ICANN | GNSO
Generic Names Supporting Organization

Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation Issues
Policy Development Process

What is this about?
The Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) is the contract that governs ICANN's relationship with its accredited registrars. Revised periodically, the newest form of RAA was approved by the ICANN Board in June 2013. Registrars wishing to sell domain names in the new gTLD program will have to sign up for the new 2013 RAA, as will registrars operating under the older 2009 RAA who wish to renew their contracts with ICANN.

The 2013 RAA negotiations had dealt with a number of high priority topics previously identified by the ICANN community. One of these was the accreditation of providers of privacy and proxy services for domain name registrations. A *privacy service* is one in which a domain name is registered in the registrant's name, but other contact details displayed in the publicly-accessible Whois system are those given by the privacy service provider and not those of the registrant. A *proxy service* is one in which the registered name holder licenses use of the domain to the customer who actually uses the domain, and the contact information displayed in the Whois system is that of the registered name holder. The *Whois system* is a form of Internet data directory service, utilizing a protocol that permits public lookup of a domain name, including certain contact and technical information about the registrant and the domain.

The topic of privacy and proxy services accreditation was not addressed in the 2013 RAA negotiations. The 2013 RAA does, however, contain a temporary specification on the use of privacy and proxy services that will expire either on January 1, 2017 or the implementation by ICANN of a Privacy & Proxy Services Accreditation Program (whichever first occurs). ICANN has already committed to such an Accreditation Program. This PDP was initiated to examine the policy issues related to the provision and accreditation of privacy and proxy services, with a view toward assisting ICANN with its development of such a program.

What is the current status of this project?
- The PDP Working Group was chartered by the GNSO Council in October 2013 and is meeting on a weekly basis.
- The WG has developed a number of preliminary recommendations that it intends to finalize following the Singapore meeting. It will hold a public meeting at ICANN52 to seek community feedback on its proposed recommendations and remaining open issues.

Why is this important?
The 2013 RAA temporary specification that governs registrars' obligations in respect of privacy and proxy services. will expire either on 1 January 2017 or ICANN's implementation of a privacy and proxy accreditation program, whichever first occurs. The GNSO has also commissioned several studies on the Whois system, including one on privacy and proxy abuse, the results of which were finalized and published in March 2014. Finally, the issue of accrediting privacy and proxy services is being discussed in the broader context of ICANN's ongoing review of the Whois system, including within an Expert Working Group formed in December 2012 that was tasked to look at the fundamental purpose and possible redesign of gTLD registration data services.

This PDP represents an opportunity for the GNSO and other interested community members to assist ICANN with developing its Privacy and Proxy Accreditation Program and informing its broader work on Whois more generally.

Expected next steps
The Working Group is addressing the substantive questions posed to it by the GNSO Council in the WG charter. The questions span several categories, ranging from registration and termination to Relay and Reveal procedures. The WG aims to produce an Initial Report for public comment following the Singapore meeting.

Background
In October 2011, the ICANN Board initiated negotiations with the Registrars Stakeholder Group for a new form of RAA, and simultaneously requested an Issue Report from the GNSO on issues not covered by the negotiations and otherwise suited for a PDP. The Final Issue Report was published in March 2012, and recommended that the GNSO commence its PDP as soon as possible after receiving a report that the negotiations were concluded.

In June 2013, the ICANN Board formally approved the new 2013 RAA. In September 2013, ICANN staff published a paper for the GNSO reporting on the conclusion of the RAA negotiations and highlighting issues relating to privacy and proxy services, including their accreditation and Relay/Reveal procedures. Following a number of discussions on the topic, the GNSO Council formally approved the charter for the PDP WG at its meeting on 31 October 2013.

How can I get involved?
The Working Group is open to anyone interested in participating. If you want to join the WG please contact the GNSO Secretariat to be added to the mailing list (gnso.secretariat@gnso.icann.org). You can also attend the WG's meeting in Singapore on Wednesday morning, scheduled from 0930-1045 a.m. Singapore time (please see the final Meeting Schedule for confirmation).

Where can I find more information?
- WG webpage with links to background information: http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/ppsa
- WG collaborative wiki workspace: https://community.icann.org/x/9iCfAg
- 2013 RAA including Privacy & Proxy Specification: http://www.icann.org/en/resources/registrars/raa/approved-with-specs-27jun13-en.htm - privacy-proxy
- Open F2F meeting during ICANN meeting in Singapore: http://singapore52.icann.org/en/schedule/wed-ppsai

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