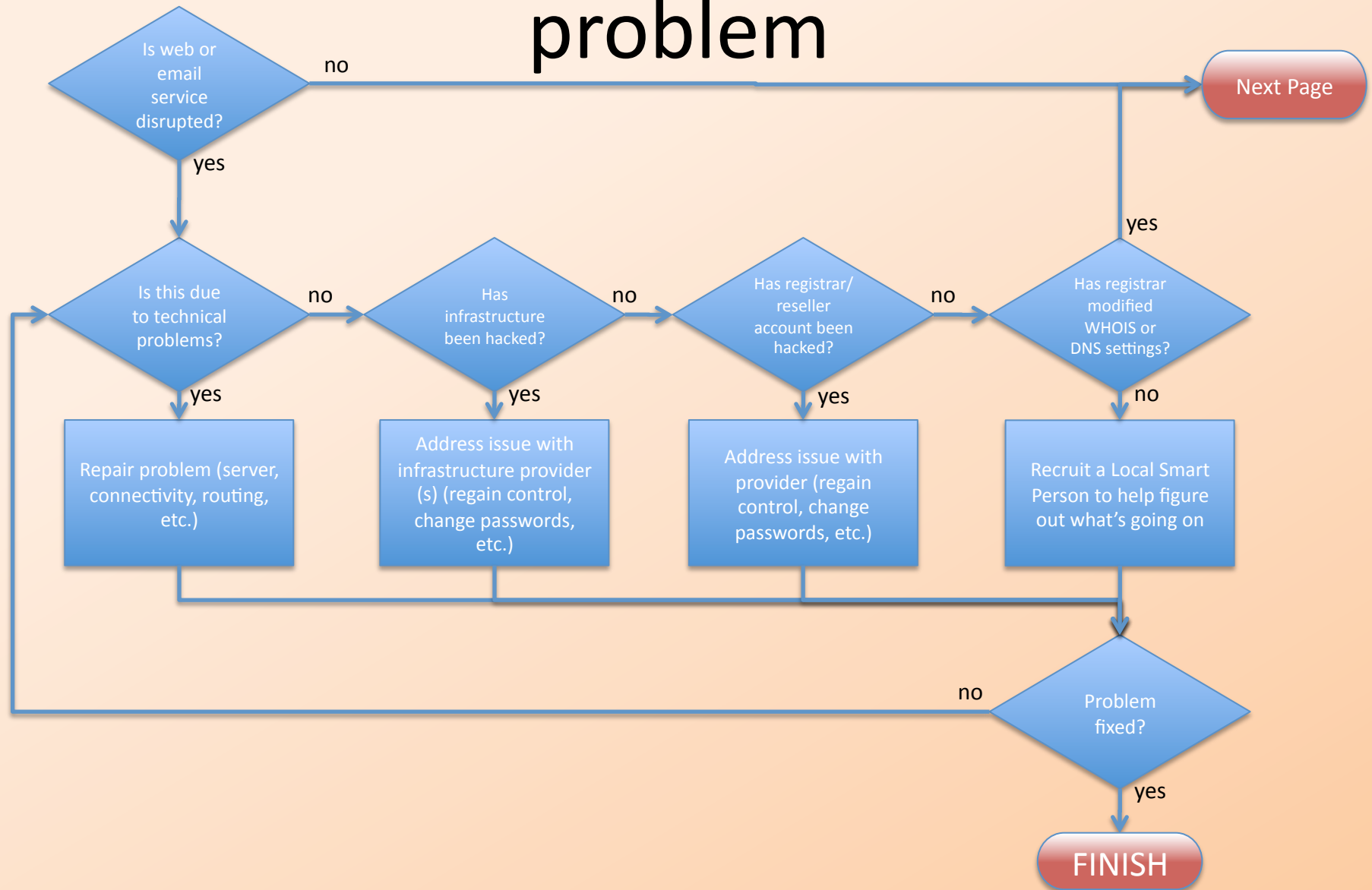