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What's new – recent changes to this workspace – as of 15-Dec, 2012

- New versions of the mind-map – [Outlines and mind-maps -- working drafts](#)
- New status report – [WG Weekly Status Reports](#)

About this PDP working group

What This Group Will Do

As part of its deliberations on this issue, the PDP WG is expected, at a minimum, to consider the following elements as detailed in the ['thick' Whois Final Issue Report](#):

- Response consistency: a 'thick' Registry can dictate the labeling and display of Whois information to be sure the information is easy to parse, and all Registrars/clients would have to display it accordingly. This could be considered a benefit but also a potential cost. This might also be a benefit in the context of internationalized registration data as even with the use of different scripts, uniform data collection and display standards could be applied.
- Stability: in the event of a Registrar business or technical failure, it could be beneficial to ICANN and registrants to have the full set of domain registration contact data stored by four organizations (the Registry, the Registry's escrow agent, the Registrar, and the Registrar's escrow agent), which would be the case in a 'thick' registry.
- Accessibility: is the provision of Whois information at the registry level under the 'thick' Whois model more effective and cost-effective than a 'thin' model in protecting consumers and users of Whois data and intellectual property owners?
- Impact on privacy and data protection: how would 'thick' Whois affect privacy and data protection, also taking into account the involvement of different jurisdictions with different laws and legislation with regard to data privacy as well as possible cross border transfers of registrant data?
- Cost implications: what are the cost implications of a transition to 'thick' Whois for Registries, Registrars, registrants and other parties for all gTLDs? Conversely, what are the cost implications to Registries, Registrars, registrants and other parties if no transition is mandated?
- Synchronization/migration: what would be the impact on the registry and registrar WHOIS and EPP systems for those Registries currently operating a thin registry, both in the migration phase to 'thick' WHOIS as well as ongoing operations?
- Authoritativeness: what are the implications of a 'thin' Registry possibly becoming authoritative for registrant Whois data following the transition from a thin-registry model to a thick-registry model. The Working Group should consider the term "authoritative" in both the technical (the repository of the authoritative data) and policy (who has authority over the data) meanings of the word when considering this issue.
- Competition in registry services: what would be the impact on competition in registry services should all Registries be required to provide Whois service using the 'thick' Whois model – would there be more, less or no difference with regard to competition in registry services?
- Existing Whois Applications: What, if anything, are the potential impacts on the providers of third-party WHOIS-related applications if 'thick' WHOIS is required for all gTLDs?
- Data escrow: 'thick' Whois might obviate the need for the registrar escrow program and attendant expenses to ICANN and registrars.
- Registrar Port 43 Whois requirements: 'thick' Whois could make the requirement for Registrars to maintain Port 43 Whois access redundant.

For further details and requirements, see the [WG Charter](#).

How This Group Will Work

ICANN Working Groups use transparent, open processes. WGs typically meet once a week by telephone for a minimum of one hour. The meetings of the WG will be recorded, and the recordings will be available to the public. The mailing list for the 'thick' Whois PDP WG will be archived publicly. Working Group members are expected to submit Statements of Interest (SOI). The group will collaborate using a public workspace. The WG is expected to follow the [GNSO Working Group Guidelines](#). In addition, the WG is expected to follow the procedures outlined in the [GNSO PDP Manual](#).

Background

ICANN specifies Whois service requirements through Registry Agreements (RAs) and the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) for the generic top-level domain (gTLD) registries.

Registries have historically satisfied their Whois obligations under two different models. The two models are often characterized as "thin" and "thick" Whois registries. This distinction is based on how two distinct sets of data are maintained.

WHOIS contains two kinds of data about a domain name; one set of data is associated with the domain name (this information includes data sufficient to identify the sponsoring registrar, status of the registration, creation and expiration dates for each registration, name server data, the last time the record was updated in the Registry database, and the URL for the registrar's Whois service), and a second set of data that is associated with the registrant of the domain name.

In a thin registration model the Registry only collects the information associated with the domain name from the Registrar. The Registry in turn publishes that information along with maintaining certain status information at the Registry level. Registrars maintain data associated with the registrant of the domain and provide it via their own Whois services, as required by Section 3.3 of the RAA for those domains they sponsor.

In a thick registration model the Registry collects both sets of data (domain name and registrant) from the Registrar and in turn publishes that data via Whois.

As recommended by the Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy (IRTP) Part B Working Group, the GNSO Council asked ICANN staff to prepare an Issue Report on the requirement of "thick" Whois for all gTLDs. The Council requested that the Issue Report and possible subsequent Policy Development Process consider a possible requirement of "thick" Whois for all gTLDs in the context of IRTP and also consider any positive and/or negative effects likely to occur outside of IRTP that should be taken into account when deciding whether to require "thick" Whois for all incumbent gTLDs. ICANN staff submitted [the Final Issue Report](#) to the GNSO Council for consideration on 2 February 2012.

At its meeting in Costa Rica last March, the GNSO Council initiated a Policy Development Process on "thick" Whois. However, considering the workload of the GNSO community, the GNSO Council on 12 April resolved to delay the formation of a drafting team to develop a charter until December 2012. The Council reconsidered that decision at its meeting in Prague in June 2012, and decided to move forward with the PDP. A drafting team was formed to develop a charter which was adopted by the GNSO Council at its meeting on 17 October 2012.

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