Specification Review in November 2015</p> <p>√ WHOIS ARS Phase 2 Cycle 1 Report: Syntax and Operability Accuracy published 23 December 2015</p>
8	ICANN should ensure that there is a clear, unambiguous and enforceable chain of contractual agreements	<p>Additional enforcement provisions and sanctions applicable to registrars, registrants, and resellers with regards to WHOIS included in 2013 RAA.</p> <p>Enhanced WHOIS obligations included in New gTLD Registry Agreements.</p> <p>Renewals of existing gTLDs includes enhanced</p>	<p>See answers to #1.a above.</p>

		WHOIS obligations. WHOIS Accuracy specifications of the 2013 RAA reviewed annually.	
9	Compliance Metrics: Impact of the annual WHOIS Data Reminder Policy (WDRP)	The Board's Resolution addressing the WHOIS Review Team Recommendations offers an alternative approach to achieving the intended result of this Recommendation.	See answers to #5 - 7 above. In addition the following informational resources are available for WDRP compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Whois Data Reminder Policy √ WDRP FAQs For Domain Name Registrants √ Implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy (WDRP) √ WHOIS Data Reminder Policy (WDRP) ICANN Learn
10	Data Access - Privacy and Proxy Services: ICANN should initiate processes to regulate and oversee privacy and proxy service providers	New obligations related to Privacy/Proxy providers and commits ICANN to create a privacy/proxy accreditation program are included in the 2013 RAA. A GNSO PDP, beginning Oct 2013, has commenced to examine policy issues related to privacy/proxy services. A consensus policy, if produced out of the PDP, would become binding upon contracted parties when adopted by Board. Staff Implementation work to develop the operational aspects of the Privacy/Proxy Accreditation Program is to be conducted in parallel with GNSO PDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Initial Report on the Implementation Advisory Group Review of Existing ICANN Procedure for Handling Whois Conflicts with Privacy Laws published 4 October 2015 √ Initial Report published for Public Comment- May 2015 √ Final Report on the Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation Issues Policy Development Process published 8 December 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GNSO Approval of PDP Final Report- est. Jan 2016 ○ Board Approval of Final Report Recommendations est. Apr 2016 ○ Implementation Plan – TBD 2016
11	Data Access - Common Interface: Overhaul of the Internic Service	ICANN developed a comprehensive WHOIS Portal, the development of which occurred in two phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 - Launch of WHOIS Informational Website (see description above in #5); and • Phase 2 - Launch of WHOIS Online Search Portal to offer a place where people could initiate a search of global WHOIS records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Future upgrades to include an overhaul of the Internic Service.
	Internationalized Domain Names		
12	Determine appropriate Internationalized Domain Name Registration (IRD) data requirements	The IETF WEIRDS Working Group has concluded its evaluation of technical protocols. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Registration Directory Access Protocol (RDAP) developed; • Once adopted by the IETF, the new gTLD Registry Agreement and the New 2013 RAA will include commitments to adopt the new protocols. <p>ICANN remains committed to this effort. A team is currently working on the IRD requirements, but is dependent upon the conclusion of the GNSO PDP on Translation and Transliteration.</p> <p>Final product is dependent upon the conclusion of the GNSO PDP on translation/transliteration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ WEIRDS finalizes new Registration Directory Access Protocol (RDAP) – Dec 2014 √ WEIRDS RDAP Protocol RFCs 7480-7484 published – Mar 2015 √ Registrars sign new 2013 RAA (2013 - 2018); List of Registrars on the 2013 RAA available here. √ New gTLD Registries sign new registry agreements. List of registries available here. √ RDAP Operational Profile for gTLD Registries and Registrars published 2 December 2015 √ IRD Team analysis under way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Final Report of IRD Team published for Public Comment – 9 Mar 2015 • Public Comment Summary – 5 May 2015 • Final Report of the Expert Working Group on IRD published 23 September 2015 • Board Approval of IRD recommendations – est. Feb 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation Plan to be developed – (TBD) 2016 <p>See answers to #13 below.</p>

13 	Requirements for Translation/Transliteration of internationalized registration data	<p>Issue of Translation/Transliteration is being explored as a Policy matter within the GNSO Council. Consensus policy, if produced out of the PDP and adopted by the Board, it would become binding upon the contracted parties.</p> <p>This output of this PDP work is required to inform the rest of the IRD related implementation work being supervised by Staff (# 12 – 14). Conclusion of this aspect of the implementation is dependent upon the speed in which the PDP can be completed once the working group is formed.</p>	<p>√ Initial Report from PDP Working Group on Translation and Transliteration of contact information published 15 Dec 2014</p> <p>√ Public Comment on Initial Report from PDP Working Group on Translation and Transliteration of contact information – 16 Dec 2014, closed 1 Feb 2015</p> <p>√ Staff Report - Summary of Public Comments– 19 Feb 2015</p> <p>√ Final Report on the Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information Policy Development Process published 15 June 2015</p> <p>√ GNSO Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information Policy Development Process (PDP) Recommendations for Board Consideration 31 August 2015</p> <p>√ Board resolution adopting the GNSO Council Recommendations Translation and Transliteration of Contact Information recommendations. 28 September 2015</p> <p>- Implementation dependent on when RDAP is in place, then est. three to six months</p> <p>○ Implementation Plan to be developed – (TBD) 2016</p>
14 	Metrics on accuracy internationalized registration data	Internationalized WHOIS Records to be proactively identified once the work referenced in #12 and #13 is complete.	Internationalized registration data (IRD) for WHOIS Records are being proactively identified in Phase I and Phase II of ARS reports Also see answers to #12 and #13.
15 	Comprehensive Implementation Plan for implementing the Final WHOIS Review Team report.	ICANN Staff developed and published its proposed Action Plan , which was adopted by the ICANN Board.	
16 	Publication of Annual Reports on Implementation of WHOIS RT Recommendations	ICANN published its first Annual Report one year after the Board's approval of the WHOIS Policy Review Team Final Report Recommendations , with subsequent ones to be published annually thereafter.	<p>√ Publication of second Annual Report – 14 Dec 2014</p> <p>√ Publication of third Annual Report – 31 Jan 2016</p>