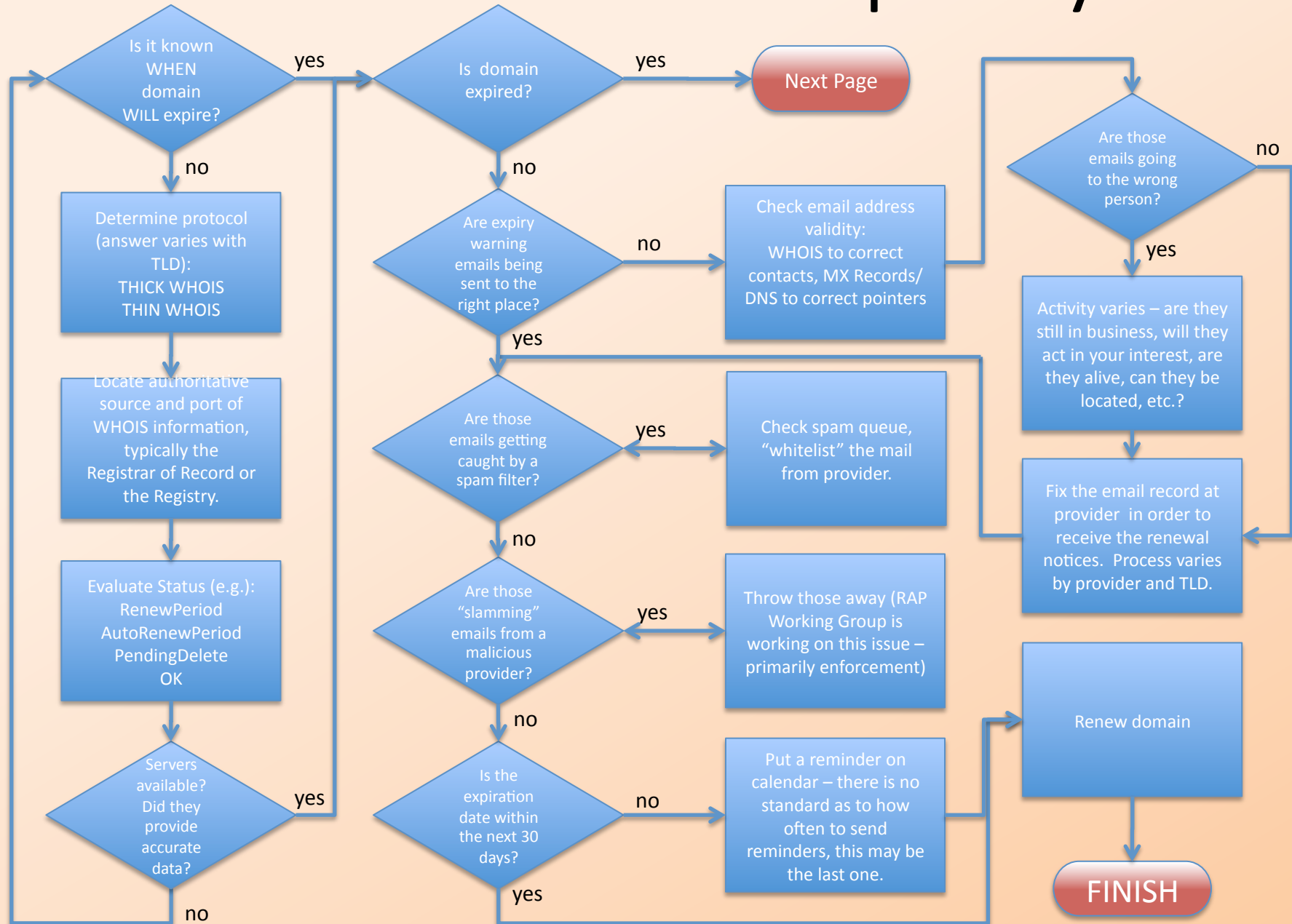# Domain Expiration Process

