



2005 Report on Implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy

30 November 2005

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
I. WDRP REQUIREMENTS.....	5
II. METHODOLOGY	6
III. SURVEY PARTICIPATION	7
IV. REGISTRAR COMPLIANCE	8
V. REGISTRAR COMMENTS.....	13
VI. IMPACT ON ACCURACY.....	15
VII. CONCLUSIONS	16
APPENDIX A - WHOIS DATA REMINDER POLICY	17
APPENDIX B - RAA WHOIS REQUIREMENTS.....	21
APPENDIX C - WHOIS DATA REMINDER POLICY SURVEY AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT, 2005.....	24
APPENDIX D - REGISTRANT WDRP FAQ PAGE	28

Executive Summary

Since 31 October 2003, all ICANN-accredited registrars have been obliged to comply with the "Whois Data Reminder Policy" (WDRP - <http://www.icann.org/registrars/wdrp.htm>). The WDRP is intended to improve the accuracy of Whois data by requiring registrars to send an annual reminder to registrants to keep their Whois records up to date. The *2005 Report on Implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy* provides information on the WDRP for the period between December 2004 and November 2005. It is a statistical and narrative summary of experiences with the WDRP which describes the implementation status of the policy, registrar compliance, problems encountered and impact on the accuracy of Whois data. The report uses a variety of means to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the WDRP, including results from the "Whois Data Reminder Policy Survey and Compliance Audit" that was sent to all ICANN-accredited registrars in October 2005.

Overall compliance with the WDRP is strong, and has further shown improvement on the compliance findings of 2004.¹

The following are key findings of the 2005 report on the WDRP:

- 85% of ICANN-accredited registrars participated in the 2005 survey, reflecting a significant increase over the 70% participation rate of 2004;
- most significantly, for the purposes of this report, registrar compliance with the WDRP's directive to send registrants reminder notices has been strong overall, marking solid improvement over last year;
- the form and content of reminder notices sent by registrars have been inconsistent in their degree of compliance with the requirements of the WDRP;
- the inability of registrars to track response to WDRP notices has hampered ICANN's ability to measure the effectiveness of the policy.

This year as in the past, registrars were invited to share their experiences with the WDRP in a part of the survey that allowed for free form input. Registrars taking the opportunity to provide their own comments reported largely positive experiences in implementing the WDRP. The most frequently cited problem with the WDRP involved concerns that WDRP notices are confused with SPAM by recipients and SPAM blocking software. ICANN has created and posted an FAQ web page² intended to help minimize confusion among registrants receiving WDRP notices.

As in the case of last year, some respondents expressed difficulty implementing the WDRP through resellers, although this issue was raised by far fewer registrars this year than in 2004. It appears that many registrars have developed successful approaches to the challenge of contacting resellers' clients.

¹ The 2004 report is available online at <http://www.icann.org/whois/WDRP-Implementation-30Nov04.pdf>.

² See Appendix D.

Regarding the WDRP's impact on the accuracy of Whois data, the survey results indicate that WDRP notices lead to changes in registrant data. However, because the most commonly used formats for WDRP notices were apparently not trackable, the precise extent to which the WDRP has improved Whois accuracy can only be inferred from the high rate of compliance with the policy. It is possible that an improved ability to capture this data will lead to a better ability to statistically assess improvements in Whois data accuracy.

Feedback from the registrars has suggested ways to continue to improve implementation of the WDRP and foster full compliance. A set of common industry practices seems to be emerging regarding the issuing of WDRP notices. Ultimately, registrars will be in part responsible for ensuring continued improvement to Whois accuracy.

Introduction

This report summarizes various community members' experiences with implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy (WDRP) from December 2004 to November 2005. The WDRP (<http://www.icann.org/registrars/wdrp.htm>) was adopted by ICANN as a consensus policy on 27 March 2003. The policy is intended to improve the accuracy of Whois data by sending an annual reminder to registrants to keep their Whois records up to date. The WDRP requires registrars to contact registrants annually with the current Whois information for each registration and remind registrants that the provision of false data can be grounds for cancellation of a registration. Registrants are asked to review their Whois data and make any necessary corrections.

