

Post-Expiration Domain Name Recovery PDP WG

Registrar Survey Preliminary Results

Tuesday 24 November 2009

Background

- Objective of registrar survey to review current registrar practices regarding domain name expiration, renewal, and post-expiration recovery
- Survey covers top 10 registrars by total domains which represent approx. 69% of domains registered
- Information gathered by ICANN Staff from internet research and registrar feedback

Initial Findings

- Preliminary findings – complete findings for top 4 registrars, still awaiting feedback & confirmation on some questions for other registrars
- Results presented cover those questions where information is confirmed (by registrar) or was found as result of on-line research
- Final results will be presented once feedback has been received from all registrars

Question 1 – What is the registrar's practice in case of registrant silence?

- (Almost) all registrars renew the registration on behalf of the registered name holder
- As a courtesy, RAE should be able to reclaim its name with most registrars
- With one registrar, if auto-renewal is switched off, registration moves directly into RGP
- Many point out that recovery, however, is not an obligation but at the sole discretion of the registrar, with one registrar stating that after expiration 'the registrant has no rights on such registration, and ownership [...] now passes on to the registrar'

1a. Does registrar allow auto-renew?

- Yes, for majority of registrars
- Questions also interpreted as asking whether registrar provides auto-renewal option for registrant – in some cases this is the default setting and registrant need to take affirmative action to switch off auto-renewal; in some cases this is optional; one registrar does not provide the option for auto-renewal

1b. When / how are notices sent?

- Notices are generally sent by email, often to the different contacts on file
- Some provide detailed calendar of when notices are sent, others don't
- Two registrars note that 'as a convenience to the registrant, and not as a binding commitment' the registrar may notify the RAE

1c. Notices after expiration

- 4 registrars confirm that notices are also sent following expiration
- One registrar does not send notices following expiration, but the user account does contain alert
- No info yet for other registrars

1d. Are substantial changes made to Whois data?

- 6 registrars note that Whois records ‘may’ undergo changes such as replacing the RAE contact information with that of the registrar
- One registrar does not make substantial changes to Whois data apart from changing the nameservers

1e. Cost of recovery prior to RGP

- 4 registrars indicate that RAE may recover domain name at least for a certain period (in some cases as short as 3 days) for the normal renewal fee
- In other cases an additional fee may apply, which in certain cases is the same as the fee charged during RGP
- Not applicable to the situation where registration immediately moves into RGP (no auto-renew grace period offered)

1f. When is the DNS changed and where does it point?

- (Almost) all registrars reserve the right to redirect IP address to registrar designated page which may include notification or renewal info, in addition to PPC advertisements or other promotional info
- In one case, RAE can opt out of display of registrar parked page before expiration
- Other registrar points out it may 'intercept any communication requests' and 'monetize such requests' at its sole discretion

1g. Does page say it has expired?

- In 5 instances the new page will display information that the registration has expired, info on how to renew or advertise the sale / auction
- In one case it does not
- N/A for the registrar that does not operate an auto-renew grace period

1k. At what points is it made available to others?

- In most cases, the registrar can in theory renew or transfer the registration to the registrar immediately upon expiration
- Some specify that this in practice only happens at the end of the auto-renew grace period
- In certain cases, the registration is put up for auction after a certain amount of time (e.g 25 days, 30 days after expiration)

1n. When does name enter RGP?

- In most cases, only if the registration has not been renewed by the RAE or transferred to a third party
- One registrar allows for the RAE to notify the registrar that he/she does not want the registrar to proceed with a transfer to third party => registration is deleted
- In one case, if domain has been canceled or auto-renewal is explicitly turned off, the registration will immediately enter RGP

1o. Duration of auto-renewal period

- Auto-renewal period provided by the registrar
- Ranges from zero (one registrar) to 30, 35, 40, 42 days

2. What if explicit instructions are given not to renew registration?

- Most registrars follow the same procedure as for no notice given
- Only in one instance, if the domain has been canceled from the registrar system, it will not be renewed and go straight to RGP

2a. How is request for deletion prior to expiration dealt with?

- 4 Registrars indicate that registration is immediately deleted upon request
- 1 Registrar will treat it as an expired registration
- Further details required from other registrars

3. Where can information concerning expiration / deletion be found

- In most cases information is contained in the registration agreement
- Some provide additional information in FAQs, Help Centre or Deletion / Renewal policies
- Not always obvious where to find information
- Language in registration agreements is often too legal to be clear and often not specific (e.g. may/may not, in its sole discretion, no guarantee, can change without notice)

Questions?