

# Update on GNSO- requested WHOIS Studies

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# gTLD WHOIS Studies - Goals



- WHOIS policy debated for many years
- GNSO Council decided in October 2007 that study data was needed to provide objective, factual basis for future policy making
- Identified several WHOIS study areas that reflect key policy concerns
- Asked staff to determine costs and feasibility of conducting those studies
- Staff used an RFP approach to do so
- Studies are approved and are now (mostly) underway

# WHOIS Misuse Study

Study is assessing whether public WHOIS significantly increases harmful acts and the impact of anti-harvesting measures. Two approaches:

1. Experimental: register test domains and measure harmful messages resulting from misuse
2. Descriptive: study misuse incidents reported by registrants, researchers/ law enforcement

**Cost:** \$150,000 (USD)

Awarded to Carnegie Mellon U., Pittsburgh, PA, USA

**Status:** Initiated in mid-2011

**Time estimate:** initial results in early 2013

# Registrant Identification Study

- Study is examining info about how domain name registrants are identified and classifying various types of entities that register domains, including natural persons, various types of legal persons and Privacy and Proxy service providers.
- Study has been recast as an “exploratory” data-gathering effort that is not hypothesis-driven. This will also provide more consistency with related GAC proposals offered in 2008.

**Cost:** approx. \$180,000 (USD). Awarded to NORC at the U. of Chicago.

**Time estimate:** 1 year

**Status:** Launched October 2011, target initial results in late 2012

# Privacy and Proxy “Abuse” Study

This study will compare a broad sample of Privacy & Proxy-registered domains associated with alleged harmful acts to assess:

1. How often bad actors try to obscure identity in WHOIS
2. How this rate of abuse compares to overall P/P use
3. How this rate compares to alternatives like falsified WHOIS data, compromised machines, and free web hosting

**Cost:** \$180,000 (USD)

**Time estimate:** 1 year

**Status:** GNSO Council approved in April 2011, contract delayed, now being finalized.

# WHOIS P/P Relay & Reveal Study

The original study would analyze communication relay and identity reveal requests sent for Privacy & Proxy-registered domains:

1. To explore and document how they are processed, and
2. To identify factors that may promote or impede timely communication and resolution.

Potential bidders were unsure of the feasibility of this study, especially obtaining a sufficient data sample, so the Council opted to conduct a pre-study to survey potential participants to determine if a full study is feasible to do.

**Cost:** \$80,000 (USD) for Pre-study Survey

Awarded to Interisle Consulting

**Status:** Launched in September, initial results expected in April 2012



# WHOIS Service Requirements Report - Upcoming Survey by WSWG

- In May 2009, GNSO Council asked Policy Staff to compile a comprehensive set of potential technical “requirements” for WHOIS -- not only known deficiencies in the current service but also technical requirements that may be needed to support various policy initiatives suggested in the past.
- Final Report released 29 July 2010
- In 2011 the GNSO Council asked a Working Group to develop a survey to try to estimate the level of agreement with various “requirements” among the GNSO community.
- Survey results may be useful for IETF protocol efforts
- The survey is a technical inventory and does not define or suggest the policies or operational rules that should apply

# Examples—Survey Will Include

- Mechanism to find authoritative WHOIS servers
- Standardized query structure
- Well-defined schema for replies
- Standardized error messages
- History of domain registration data
- Internationalized registration data



# Next Steps



- Current draft survey has 13 Requirements -- 63 total questions
- Working Group to edit, test survey
- Submit draft survey to GNSO Council & Public Comment
- Solicit input from SO/ACs
- Create proposed final draft
- Submit for independent review
- Run survey for 30 days
- Analyze results and publish Report

*Questions?*

*Thank you!*