This Report on Implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy (Report) is published in accordance with Amendment 6 to the ICANN/DOC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (<http://www.icann.org/general/amend6-jpamou-17sep03.htm>). Section II.C.10 (b) of that amendment to the MOU provides that:

"ICANN shall publish a report no later than November 30, 2004, and annually thereafter, providing statistical and narrative information on the implementation of the ICANN Whois Data Reminder Policy. The report shall include statistics on registrar compliance with the policy and information obtained regarding results of the implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy. The narrative information shall include implementation status, information on problems encountered, and an evaluation of the impact of the Whois Data Reminder Policy on improved accuracy of Whois data."

The report describes the requirements relating to Whois data and the WDRP. It provides statistical and narrative information on implementation status, registrar

compliance, problems encountered, emerging practices and possible impact on Whois accuracy.

A separate report on “Community Experiences with the InterNIC Whois Data Problem Reports System” (WDPRS Report) was previously published, in accordance with the MOU, on 31 March 2005 (<http://www.icann.org/whois/wdprs-report-final-31mar05.htm>).

ICANN would like to express its appreciation to the many registrars and other stakeholders who participated in the “Whois Data Reminder Policy Survey and Compliance Audit” in October / November 2005. The experiences and insight they shared are the central component of this report.

I. WDRP Requirements

The WDRP was adopted as a consensus policy on 27 March 2003 by ICANN's Board of Directors in [resolution 03.41](#) by a 13-1-0 vote. All ICANN-accredited registrars must comply with the WDRP with respect to registrations they sponsor in all generic top-level domains for which they are accredited.

The WDRP was one of [four policies](#) concerning Whois issues that the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council recommended be established as consensus policies. The GNSO Council and Board votes were based on the [Final Report of the GNSO Council's Whois Task Force on Whois Data Accuracy and Bulk Access](#) (GNSO Whois Report). That report documented [the extent of agreement and disagreement among impacted groups](#), the outreach process used to seek to achieve adequate representation of the views of groups that were likely to be impacted, and the [nature and intensity of reasoned support and opposition to the proposed policy](#). The GNSO Whois Report was posted on the ICANN web site on 11 March 2003, with a call for public comment. [Various public comments](#) were received and considered by the Board. The report was discussed at the [ICANN Public Forum session held in Rio de Janeiro on 26 March 2003](#), prior to its adoption by the Board the following day.

On 16 June 2003, ICANN provided notice of adoption of the Policy to all registrars and posted the “Whois Data Reminder Policy” (<http://www.icann.org/registrars/wdrp.htm>), a copy of which is contained in Appendix A. All registrars were required to come into compliance with the WDRP by a specific “Compliance Date.” The Compliance Date for registrars accredited before 16 June 2003 was 31 October 2003. The Compliance Date for registrars accredited since 16 June 2003 is the effective date of their accreditation agreements. Accordingly, all registrars are now required to comply with the WDRP.

Pursuant to the WDRP, each registrar must provide, before the passage of the anniversary of the creation date of each registration under its sponsorship, a WDRP notice (also called a “reminder notice”) to the registrant. The notice must include a copy of the data elements contained in the registrar's database for that registration (as

specified in the [Registrar Accreditation Agreement \(RAA\) at subsection 3.3.1](#)). The notice must also include a statement reminding the registrant that under the terms of its registration agreement, [the provision of false Whois information can be grounds for cancellation of the domain name registration](#).³

A WDRP notice can be presented via web, fax, postal mail, email, or other appropriate means. It can be presented in one or more languages, including at least the language of the registration agreement. The notice may be presented to the registrant either directly or through the administrative contact for each registration.

Registrars [must maintain](#) either copies of each WDRP notice or an electronic database documenting the date and time, and the content, of each WDRP notice sent under this policy. Registrars are required to [make these records available for inspection by ICANN](#) in accordance with the RAA. ICANN will consider proper notification to have been given for a registration if the registrar can show that a WDRP notice meeting the requirements described above was given at any time in the year before each anniversary of the registration's creation date. A [Model WDRP Notice](#) was posted along with the Policy and is contained at the end of Appendix A to this Report. The sections of the Registration Accreditation Agreement on Whois-related obligations of registrars are reproduced in Appendix B of this report.

II. Methodology

This report was prepared based on information obtained with a survey emailed to all ICANN-accredited registrars. The 2005 survey questionnaire was largely identical to that of 2004. The 2005 questionnaire additionally included an opportunity for respondents who had not sent WDRP notices to explain why.