A Simplified Diagram

From the Registrant's Point of View
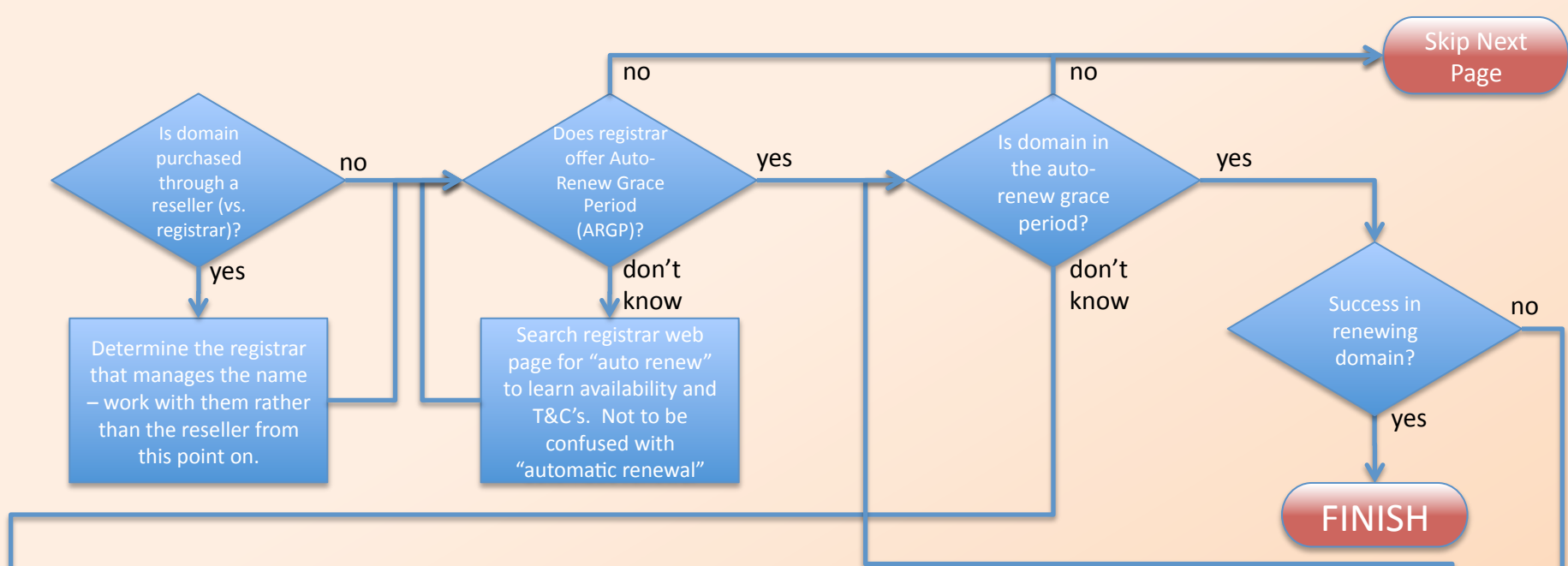
Mikey O'Connor – January 2010

