Draft Thick RDDS (Whois) Consensus Policy and Implementation Notes

Version 1.0 | 19 October 2015

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Thick RDDS (Whois) Consensus Policy

1. Consensus Policy

1. The provision of thick[1] Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) is required for all generic Top-Level Domain (gTLD) registries, that is the collection and display by the Registry of all data associated with both the Registrant of a domain name and the domain registration itself.

2. The labeling and display of all gTLD registries web-based RDDS output[2], must be consistent with:
   (a) Specification 3 of the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA)[3]
   (b) Advisory: Clarifications to the New gTLD Registry Agreement, Specification 4; and the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA), Registration Data Directory Service (WHOIS) Specification, in particular:
      (i) Section I and Section II in their entirety
      (ii) Section III, Clarifications 50, 51, and 52

3. The implementation of an RDAP service in accordance with the "RDAP Operational Profile for gTLD Registries and Registrars" is required for all gTLD registries in order to achieve consistent labeling and display in the replacement for (port-43) WHOIS

2. Phased Implementation

This Consensus Policy will be implemented in three phases, each with a specific scope and a dedicated timeline:

- Phase 1 - Effective Date: 1 August 2016
  All gTLDs, excluding .COM, .NET and .JOBS, are required to display a Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) output compliant with this Consensus Policy, with the exception of Registrar Registration Expiration Date and Reseller information.
- Phase 2 - Effective Date: 1 February 2017
  All gTLDs, excluding .COM, .NET and .JOBS, are required to display a Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) output fully compliant with this Consensus Policy.
- Phase 3 - Effective Date: [To be determined]
  All gTLDs, including .COM, .NET and .JOBS, are required to provide a thick Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) fully compliant with this Consensus Policy.

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[1] Thick RDDS (also known as Thick Whois) is defined in Additional Resources as well as section 3.2 of the PDP Working Group Final Report

[2] WHOIS (port-43) is expected to be retired over time in favor of its replacement, the RDAP Protocol. Therefore, this Consensus Policy does not require changes to WHOIS (port 43) output, but Registries have the option to change the WHOIS (port 43) output should they choose to do so.

[3] The GNSO Policy Recommendation points to the RAA as a reference for Registry RDDS output because it was the only reference RDDS Specification available at the time of finalization of the PDP WG Final Report

Author

Comment [1]: @Thick Whois IRT: This part of the draft policy language is inserted for information and discussion. It would not become effective until Phase 3 of the implementation is defined (see below "Phased Implementation").

Author

Comment [2]: @Thick Whois IRT: This phase is not defined in the current version of the document

Thick RDDS (Whois) Implementation Notes

ICANN specifies Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) requirements through the Registry Agreement (RA) and the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA). Registries satisfy their obligations using different service models. The two common models are often characterized as "thin" and "thick" RDDS Registries (or thin/thick Whois, former designation of Registration Data Directory Services). This distinction is based on how two distinct sets of data are managed. One set of data is associated with the domain name, and a second set of data is associated with the registrant and contacts of the domain name.

- Thin RDDS Registries only maintain and provide the information associated with the domain name while Registrars maintain and provide information associated with the registrant and contacts of the domain.
- Thick RDDS Registries maintain and provide both sets of data.
- At the time of implementation of this Consensus Policy, only .COM, .NET and .JOBS were thin RDDS Registries

The GNSO Council requested an Issue Report regarding the use of thick Whois by all gTLD Registries at its meeting on 22 September 2011, followed by the delivery of the Final Issue Report and the GNSO Council initiating a Policy Development Process at its meeting on 14 March 2012. The Thick Whois PDP Working Group published its Initial Report for public comment on 21 June 2013. Following a review of the comments received, the WG revised its report accordingly and submitted the final version on 31 October 2013 to the GNSO Council for review. The recommendations were adopted by the GNSO Council, along with a resolution to convene an Implementation Review Team (IRT) to assist ICANN staff in developing the implementation details for the Consensus Policy. The ICANN Board adopted the GNSO Council Policy Recommendations for a new Consensus Policy on Thick Whois on 7 February 2014.

In section 7.2 Implementation Considerations of the Final Report, there is guidance related to the timeline and requirements for implementing and conducting the transition from thin to thick Whois. It specifically notes that "The WG does emphasize that implementation of one part of the recommendation (for example, transition of existing thin gTLD registries to thick model) should not unnecessarily delay the implementation of another part of the recommendation (for example, the consistent labeling and display of such data)". As such, ICANN staff and the IRT agreed that consistent labeling and display (Phase 1 and 2 of the Policy Implementation above) could be decoupled from the implementation of the transition from thin to thick (Phase 3 of the Policy Implementation).

Additionally, when approaching this Policy Implementation, ICANN's objective has been to minimize the impact to contracted parties and the overall RDDS Systems by seeking to synchronize, where appropriate, the implementation of the Thick RDDS (Whois) Consensus Policy with other related initiatives such as the Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) (http://datatracker.ietf.org/wg/weirds/documents/).

1. Phase 1 Implementation Notes

1.1. Objective

The objective of implementation during Phase 1 is for all gTLDs, excluding .COM, .NET and .JOBS, to display a Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) output compliant with this Consensus Policy, with the exception of Registrar Registration Expiration Date and Reseller information, which are the subject of Phase 2.

1.2. Scope of Thick RDDS (Whois) Implementation Phase 1

All gTLD Registry Operators, excluding .COM, .NET and .JOBS, are required to implement this phase of the Consensus Policy.