The survey was designed to elicit important information about registrar implementation of and compliance with the WDRP. The questions covered:

- The size of the registrar;
- The percentage of registrations for which WDRP notices had been sent;
- The method of transmitting the notices;
- The percent of notices that were undeliverable;
- The language(s) in which the notices were sent;
- The timing of the notices;
- The percent of notices that led to changes in registrant data; and

³ As noted above, section 3.7.7.2 of the RAA provides that a registrant's "willful provision of inaccurate or unreliable information, its willful failure promptly to update information provided to Registrar, or its failure to respond for over fifteen calendar days to inquiries by Registrar concerning the accuracy of contact details associated with the . . . registration shall constitute a material breach of the [agreement] . . . and be a basis for cancellation" of the domain name.

- The fields that were most frequently changed.

The survey invited registrars to use a free text box to describe any problems they encountered during implementation and to provide any suggestions for improving the WDRP or the accuracy of Whois data generally. Registrars were also asked to provide a sample copy of an actual notice to ICANN for review for compliance with the WDRP requirements. A copy of the survey is contained in Appendix C.

III. Survey Participation

All currently accredited registrars are required to comply with the WDRP.

As part of the WDRP's requirements, registrars are required to provide each registrant with a reminder notice containing the relevant Whois data before the anniversary of the creation date of each registration. All registrations more than one year old should therefore have already been the subject of a notice. Newer registrations are not required to be the subject of a notice until just before the one-year anniversary of their creation date.

A total of 444 registrars (85% of all ICANN-accredited registrars) responded to the "Whois Data Reminder Policy Survey and Compliance Audit." These registrars are responsible for approximately 93% of all gTLD domain names. Compared to last year's response rate of 70%, the additional participation of 190 registrars this year represents a significant improvement over last year. In addition, while only ten of the largest fifteen registrars participated in the survey last year, twenty-four of the twenty-five largest registrars participated in the survey this year, representing among them an estimated 82% of all gTLD registrations.

Registrar participation in the 2005 WDRP Survey by size of registrar	Size of Registrar	Number of Registrars Responding	Total Number of Registrars in Category	Percentage of Registrars Responding per Category
	Less than 1,000 names	220	257	85.6%
	1,000 - 9,999 names	121	139	87.0%
	10,000 - 99,999 names	53	66	80.3%
	100,000 - 999,999 names	40	46	87.0%
	1,000,000+ names	10	10	100%
	Total	444	518	85.7%

While ICANN is pleased that this year's survey response rate increased over last year's, the number of non-responsive registrars remains a focus for contractual compliance follow-up. ICANN staff engaged in a variety of measures to improve overall response rates, including email and telephone reminders and an extension of the time allowed to complete the survey. Compliance staff will follow up as appropriate with the non-responsive registrars.

IV. Registrar Compliance

Compliance with the WDRP was assessed using two sources: the survey responses and the actual WDRP notices that were provided to ICANN. This survey was designed to measure three primary compliance benchmarks; specifically, (1) whether required WDRP notices were transmitted to registrants, (2) whether notices were sent on a timely basis, and (3) whether the notices contained the substantive items required by the WDRP.

