
Implementation Status: Thick WHOIS Policy Recommendations

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN57 IN RELATION TO THIS TOPIC?

A working session has been scheduled geared toward members of the Thick WHOIS Implementation Review Team and other interested parties, such as registries and registrars. Participants will discuss the latest updates to the draft policy implementation plan. These discussions will include topics of particular interest to all gTLD registries and registrars including future requirements for all contracted parties, implementation mechanisms, timeline and coordination with implementation of the Registry Data Access Protocol (RDAP).

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.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS PROJECT?

The ICANN Board approved the GNSO recommendations on Thick WHOIS in February 2014 and an Implementation Review Team (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 submitted a Request for Reconsideration regarding the CL&D Policy and the policy is currently undergoing a revision. The revised policy will be release for an additional Public Comment period, which should result in the publication with an updated Policy with a new effective. As for the Transition Policy, a draft Consensus Policy is being finalized by staff, in coordination with the IRT, in preparation to begin the Public Comment.

MORE INFORMATION

- GNSO PDP page: gns0.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/thick-whois
- Implementation Review Team Workspace: community.icann.org/display/TWCPI/Thick+WHOIS+Policy+Implementation
- Proposed Implementation of GNSO Thick WHOIS Consensus Policy Requiring Consistent Labeling and Display of RDDS (WHOIS) Output for All gTLDs: [ICANN.org/public-comments/rdds-output](https://icann.org/public-comments/rdds-output)
- Registry Registration Data Directory Services Consistent Labeling and Display Policy: [ICANN.org/rdds-labeling-display](https://icann.org/rdds-labeling-display)

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