

Internationalized Registration Data Working Group

Meeting Notes

24 May 2010

Attendees: Rafik Dammak, Avri Doria, Jim Galvin, Jeremy Hitchcock, and Bob Hutchinson, Ram Mohan, and Owen Smigelski; from staff: Julie Hedlund and Steve Sheng.

Action Items: Staff will develop a draft preliminary approach for Working Group consideration as a basis for a public session in Brussels.

Discussion Summary:

The Working Group continued discussion of a fourth model based on comments circulated on the email distribution list. In particular, they discussed ideas for backwards compatibility for Port 43. Jim Galvin provided a brief description of how backwards compatibility might work, such as an extended client enabling WHOIS to return non-ASCII output. Jim also noted that there was a question on the list asking who are the users of the WHOIS since the data requirements may depend on who is using the service and for what purpose. Jeremy noted that some of the users included law enforcement and others who are seeking a technical continuity contact. However, he added that there has never been a position on what is the purpose of the WHOIS. Avri noted that many consumers now are using the WHOIS to see who is running a domain name and that this use is becoming more international. Owen added that intellectual property owners, businesses, and the press also are using the WHOIS. Steve pointed out that in 2006 a WHOIS working group discussed the purpose of the WHOIS and suggested two 1) provide information sufficient to contact someone who can resolve issues relating to the configuration of the record (registrar, registry); and 2) party who can resolve technical and legal issues. He emphasized, however, that there was no agreement from the working group on these two purposes for WHOIS and Avri agreed that was true from a policy perspective, but that shouldn't constrain the IRD-WG from determining what are technically possible and reasonable requirements. Jim questioned whether it was necessary to answer the question in order to determine the display requirements for the WHOIS. Avri noted that while some users are able to use Google tools to translate information from the WHOIS, she wasn't sure if the IRD-WG should assume everyone could do this. Jim wondered whether the IRD-WG had to accommodate all users and suggested that the use of the WHOIS is more regional than international. Avri said that the goal has less to do with the WHOIS than how the IRD-WG ensures that there are appropriate standards and guidelines concerning what is mandatory and what is optional.

Ram asked whether the IRD-WG had reached agreement on any of the display requirements. Julie said that there had been some agreement on elements where international standards already existed, such as telephone and email. She asked Steve to run through the recommendations that have been discussed and agreed to. Steve that the IRD-WG members appeared to agree that the domain name should be provided in both U and A-label format. The registrar name would be provided in US ASCII and existing

standards would be followed for email, and telephone and fax numbers. With respect to the registration information, such as the postal address and entity name, there has been no agreement, although the Working Group members discussed three possible models: 1) registrants submit in a “must be present” script with the option to provide localized data (this was considered the minimum or lowest common denominator requirement); 2) registrants must submit in a script that can be accepted by the registrar and registrars provide contact information for transliteration and abuse issues on request; 3) registrants must submit in a script that can be accepted by the registrar and registrars must provide tools for transliteration. He added that a fourth model was discussed at the last meeting and on the email distribution list. In that model the registrants submit in a “must be present” script and the registrar would provide backward compatibility for Port 43.

The Working Group members initiated a discussion of the fourth model. Jim suggested that under this model the WHOIS would not change but the registrars would have to support backwards compatibility. He added that this option would allow entry in local script and a mechanism for providing responses in local script. Ram asked about Port 43 and Jim said that there would be a mechanism to provide information in local script (using backwards compatibility tools) so Port 43 stays around but eventually everyone moves to the extended service. Jeremy asked about translation and Jim suggested that the responsibility for translation should be on the user, not the registrar or registry. Avri asked if the technical requirement for Port 43 was to support ASCII and one or more other language, but not a recommendation that registrars should support several languages, just that the information is stored correctly and provided accurately. Jim responded that a more precise description would be that WHOIS is “8-bit clean” rather than saying what languages it does, or doesn’t, support. The recommendation would be for a technology that would allow WHOIS to be 8-bit clean. Avri noted that at the policy level there would need to be a decision of what to let everyone do. Technology would allow WHOIS to store both ASCII and local script, but policy could dictate which languages. Jim clarified that the requirement would not be for the WHOIS to store both ASCII and non-ASCII scripts, but that it would be 8-bit clean. Avri asked if it could have an application that doesn’t have 7-bit (such as Chinese and Japanese). Jim noted that stating the language set is the tricky part. Ram emphasized that the IRD-WG can say that it has to be done and then call for the specifications to be developed. Jim agreed that the Working Group could recommend studying the feasibility. The Working Group could see if there is consensus on whether the WHOIS protocol should be made to allow local script and be 8-bit clean. Avri emphasized that the model must include local script, but the Working Group doesn’t need to decide the policy question. Jim asked whether US-ASCII would be the baseline script. Avri agreed that it could be some version of US-ASCII and encourage the provision of registration information in the local language (model 1 to include backwards compatibility).

Julie noted that there will be a public session of the IRD-WG at the ICANN meeting in Brussels where a preliminary approach to a set of requirements could be discussed. She offered that she and Steve would draft a preliminary approach for the Working Group members to review and consider for presentation slides at the public session.