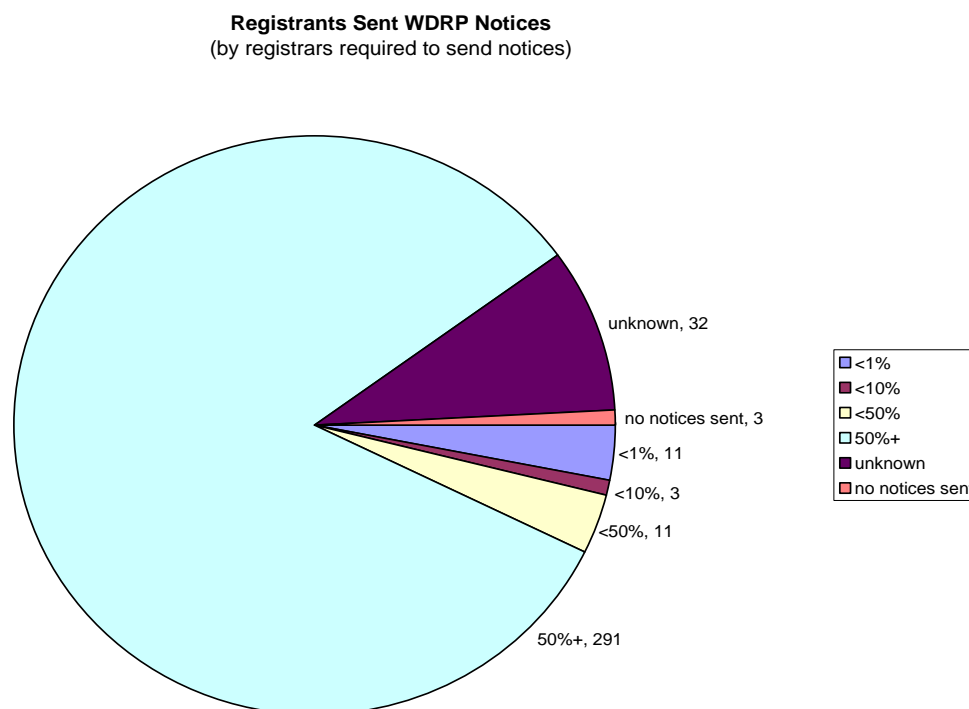
Notification Requirement

Of the 412 registrars who could determine the number of WDRP notices sent to registrants, 77% reported sending the notices this year. (Last year, only 44% of such registrars had sent WDRP notices.) Of the registrars who reported that they had not sent WDRP notices this year, 97% had legitimate explanations for not doing so. For example, a registrar may have been in operation for less than a year or no registrations had yet been held for a full year. As a result, only three respondents (less than 1% of all responding registrars) who were obligated to send WDRP notices wholly failed to do so. Of these three, two cited technical difficulties. The third registrar cited legal concerns related to privacy laws in its jurisdiction that were being resolved. In two of the three instances, within the survey itself, the registrar volunteered its commitment to future compliance with the WDRP.

The survey results indicate a positive trend in compliance, with substantial improvement since last year. On the other side, ICANN remains concerned that a sizeable portion (7%) of responding registrars did not know how many WDRP notices, if any, they sent. Because the WDRP requires registrars to maintain WDRP notification records, it is troubling that some registrars could not readily provide statistics to measure their compliance with the WDRP. This issue will be the subject of future compliance audit efforts by ICANN.

As well as asking whether or not WDRP notices were sent, the survey also asked registrars to approximate the number of notices sent. The questionnaire allowed registrars to indicate if (a) less than 1% of registrants had been sent WDRP notices, (b) at least 1% but less than 10%, (c) at least 10% but less than 50%, or (d) 50% or more. (As noted above, registrars also had the option to indicate that they were unable to determine the number of WDRP notices sent.)

When those registrars not yet obligated to send WDRP notices were removed from the data set, a great majority (83%) of the remaining registrars reported that they had sent notices to 50% or more of their registrants. Three percent (3%) of these registrars sent notices to at least 10% but less than 50% of registrants; one percent (1%) sent notices to at least 1% but less than 10% of registrants; and three percent (3%) sent notices to less than 1% of registrants. Approximately one percent (1%) of obligated registrars sent no WDRP notices to their registrants and nine percent (9%) were unable to determine how many notices were sent. This data is illustrated below.



Of the registrars obligated to send WDRP notices, the following table details the number of notices sent, according to registrar size .

Registrar Size	Percentage Of Registrants To Whom WDRP Notices Were Sent						Total
	<1%	<10%	<50%	50%+	unknown	no notices	
< 1,000 names	10		1	117	3	1	132
1,000 - 9,999 names		2	3	90	22		118
10,000 - 99,999 names	1		5	42	3	1	52
100,000 - 999,999 names		1	1	33	4	1	40
1,000,000+ names			1	9			10
Total	11	3	11	291	32	3	351

The data appears to indicate that a considerable number of the smallest registrars were only partially complying with the WDRP; however, several of the smallest registrars were relatively recently accredited and may not have had many registrations that were

at least one year old. (The survey asked responding registrars to provide an explanation if they sent no WDRP notices to registrants. Respondents with legitimate explanations were removed from the data set for the purpose of analyzing this question. As no explanation was required for registrars who merely sent few notices, the reason for some registrars' low notification rates is unknown. Future surveys will be modified to require an explanation in such circumstances.)

