



WHOIS STUDIES REQUESTED BY THE GNSO COUNCIL

Discussion Document

Prepared by: Liz Gasster

27 October 2007



GNSO Council Resolution on WHOIS Studies: (Approved 6 September 2007)

- “[The GNSO Council] requests ICANN Staff proceed with a study of gTLD registrations and registrants and how WHOIS data is used and misused as described in the GAC Principles Regarding gTLD WHOIS Service paragraph 4.2, and by the Working Group Final outcomes report. This study should include a review and analysis of the different proxy services available today and a summary of any other statistical studies that Staff can locate. We ask staff to report back to the council on the 'study to date' by October 4.”

1. study of gTLD registrations and registrants

- How should the scope of the study be defined?
- Possible areas of study:
 - Percentage of registrants who are natural persons?
 - Level of accuracy of registration data?
 - Percentage use of proxy services and privacy services among all registrants?
 - What other characteristics of registrations and registrants should be studied?

2. study of how WHOIS data is used and misused

- Focus is on WHOIS queries
- What does the GNSO Council want to know about uses and misuses of WHOIS?
 - Cataloguing uses and misuses – is there a common understanding?
 - Some descriptive, qualitative data exists
 - Harder to collect accurate quantitative data – input is needed about the approach that should be taken, e.g. survey of requesters, independent study
 - Utility of study may be enhanced by participation from service providers

3. review and analysis of the different proxy services available today

- Staff intends to engage a researcher to perform a qualitative analysis of the proxy marketplace, including the marketplace for privacy registration services (quantitative data may be collected in Study #1 preceding)
- What specific information should staff collect or focus on?

4. summary of any other statistical studies that staff can locate

- ICANN staff will maintain ongoing compendium of statistical studies on WHOIS – “WHOIS Available Data Points” – file can be found at <http://gnso.icann.org/drafts/whois-available-data-points-04oct07.pdf>
- Additional studies will be included as identified, please send to: policy@icann.org

Conclusion

- Studies of WHOIS will be initiated based on discussion and guidance provided
- Staff will define study incorporating recommendations and provide time frames for completion
- Questions?