
Implementation Status: Thick WHOIS Policy Recommendations

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN58 IN RELATION TO THIS TOPIC?

A working session has been scheduled on Wed, 15 Mar (Day 5) at 09:00-10:30. It is geared toward members of the Thick WHOIS Implementation Review Team (IRT) and other interested parties, such as registries and registrars. Participants will discuss the published policy implementation plan. These discussions will include topics of particular interest to all generic top-level domain (gTLD) registries and registrars, including requirements for all contracted parties, implementation mechanisms, timeline and near-term deliverables.

WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

ICANN specifies WHOIS service requirements through Registry Agreements (RAs) and the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) for the 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 concluded that requiring all gTLD registries to provide thick WHOIS services with a consistent labeling and display would improve stability of and access to WHOIS data as well as potentially reduce acquisition and processing cost for consumers of WHOIS data. The GNSO Council unanimously adopted the recommendation to require Thick WHOIS for all gTLD registries at its meeting on 31 October 2013. Following the Public Comment forum and the notification of the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC), the ICANN Board considered the recommendations and [adopted](#) these at its meeting on 7 February 2014.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

Following the ICANN Board approval of the GNSO recommendations on Thick WHOIS in February 2014, an IRT was formed. Various impact assessments and implementation proposals have been discussed with the IRT in the two decoupled work streams: transition from thin to thick for .COM, .NET and .JOBS (Transition Policy); and the consistent labeling and display of WHOIS output for all gTLDs as per Specification 3 of the 2013 RAA (CL&D Policy). In June 2015, ICANN's General Counsel's Office released to the IRT a Legal Review Memorandum per the GNSO Council's recommendation. In December 2015, a Proposed Implementation of CL&D Policy was released for Public Comment. Following the Public Comment, the CL&D Policy was published on 26 July 2016. In August 2016, Registry Stakeholder Group (RySG) submitted a Request for Reconsideration regarding the CL&D Policy. In October 2016, the revised policy was published for another Public Comment to allow for additional comments. The Transition Policy was also released for Public Comment in the same time period. Following the Summary and Analysis Reports in January 2017, the implementations for both the CL&D Policy and the Transition Policy were published on 1 February 2017. CL&D Policy must be implemented by 1 August 2017. Thick WHOIS for new registration must be implemented by 1 May 2018 and the transition of thick registration data for existing registration must be implemented by 1 February 2019.

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 period on Transition from thin to thick for .COM, .NET and .JOBS: icann.org/public-comments/proposed-implementation-gns-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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