Registrars responding to the survey were also asked to identify their primary means for communicating WDRP notices. As was the case last year, email proved to be the most commonly used method. Although not an available answer in the survey, it appears many registrars have implemented hybrid notice systems. In particular, several registrars sent email notices to registrants asking them to visit a web site to validate Whois information. The following table depicts the WDRP notice communication methods used by registrars.

Registrars	
web	6
fax	1
post	1
email	340
other	4
Total	352

Primary method of communicating WDRP notices, by number of registrars using each method.

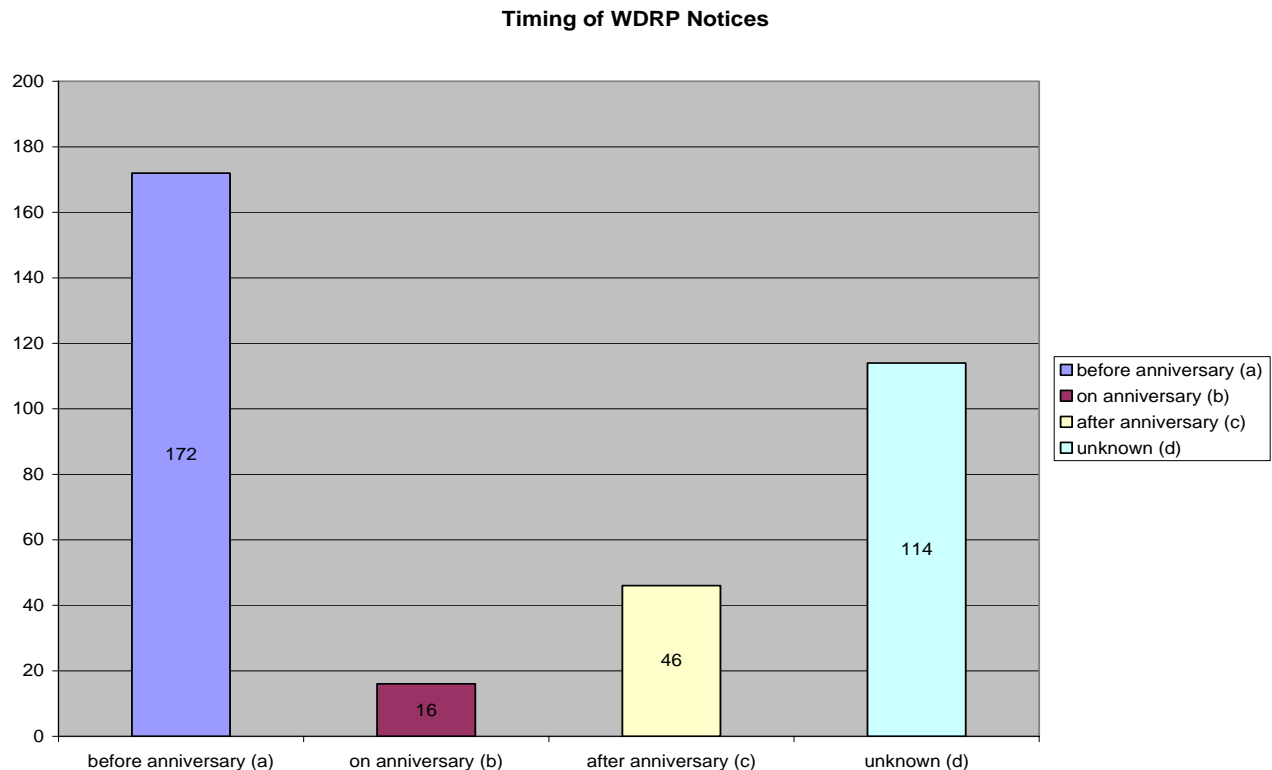
Registrars were also asked to indicate the percentage of WDRP notices that were returned as undeliverable in order to evaluate the potential effectiveness of each method of communication. A comparison by method of communication is provided.

