'Thick' Whois Final Issue Report

What is the GNSO Council expected to consider?

Following the submission of the Final Issue Report by ICANN Staff, the GNSO Council is now expected to consider whether or not to initiate a Policy Development Process (PDP) on this topic. Initiating a PDP requires an affirmative vote of more than 33% of each House or more than 66% of one House.

Why is this important?

For the generic top-level domain (gTLD) registries, ICANN specifies Whois service requirements through the registry agreements (ICANN 2009 Registry Agreements) and the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA). Registries satisfy their Whois obligations using different services. The two common models are often characterized as "thin" and "thick" Whois registries. 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 of the domain name. A thin registry only stores and manages the information associated with the domain name. This set 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 its Whois data store, and the URL for the registrar's Whois service. With thin registries, Registrars manage the second set of 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 3.3 for those domains they sponsor. COM and NET are examples of thin registries. Thick registries maintain and provide both sets of data (domain name and registrant) via Whois.

Should a PDP be initiated it would not only consider a possible requirement of 'thick' Whois for all gTLDs in the context of Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy, for which it is considered beneficial, but should also consider any other positive and/or negative effects that are likely to occur outside of IRTP that would need to be taken into account when deciding whether a requirement of thick Whois for all gTLDs would be desirable or not.

The Staff Recommendation

ICANN staff has confirmed that the proposed issues are within the scope of the ICANN policy process and the GNSO. It is reasonable from the staff's perspective to expect that further investigation of 'thick' Whois for all gTLDs would be beneficial to the community generally, as it would allow for an informed decision by the GNSO Council as to whether 'thick' Whois for all gTLDs should be required or not. ICANN staff, therefore, recommends that the GNSO Council proceed with a policy development process limited to consideration of the issues discussed in this report.

Background

As recommended by the IRTP Part B Working Group, the GNSO Council resolved at its meeting in September 2011 to ask ICANN staff to prepare an Issue Report on the requirement of 'thick' Whois for all gTLDs. Such an Issue Report and possible subsequent Policy Development Process should not only consider a possible requirement of 'thick' Whois for all gTLDs in the context of Inter-Registrar Transfer Policy, but should also consider any other positive and/or negative effects that are likely to occur outside of IRTP that would need to be taken into account when deciding whether a requirement of thick Whois for all gTLDs would be desirable or not. ICANN Staff published the [Preliminary Issue Report](#) on 21 November for public comment. Following the closing of the [public comment forum](#), ICANN staff submitted [the Final Issue Report](#) to the GNSO Council on 2 February 2012 for consideration.

Where can I find more information?

- ['Thick' Whois Final Issue Report](#)
- [Motion on the Initiation of a Policy Development Process on 'Thick' Whois](#)

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