

GNSO Council-requested WHOIS studies – February 2011 Update

Study Area/Topic	X-ref to study proposals	Specific studies defined (work in progress)	Current status	Other Information
<p>1. WHOIS Misuse Studies</p> <p>Extent to which publicly displayed WHOIS data is misused</p>	<p>Study # 1, #14, #21 GAC data set 2</p>	<p>1. Experimental: register test domains and measure harmful messages resulting from misuse</p> <p>2. Descriptive: study misuse incidents reported by registrants, researchers/ law enforcement</p>	<p>Council decided 8 Sept 2010 to proceed with this study. Cost: 150,000 Time estimate: 1 year Contract negotiations are underway. We hope to begin the study in March 2011.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can count and categorize harmful acts attributed to misuse and show data was probably not obtained from other sources ▪ Some acts might be difficult to count ▪ Cannot tie WHOIS queries to harmful acts, which makes it difficult to prove that reductions in misuse were caused by specific anti-harvesting measures ▪ Difficult to assess whether misuse is “significant”
<p>2. WHOIS Registrant Identification Study</p>	<p>GAC 5, GAC 6 #13a, #18 GAC 9, GAC 10</p>	<p>1. Gather info about how business/commercial domain registrants are identified</p> <p>2. Correlate such identification with use of proxy/privacy services</p>	<p>5 RFP responses received. Staff analysis to Council on 23 March 2010. Cost: 150,000 Time estimate: 1 year Pending decision by Council to proceed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can classify ownership and purpose of what appear to be commercial domains without clear registrant information, and measure how many were registered using a P/P service ▪ Might provide insight on why some registrants are not clearly identified ▪ Use of P/P services by businesses
<p>3. WHOIS Privacy and Proxy “Abuse” Study</p>	<p>#17, #19 GAC 1, GAC 11</p>	<p>Compare broad sample of P/P-registered domains associated with alleged harmful acts with overall frequency of P/P registrations</p> <p>http://gns0.icann.org/issues/whois/gns0-whois-pp-abuse-studies-report-05oct10-en.pdf</p>	<p>3 RFP responses received. Staff analysis to Council on 5 October 2010. Cost: 150,000 Time estimate: < 1 year Pending decision by Council to proceed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can sample many harmful acts to assess how often alleged "bad actors" try to obscure identity in WHOIS ▪ Compare bad actor P/P abuse rate to control sample <i>and</i> to alternatives like falsified WHOIS data, compromised machines, and free web hosting ▪ Some kinds of acts not sampled due to irrelevance and/or difficulty ▪ Cannot reliably filter out "false positive" incident reports

4. WHOIS Privacy and Proxy “Relay & Reveal” Study	#3, #13b, #13c, #20	Analyze relay and reveal requests sent for P/P-registered domains to explore and document how they are processed	RFP posted on 29 September, responses were due 30 November 2010. No bids received. Staff analysis (posted 11 February) recommends conducting a pre-study survey to identify willing volunteers. Cost: \$60,000-\$80,000 Time estimate: 4 months.	RFP and Terms of Reference: http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-29sep10-en.htm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be difficult to find diverse set of participants ▪ Likely concerns by Registrars, Law Enforcement, privacy and business sensitivities ▪ Others will have limits to the data they will disclose ▪ Data collection aids may help
5. non-ASCII registration information	Previously Study #11	Technical analysis of how non-ASCII registration information is displayed.	On hold pending work of Internationalized Registration Data WG.	IRD WG Workshop was conducted in Brussels. Interim report was presented in Cartagena. See: Internationalized Registration Data Working Group Interim Report
6. WHOIS service requirements	Separate request-7 May 2009	Compile a list of WHOIS service requirements based on current + previous policy discussions	Final report is complete. GNSO Council to discuss.	http://gns0.icann.org/issues/whois/whois-service-requirements-final-report-29jul10-en.pdf

Note: Study areas 1-5 reflect all the studies initially requested by the GNSO Council 4 March, 2009. Study area 6 was requested by the Council 7 May, 2009.