Method of Sending	Percent of WDRP Notices that were Undeliverable					Total
	<1%	<10%	<50%	50%+	unknown	
web	2		1		3	6
fax	1					1
post	1					1
email	48	40	14	4	234	340
other	2				2	4
Total	54	40	15	4	239	352

It appears from this data that most messages were received by registrants, but the vast majority of responding registrars indicated that they were unable to count undeliverable messages. Given that almost all registrars used the same communications method (email), it is unfortunate that only a small number of registrars were able to measure the success of their communications attempts. Although not a requirement of the WDRP, greater efforts by registrars to monitor communication effectiveness would contribute to a more reliable evaluation of the WDRP's effectiveness overall. We will work with registrars to address this point during the upcoming year. Alternatively, ICANN will support specific improvement to the process through its policy development body, the Generic Names Supporting Organization.

Timing of WDRP Notices

Registrars were also asked to specify if WDRP notices were sent to registrants before, on, or after the anniversary of the subject domain name's creation date. Registrars' answers are represented in the following chart:



Although there was a large number of “unable to determine” responses, registrars were largely in compliance with the WDRP’s requirement that notices be sent before the anniversary of the creation of the domain name.

There seems to be confusion among a small number of registrars about this timing requirement. Anecdotally, one registrar said it understood WDRP notices were required each year but did not realize that the notices had to be sent before the anniversary of the creation of each domain name. Although it is true that WDRP notices are required to be sent prior to a domain name’s creation anniversary date, if notices are consistently sent once per year at the same time each year, this requirement will be met.

To the extent that ICANN can identify specific registrars who have questions about this requirement, efforts will be made to help those registrars understand more clearly what is required. In addition to specific feedback following this survey, ICANN compliance staff also uses the accreditation renewal process to improve understanding of and compliance with this and other aspects of the WDRP.

Content of Notices

Registrars were asked to send a copy of an actual WDRP notice to ICANN for review. As noted above, each WDRP notice must contain: (i) a copy of the data elements listed in Section 3.3.1 of the RAA and (ii) a statement reminding the registrant that the provision of false Whois information can be grounds for cancellation of a domain name registration. Section 3.3.1 requires the following data elements: the domain name; the primary name server and secondary name server(s); the identity of the registrar; the original creation date of the registration; the expiration date of the registration; the name and postal address of the registrant; the name, postal address, email address, voice telephone number, and (where available) fax number of the technical contact for the domain name; and the name, postal address, email address, voice telephone number, and (where available) fax number of the administrative contact for the domain name.

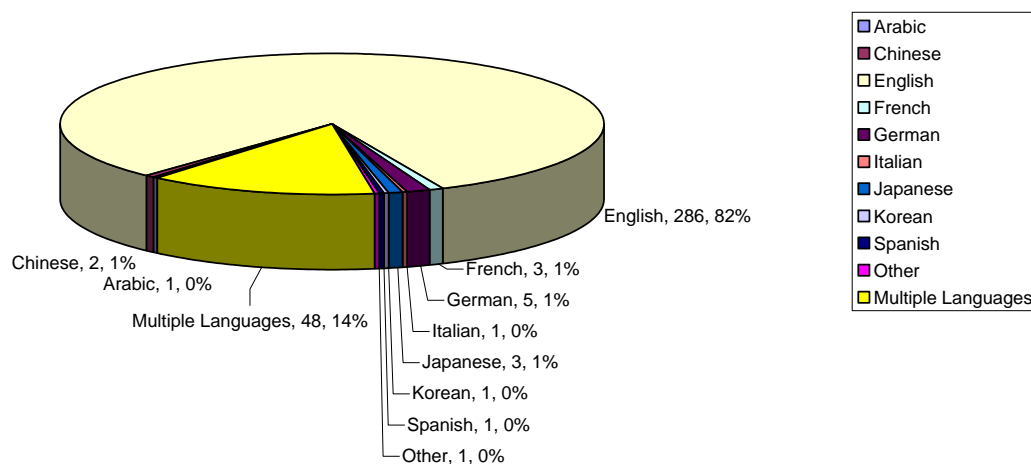
One hundred fifty-one (151) registrars – about 34% of those responding to the survey – followed the survey's instruction to provide an actual sample of a WDRP notice. The samples were examined to determine whether they complied with the WDRP requirements stated above, including providing the registrant with the current Whois data by actual text or a link and providing a warning to the registrant that provision of false Whois data could be grounds for cancellation of the domain name.

