

From DT1 Output: <https://community.icann.org/download/attachments/74580012/DT1%20-%20TechIssues-Research-final.pdf>

**Definition:** *Information collected to enable use of registration data elements by researchers and other similar persons, as a source for academic or other public interest studies or research, relating either solely or in part to the use of the DNS.*

**1. Who associated with the domain name registration needs to be identified and/or contacted for the purpose of Academic or Public Interest DNS Research?**

Entities who buy/sell, register, or use domain names may benefit indirectly from academic or public interest DNS research.

The entities to be identified or contacted about each domain name registration (hereafter referred to as research subjects) depend upon the nature of the research, but may include the domain name's current owner (the Registrant), the domain name's current user (who may or may not be the customer of a Privacy/Proxy provider), a Privacy/Proxy provider associated with the domain name, or the Registrar of record associated with the domain name.

Identification of research subjects is often not strictly necessary for this purpose; for example, research that is performed through aggregation of domain name characteristics obtained from registration data, without regard to registrant or registrar. However, for research tasks such as determining a domain name's registration history, identifying the past and present entities associated with a specific domain name may be essential to the study.

Contact with each entity for research purposes may not be necessary or desired by those entities. For example, the GNSO-sponsored study of WHOIS abuse included surveying registrants about their experiences with abuse of contact data published in WHOIS – this study was performed for the indirect benefit of all entities with contact data in WHOIS. However, some entities may view unsolicited survey invitations as intrusive or perceive contactability for research as a risk not benefit.

**2. What is the objective achieved by identifying and/or contacting each of those entities?**

The party initiating contact (e.g., Internet researcher, ICANN, government) has an interest in performing the study (e.g., cybercrime research, WHOIS accuracy studies, Internet proliferation studies, legal and economic analysis of the DNS or domain name registration systems, research to inform public policy). As such, that party benefits directly from access to WHOIS data for this purpose, including data associated with the research subject or domain name that may not be personally-identifiable information (e.g., country of the registrant, sponsoring registrar).

The entity being identified or contacted for this purpose may not directly benefit, but may indirectly benefit through reduction in cybercrime, improvements in public policy, fewer data inaccuracies, Internet capacity building, enforcement of laws, consumer protection, etc. Benefits to the research subject depend upon the nature of the research.

In some cases, the research subject may benefit directly – for example, if a prospective buyer is researching the history of a domain name before purchasing it from a willing and interested seller.

**3. *What might be expected of that entity with regard to the domain name?***

The identified or contacted entity has no obligation to respond to communication initiated for academic or public interest DNS research.