Learning that there's a domain problem
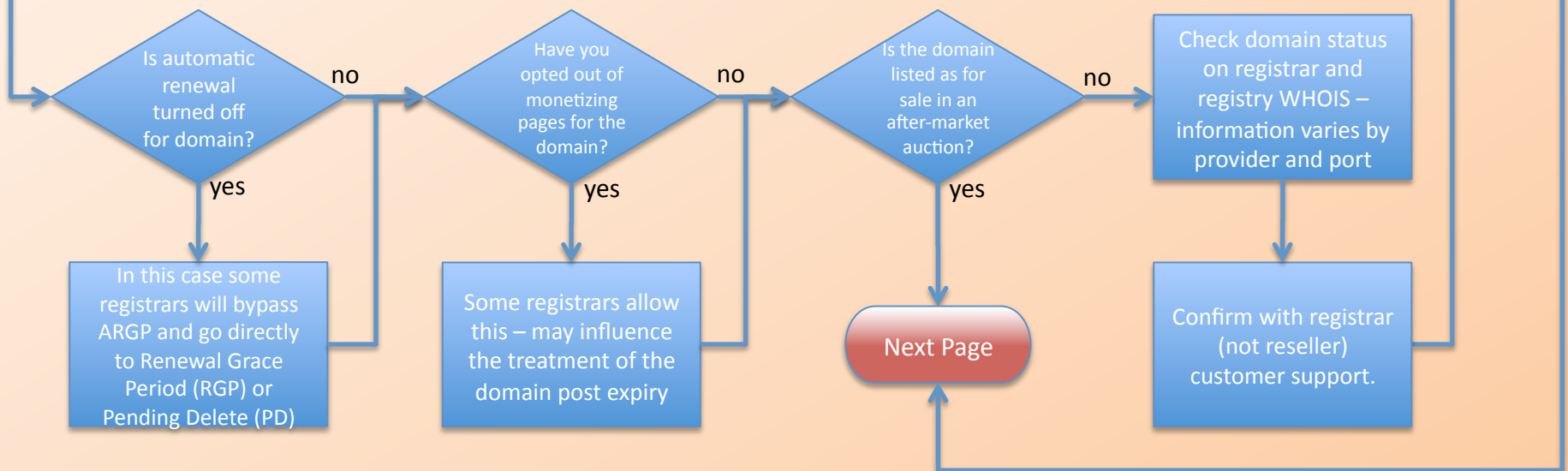
If the domain hasn't expired yet...

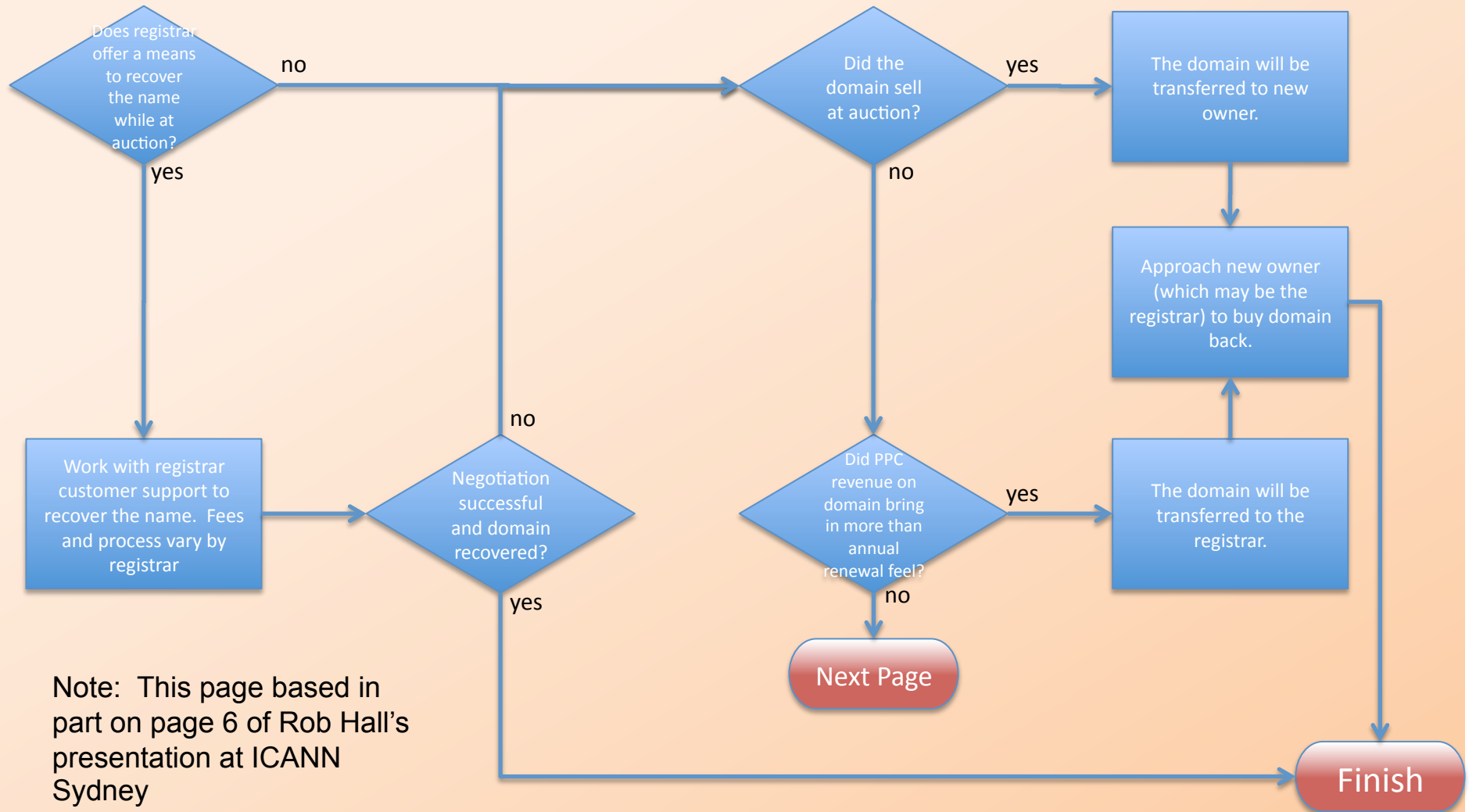**Is it known WHEN domain WILL expire?** — yes → **Is domain expired?** — yes → Next Page