In reviewing the sample WDRP notices provided, ICANN discovered that a sizeable number of notices did not comply with the requirements of the WDRP. In several cases, registrars did not provide the requisite Whois data, and in at least as many instances, the registrant was not warned of the consequences of providing false contact data. This failure to precisely follow the WDRP's procedures may have diminished somewhat the effectiveness of the reminder notices sent but sending the notices in some competent form will remain largely effective with respect to the policy's goals. The registrars at issue are being contacted by ICANN's compliance staff to ensure that future WDRP notices comply with the WDRP's guidance.

Language of WDRP Notices

Registrars reported transmitting WDRP notices in several languages, with English being the most common. The following chart details the primary language(s) used by registrars in transmitting WDRP notices.

Primary WDRP Notice Language



V. Registrar Comments

Registrars responding to the survey had the option to provide a description of any problems encountered throughout the WDRP process. In total, 153 registrars took the opportunity to provide substantive comments. The vast majority of these respondents (146) indicated there were no problems, while others raised concerns or made suggestions for improvement. Highlights of these survey responses are provided below.

Consumer Concerns

The most commonly expressed consumer-related concern dealt with SPAM. Seven registrars complained that, by sending a large number of email notices, messages were frequently caught by users' SPAM filters, preventing communication of the notices. Even when the messages were delivered, as one registrar expressed, registrants often ignored the messages as SPAM.

Another related concern was the perceived redundancy of emailing one WDRP notice per domain name when an individual registrant might hold dozens or even thousands of registrations. This concern was also raised last year, and it appears some registrars have addressed the problem by emailing registrants with a link that provides Whois data

for all of the associated registrations. Other registrars may have included multiple domain name Whois records in WDRP notices.

One registrar complained that its WDRP notices caused confusion among consumers who were unaware of ICANN and another expressed concern that users' languages posed a barrier to effective understanding when the notice was sent in a language other than the user's. Two registrars reported receiving positive responses from consumers who appreciated the registrars' concern for accuracy of the consumer's information.

Shortly after initiating this survey, ICANN received a number of inquiries from consumers who received WDRP notices purportedly from ICANN. In reviewing the notices, the source of confusion was readily apparent. Some registrars have been sending WDRP notices from an <icann@____> email address and others include contact information for ICANN in the messages without providing contact information for the registrar or clear instructions for updating the Whois data. Although registrars should be free to explain to their customers that the WDRP is an ICANN-required consensus policy, these particular techniques appear to be creating unnecessary consumer confusion and delaying consumers' ability to update Whois records. As an alternative to these practices, registrars are encouraged to provide a link to ICANN's WDRP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) web page. This page was developed specifically to address frequently raised concerns by consumers about WDRP notices.

Concerns Applicable to Specific Registrar Business Models

In response to last year's survey, several registrars complained about the difficulty of implementing the WDRP where resellers serviced accounts. Three registrars voiced this concern this year, although another registrar reported problem-free implementation of the WDRP between itself and its resellers. One registrar suggested centralizing the WDRP notification process, possibly by having ICANN send all notices.

A few registrars mentioned that the WDRP was not appropriate in light of their business models (although they did still comply with the policy). One registrar explained that it does not register domain names for the public, but only for its corporate-affiliate's needs. Another registrar similarly expressed that its clients were sophisticated corporations for whom contact information was not likely to become inaccurate.

Other Issues & Suggestions

A handful of other concerns and suggestions were raised related to the WDRP. Three registrars indicated that they felt the WDRP was ineffective in improving data accuracy. One registrar suggested, "only vetting each data element will ensure accuracy."

