
Implementation Status: Thick WHOIS Policy Recommendations

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT ICANN65 IN RELATION TO THIS TOPIC?

The Implementation Review Team does not plan to meet at ICANN65.

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, often characterized as “thin” and “thick” WHOIS registries. This description is based on how the 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 publishes that information and maintains 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 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 working group finalized its report and submitted it to the GNSO Council on 21 October 2013. The GNSO PDP working group recommends all gTLD registries to provide thick WHOIS services with a consistent labeling and display (CL&D). It would improve the 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 Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) notification, the ICANN Board considered and **adopted** the recommendations 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, on 14 March 2019, the ICANN Board passed a **resolution** to defer contractual compliance enforcement. ICANN Contractual Compliance will defer enforcing the following milestones until the dates listed below:

- By 30 November 2019: The registry operator must begin accepting thick WHOIS data from registrars for existing registrations in .COM, .NET and .JOBS.
- By 31 May 2020: All registrars must send thick WHOIS data to the registry operator for all new registrations in .COM, .NET and .JOBS.
- By 30 November 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: <http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/active/thick-whois>
- IRT Workspace: <https://community.icann.org/x/t77hAg>
- Public comment proceeding on CL&D Policy Proposal: <https://www.icann.org/public-comments/rdds-output-2015-12-03-en>
- Public comment proceeding on Transition from thin to thick for .COM, .NET, and .JOBS: <https://www.icann.org/public-comments/proposed-implementation-gnso-thick-rdds-whois-transition-2016-10-26-en>
- Thick WHOIS Transition Policy for .COM, .NET, and .JOBS: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/thick-whois-transition-policy-2017-02-01-en>
- Registry Registration Data Directory Services CL&D Policy: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/rdds-labeling-policy-2017-02-01-en>

Staff Responsible: Dennis Chang (GDD)