Is it known WHEN domain WILL expire? — no → Determine protocol (answer varies with TLD): THICK WHOIS THIN WHOIS

Determine protocol → Locate authoritative source and port of WHOIS information, typically the Registrar of Record or the Registry.

Locate authoritative source → Evaluate Status (e.g.): RenewPeriod AutoRenewPeriod PendingDelete OK

Evaluate Status → **Servers available? Did they provide accurate data?** — yes (back to top) / no (loops back)

Is domain expired? — no → **Are expiry warning emails being sent to the right place?**

Are expiry warning emails being sent to the right place? — no → Check email address validity: WHOIS to correct contacts, MX Records/ DNS to correct pointers

Are expiry warning emails being sent to the right place? — yes → **Are those emails getting caught by a spam filter?**

Are those emails getting caught by a spam filter? — yes → Check spam queue, "whitelist" the mail from provider.

Are those emails getting caught by a spam filter? — no → **Are those "slamming" emails from a malicious provider?**

Are those "slamming" emails from a malicious provider? — yes → Throw those away (RAP Working Group is working on this issue – primarily enforcement)

Are those "slamming" emails from a malicious provider? — no → **Is the expiration date within the next 30 days?**

Is the expiration date within the next 30 days? — no → Put a reminder on calendar – there is no standard as to how often to send reminders, this may be the last one.

Is the expiration date within the next 30 days? — yes → Renew domain

Check email address validity → **Are those emails going to the wrong person?**

Are those emails going to the wrong person? — no → Fix the email record at provider in order to receive the renewal notices. Process varies by provider and TLD.

Are those emails going to the wrong person? — yes → Activity varies – are they still in business, will they act in your interest, are they alive, can they be located, etc.?

Activity varies → Fix the email record at provider in order to receive the renewal notices. Process varies by provider and TLD.

Renew domain → FINISH

Auto-renew Grace Period – part 1

Skip Next Page

Is domain purchased through a reseller (vs. registrar)?
— no →

Does registrar offer Auto-Renew Grace Period (ARGP)?
— yes →

Is domain in the auto-renew grace period?
— yes →

— no (top) → Skip Next Page

yes ↓ (from reseller question)

Determine the registrar that manages the name – work with them rather than the reseller from this point on.

don't know ↓ (from ARGP question)

Search registrar web page for "auto renew" to learn availability and T&C's. Not to be confused with "automatic renewal"

don't know ↓ (from auto-renew grace period question)

Success in renewing domain?
— no →
yes ↓

FINISH

Is automatic renewal turned off for domain?
— no →

Have you opted out of monetizing pages for the domain?
— no →

Is the domain listed as for sale in an after-market auction?
— no →

Check domain status on registrar and registry WHOIS – information varies by provider and port

yes ↓ (from automatic renewal question)

In this case some registrars will bypass ARGP and go directly to Renewal Grace Period (RGP) or Pending Delete (PD)

yes ↓ (from monetizing question)

Some registrars allow this – may influence the treatment of the domain post expiry

yes ↓ (from after-market auction question)

Next Page

Confirm with registrar (not reseller) customer support.

