
Implementation Status: Thick WHOIS Policy Recommendations

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN62 IN RELATION TO THIS TOPIC?

The Implementation Review Team (IRT) does not plan to meet at ICANN62.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

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.

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.

The Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council initiated a Policy Development Process (PDP) to consider a possible requirement of “thick” WHOIS for all gTLDs. The PDP WG finalized its report and submitted it to the GNSO Council on 21 October 2013. The GNSO PDP WG recommends all gTLD registries to provide thick WHOIS services with a consistent labeling and display (CL&D). It would improve stability of and access to WHOIS data, as well as potentially reduce acquisition and processing cost for consumers of WHOIS data. During its meeting on 31 October 2013, the GNSO Council unanimously adopted the recommendation to require thick WHOIS for all gTLD registries. Following the public comment forum and the notification of the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), the ICANN Board considered the recommendations and [adopted](#) these during its meeting on 7 February 2014.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

The CL&D of the Registration Data Directory Service (RDDS) Output for All gTLDs policy has completed implementation by the policy effective date of 1 August 2017.

For the Thick WHOIS Transition Policy for .COM, .NET, and .JOBS, the ICANN Board passed a [resolution](#) to defer contractual compliance enforcement for six months. ICANN Contractual Compliance will defer enforcing the following milestones until the dates listed below:

- 30 November 2018: The registry operator must begin accepting Thick WHOIS data from registrars for existing registrations in .COM, .NET and .JOBS.
- By 30 April 2019: All registrars must send Thick WHOIS data to the registry operator for all new registrations in .COM, .NET and .JOBS.
- By 31 January 2020: All registrars are required to complete the transition to Thick WHOIS data for all registrations in .COM, .NET and .JOBS.

MORE INFORMATION

- PDP Webpage: gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/thick-whois
- IRT Workspace: community.icann.org/x/t77hAg
- Public Comment period on CL&D Policy Proposal: icann.org/public-comments/rdds-output-2015-12-03
- Public Comment proceeding on Transition from thin to thick for .COM, .NET and .JOBS: icann.org/public-comments/proposed-implementation-gnso-thick-rdds-whois-transition-2016-10-26
- Thick WHOIS Transition Policy for .COM, .NET and .JOBS: icann.org/resources/pages/thick-whois-transition-policy-2017-02-01
- Registry Registration Data Directory Services CL&D Policy: icann.org/resources/pages/rdds-labeling-policy-2017-02-01

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