Phase 1 concerns the adjustments to Registries' RDDS output that will be required in order to conform with this Consensus Policy, except for the Registrar Registration Expiration Date and Reseller information, which are applicable in Phase 2. These adjustments include the implementation of RDAP and the reordering and/or renaming of fields in web-based RDDS output, the change of data format, or the display in all applicable RDDS output of new pieces of information that are readily available.

1.3. Implementation Timeline

- Publication of Consensus Policy and implementation notes by 31 January 2016
- Consensus Policy Effective Date: 1 August 2016

1.4. Implementation Guidance for Registries

1.4.1. Summary of impact on Registries

Below are highlights of the impact on Registries' RDDS outputs:

- Implementation of RDAP: gTLD registries will implement RDAP in accordance with the RDAP Operational Profile for gTLD Registries and Registrars.
- Reordering and renaming of fields in web-based RDDS: gTLD registries, including 2012-round gTLD registries, will need to follow the ordering and naming convention specified in Specification 3 of the 2013 RAA in their web-based RDDS. Registries will need to update their internal systems accordingly.

- Possible change of data format in web-based RDDS: most pre-2012 gTLD registries may need to reformat data for some fields in order to match Specification 3 of the 2013 RAA, which references the EPP RFCs 5730-5734[4].
- Display of new fields in web-based RDDS: this might be new information required under Specification 3 of 2013 RAA which is not displayed in pre-2012 gTLD registries Whois output. This is usually the case for Registrar Name, WHOIS Server, Website URL, Contacts Phone and Fax Extensions, Contacts Fax number, and DNSSEC status. For all gTLD registries (including 2012-round), there are also fields, e.g., Reseller, Registrar Registration Expiration Date.

1.4.2. Registry-specific additional data fields need to be placed at the end of the output

As stated in the Advisory: Clarifications to the Registry Agreement, and the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) regarding applicable Registration Data Directory Service (RDDS) Specifications, also known as "Whois Clarifications Advisory", in Clarification 10:

> *Data fields MUST be shown in the format (including the order of keys, among others) specified in the 2013 RAA (for registrars) or the Registry Agreement (for registries). If additional data fields are included in the Whois output, the additional data fields MUST be placed at the end of the text format outlined in the Registry Agreement or 2013 RAA. For example, for domain name object responses: after the field DNSSEC for registries [...].*

New gTLD Registries should note that, as per section 1.4, Specification 4 of the Registry Agreement, the Registry Operator MUST obtain approval from ICANN before adding fields to the RDDS output, i.e., request this according to the RSEP Consensus Policy.

1.4.3. Special consideration of privacy settings (.CAT and .TEL) and tiered access (.NAME) in specific Registration Data Directory Services

[The .CAT, .NAME, and .TEL Registry Agreements have specialized whois related provisions which should be looked at to see how they interact with the new requirement to have Consistent Labeling and Display]

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4 For example, this is the case for Country information, which in some Whois output may correspond to the actual name of the given Country, where Specification 3 of the 2013 RAA requires the use of the ISO 3166-1 country-code.

1.5. Implementation Information for Registrars

Because Registries will determine their individual approaches to this implementation, Registrars may be impacted by the following:

- A Registrar may need to supply static data to a Registry and keep this static data current with Registry in the future.

- A Registrar may need to provide a Registry with contact information not currently in the Registry's possession. The Registrar may need to submit the requested data through EPP-based batch update with or without changes to the EPP interface

2. Phase 2 Implementation Notes

2.1. Objective

The objective of implementation during Thick Whois Policy Phase 2 is for all gTLDs, excluding .COM, .NET and .JOBS, to display a Registration Data Directory Services (RDDS) output compliant with this Consensus Policy, that is including display of the Registrar Registration Expiration Date and Reseller information which were out of scope of Phase 1.

2.2. Scope of Thick Whois Implementation Phase 2

All gTLD Registry Operators, excluding .COM, .NET and .JOBS, are required to implement this phase of the Consensus Policy.

Phase 2 concerns adjustments, specifically the Registrar Registration Expiration Date and the Reseller Information, to Registries' RDDS output that are required in order to conform to this Consensus Policy.

2.3. Implementation Timeline

- Publication of Consensus Policy and implementation notes by 31 July 2016
- Consensus Policy Effective Date: 1 February 2017

2.4. EPP Extension for Registration Expiration Date and the Reseller Information

Registries and Registrars are invited to participate in the IETF EPPExt working group to discuss the best way to transmit the Registrar registration expiration date and reseller information. Once an EPP extension is defined by the WG, Registries and Registrar are REQUIRED to implement such EPP extension in order to facilitate the implementation across the industry.

2.5. Special consideration of privacy settings (.CAT and .TEL) and tiered access (.NAME) in specific Registration Data Directory Services

[The .CAT, .NAME, and .TEL Registry Agreements have specialized whois related provisions which should be looked at to see how they interact with the new requirement to have Consistent Labeling and Display]

3. Phase 3 Implementation Notes

3.1. Objective and Scope of Thick Whois Implementation Phase 3

The objective of implementation during Phase 3 is for .COM, .NET and .JOBS, to transition to a thick RDDS model, which output is to be consistent with this Consensus Policy, including display of the Registrar Registration Expiration Date and Reseller information.

3.2. Implementation Timeline

- Publication of Consensus Policy and implementation notes by [To be determined]
- Consensus Policy Effective Date: [To be determined]