Auto-renew Grace Period part 2

Does registrar offer a means to recover the name while at auction?

no

yes

Did the domain sell at auction?

yes

The domain will be transferred to new owner.

no

Work with registrar customer support to recover the name. Fees and process vary by registrar

Negotiation successful and domain recovered?

no

yes

Approach new owner (which may be the registrar) to buy domain back.

Did PPC revenue on domain bring in more than annual renewal feel?

yes

The domain will be transferred to the registrar.

no

Next Page

Note: This page based in part on page 6 of Rob Hall's presentation at ICANN Sydney

Finish

No longer in zone?

Something's wrong with this flowchart or your diagnostic work so far. Call registrar customer support.

no → Is domain status PENDING-DELETE? **yes** →

yes → Is the domain in the zone file? **no** → Is domain status REGISTRY-HOLD? **no** →

yes (REGISTRY-HOLD) ↓

don't know (zone file) ↓
Check WHOIS – process and results vary by TLD, registrar, registry and port – confirm with registrar customer support

don't know (REGISTRY-HOLD) ↓
Check WHOIS – process and results vary by TLD, registrar, registry and port – confirm with registrar customer support

don't know (PENDING-DELETE) ↑
Check WHOIS – process and results vary by TLD, registrar, registry and port – confirm with registrar customer support

Varies by registry, registrar, TLD – search registrar web page to determine availability, process

don't know → Does registrar offer Redemption Grace Period? **no** →

Attempt to re-register name after it is deleted ("on the drop"). Competitive process, varies by provider and TLD

yes ↓
Attempt to "recover" (rather than "renew") domain. Timing, price and process varies by TLD/ reseller/registrar

→ Domain recovered? **no** ↑ **yes** → FINISH

Mikey's Wish List – easy stuff

- Originate renewal notices from a consistent/distinctive email address that is used for no other purpose (and remind registrants to white-list the address in spam filters)
- Establish minimum expiration-reminder schedule (pre and post-expiry)
- Provide consistent "service disruption" across registrars on expiration
- Always disrupt web service on expiration – triggers active/technical response
- Do not disrupt email on expiration – to aid in contacting registrant
- Provide consistent and informative domain-status flags across registries, registrars and TLDs
- Provide "plain language" versions of the various policy statements, with disclaimers that point to the "real deal" legal stuff
- Change confusingly-similar terms like "automatic renewal" vs "auto renew grace period"

Mikey's Wish List – harder stuff

- Work to eliminate confusing registrar-slamming schemes
- Establish minimum standards for registrar WHOIS information display (data elements, sequence, captions, consistency, availability, etc.)
- Provide consistent minimum processes across registrars and TLDs to determine domain status
- Provide consistent notification/display of deletion, automatic-renewal, auto-renew grace-period and redemption grace-period policies on reseller/registrar web pages
- Provide consistent redemption grace-period intervals rather than leaving it up to provider discretion
- Provide consistent post-expiry implications when registrants elect not to automatically-renew domains and/ or opt out of monetization of web addresses

Mikey's Wish List – really hard stuff

- Eliminate conflict of interest – registrar either generates revenue from renewal OR monetization/aftermarket-auction/drop-catching, not both

- Offer a mechanism (perhaps a "token"?) during Pending-Delete that can be used by registrant to recover the name in the drop-catching/auction post-delete

- Shift all TLDs to thick-registry model to aid in normalizing WHOIS-based processes