Policy Development Process (PDP) Update

'Thick' WHOIS Policy Development Process

18 September 2017

Upcoming dates

Following the publications of the Thick WHOIS Consensus Policies in February 2017 for the Consistent Labeling and Display of RDDS (WHOIS) Output for All gTLDs and the Thick RDDS (WHOIS) Transition for .COM, .NET and .JOBS, the implementations work began. As of 1 August 2017, Consistent Labeling and Display of WHOIS Output for ALL gTLDs policy has completed its implementation. The Thick WHOIS Transition for .COM, .NET and .JOBS policy continues its implementation toward the current deadlines for new registrations as Thick by 1 May 2018 and for completion of migrating existing registration data from Thin to Thick by 1 February 2019.

On 17 August 2017, the ICANN organization received a request from the RrSG requesting a 120-day extension to the .COM and .NET data migration dates of 1 May 2018 and 1 February 2019, respectively, ICANN is currently considering this request.

Summary

ICANN specifies WHOIS service requirements through its agreements with gTLD registries and registrars. Registries have historically complied with their WHOIS obligations under two different models, characterized as "Thin" and "Thick" WHOIS registries. In a Thin registration model the Registry only collects and publishes the minimal information associated with the domain name from the registrar (such as DNS technical information). All of the registrant's contact information is maintained by the registrar, which publishes it via their own WHOIS services. 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.

The ICANN organization and the Thick Whois IRT have identified two steps for the Thick Whois Policy recommendations and agreed that their implementations could be decoupled:

- Consistent Labeling and Display of WHOIS output for all gTLDs
- Transition from Thin to Thick for .COM, .NET and .JOBS

Both policies were published on 1 February 2017 consisting of three effective dates:

- Consistent Labeling and Display of Whois output for all gTLDs by 1 August 2017
- Transition from Thin to Thick for .COM, .NET and .JOBS (for new registrations) by 1 May 2018
- Transition from Thin to Thick for .COM, .NET and .JOBS (for exisitng registrations) by 1 February 2019

Recent Developments

The transition from Thin to Thick for .JOBS remains on schedule. On 1 August 2017 .JOBS began accepting Thick data from registrars for existing registrations. All indications at this time are that the registry and their registrars will meet the policy effective deadlines of accepting new registrations as Thick data by 1 May 2018, and complete the transition of any existing registration data from Thin to Thick by 1 February 2019.

Verisign, the registry operator for .COM and .NET , has proposed changes to its Registry-Registrar Agreement (RRA) to accept Thick WHOIS data. However, Verisign and RrSG hit an impasse when they could not agree on RRA proposed by Verisign. As a result, on 20 June 2017, ICANN received a request from Verisign to defer the start date of 1 August 2017 for accepting Thick WHOIS data from its registrars. Verisign's request to defer starting the data migration was granted by the ICANN organization on 29 June 2017, with a new deadline for the start date of 29 November 2017. The ICANN organization granted the request on the basis that this would not impact the policy effective dates of 1 May 2018 and 1 February 2019.

On 17 August 2017, the ICANN organization received a request from the RrSG requesting a 120-day extension to the .COM and .NET data migration dates of 1 May 2018 and 1 February 2019, respectively, ICANN is currently considering this request.

GAC Engagement Opportunity Status

Following the publication of the policies, the Implementation Review Team is working with the ICANN organization on the implementation of the policies.

Additional Information
- Thick Whois Transtioin 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 Consistent Labeling and Display Policy: https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/rdds-labeling-policy-2017-02-01-en
- PDP Documentation: http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/thick-whois.htm
- PDP WG Final Report: http://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/whois/thick-final-21oct13-en.pdf
- Thick Whois Implementation: https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/thick-whois-2016-06-27-en
- Thick Whois IRT Workspace: https://community.icann.org/display/TWCPI
- Public Comment period on Consistent Labeling and Display implementation proposal: https://www.icann.org/public-comments/rdds-output-2015-12-03-en
- Public Comment period 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