

The History of gTLD Registration Data (aka WHOIS)

Marika Konings

Policy Development Accelerator

19 September 2023



Purpose

Began in the 1980s as a service used by Internet operators to identify and contact individuals or entities responsible for the operation of a network resource on the Internet



Evolved into a tool for many purposes such as:

Is the domain name available for registration?

Identifying the registrant of a domain name that has been associated with malicious activities

Contacting domain name registrants on matters related to trademark protection or security issues

Verifying online merchants

What does it look like?

- ⦿ See <https://lookup.icann.org/en/lookup>
- ⦿ Includes information about:
 - Domain
 - Contact (registrant)
 - Registrar
 - DNSSEC
 - Authoritative Servers
- ⦿ Required to publish registrant contact information publicly until implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) meant this requirement would result in conflict with local law

Domain Information

Name: icann.org

Internationalized Domain Name: icann.org

Registry Domain ID: 628dbbcb4edc464b9401cbadea0a08b2-LROR

Domain Status:

[clientDeleteProhibited](#)

[serverDeleteProhibited](#)

[clientRenewProhibited](#)

[clientTransferProhibited](#)

[serverTransferProhibited](#)

[clientUpdateProhibited](#)

[serverUpdateProhibited](#)

Nameservers:

ns.icann.org: 199.4.138.53, 2001:500:89::53

a.icann-servers.net

b.icann-servers.net

c.icann-servers.net

Dates

Registry Expiration: 2027-12-07 17:04:26 UTC

Updated: 2023-02-14 22:18:25 UTC

Created: 1998-09-14 04:00:00 UTC

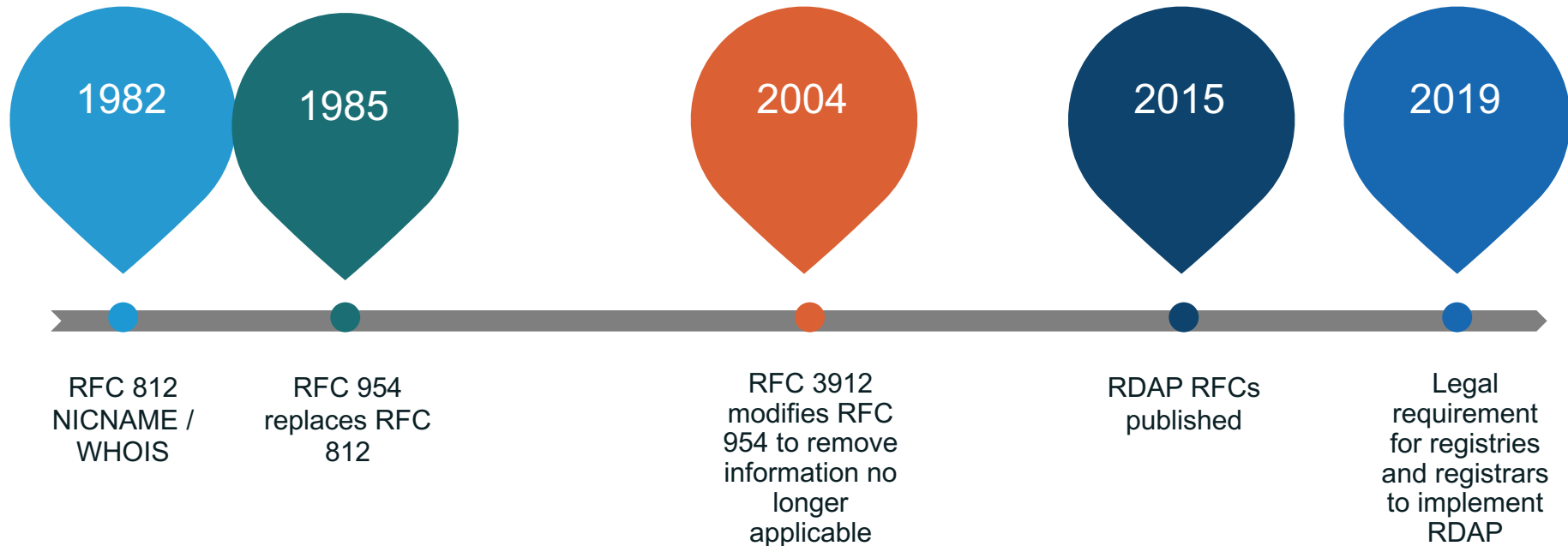
Contact Information

Registrant:

Handle: CR12376439

Name: Domain Administrator

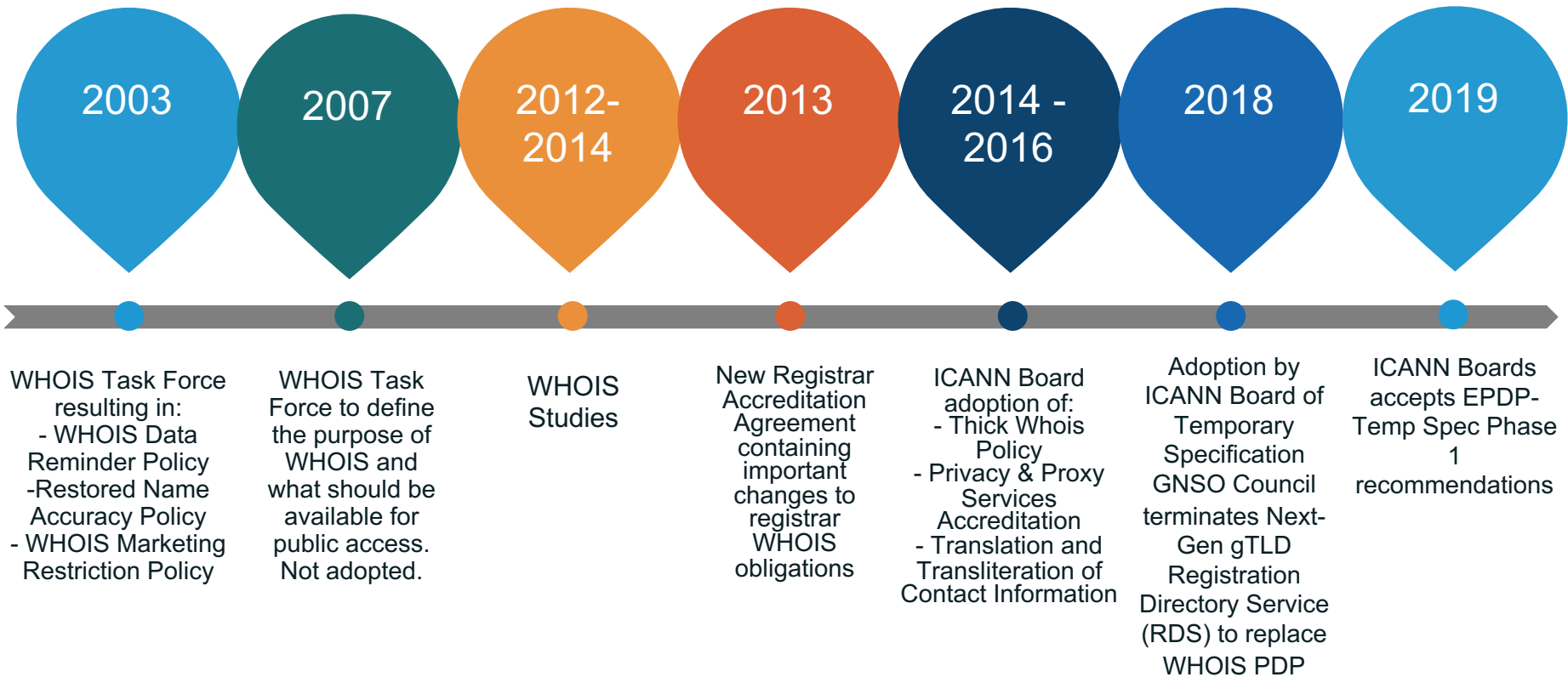
Technical development



To Summarize

Until recently, the set of rules for communication of WHOIS searches and commands between computers was largely based on the 1985 standard. With Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP), the limitations of WHOIS protocol have been addressed in terms of accessibility, scalability, extensibility and security.

Policy Development



To Summarize

In 1999, ICANN began allowing other entities to offer domain name registration services. ICANN has used its agreements with registrars and registries to modify the WHOIS service requirements. These agreements set up the basic framework that dictates how the WHOIS service is operated. In addition, ICANN has adopted and implemented several consensus policies aimed at improving the WHOIS service.

Personal observations

Discussing WHOIS / Registration Data has always been difficult because:



Lack of agreement on the purpose;



Disagreement over how to unite privacy protection with transparency / accountability;



No incentive to change if status quo suits you;



Long history of disagreement, also means long history between participants

Questions?