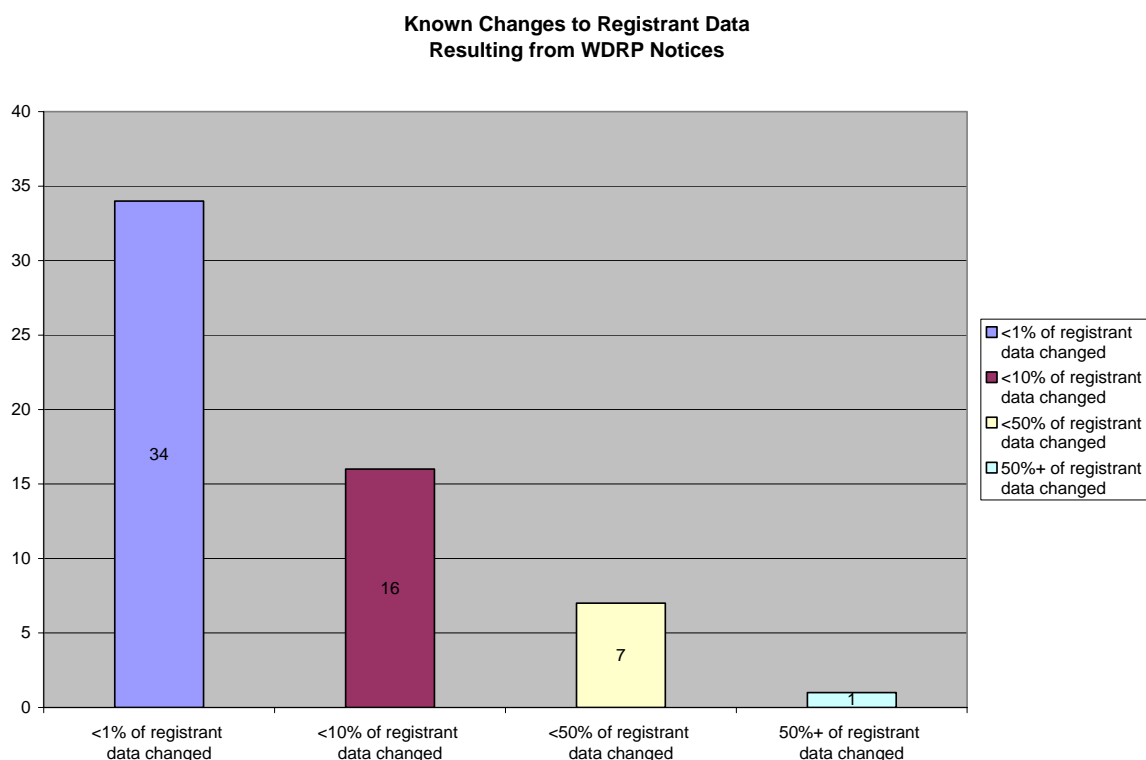
Similarly, three registrars complained about undeliverable WDRP notices. In particular, one registrar pointed out the cyclical problem of contacting registrants in order to ask them to update their contact information.

Finally, five registrars expressed concerns related to Whois data and/or Whois privacy protection services. These issues were generally not directly related to WDRP implementation although one registrar observed that the privacy protection services offered by some registrars seem to contravene the spirit of the WDRP.

ICANN is reviewing the feedback received through this survey with a view toward improvement in processes and communication with both registrars and registrants. In addition to following up with specific registrars, ICANN has also created the Registrant WDRP FAQ page described above.

VI. Impact on Accuracy

When asked to what extent WDRP notices improved Whois data accuracy, Registrars predominantly responded that they did not know or were unable to determine this information. Approximately 84% of responding registrars said they could not track the changes resulting from the WDRP notices. Changes resulting from WDRP notices that were tracked by registrars are reported below.



Just as most registrars had not tracked the number of changes resulting from WDRP notices, when asked which registration fields changed most frequently in response to WDRP notices, most registrars were similarly unable to answer. In fact, 89% of responding registrars answered with “unable to determine” when asked which Whois fields were changed most frequently. Among registrars who did have tracking data, 20 found the administrative contact fields to be the most frequently changed, 17 found the registrant fields to be most frequently changed, and 2 found that most changes were made to the technical contact fields.

Because so little information is available about the resulting changes to registrant data following WDRP notifications, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of the WDRP on Whois data accuracy. Interestingly, none of the registrars who complained about the ineffectiveness of the WDRP were able to provide statistics about the resulting changes to registrant data following WDRP notice transmission. ICANN would encourage all registrars to do a better job of tracking response rates to WDRP notices in the future and will work with them to find a mechanism to do so.

VII. Conclusions

Several positive improvements were shown in this year’s WDRP survey. In particular, registrar participation in the survey was greatly improved over last year, and compliance efforts by registrars, overall, have been strong. Among the registrars able to track responses to their WDRP notices, nearly 14% observed changes to over 10% of their registrant data and 41% observed changes to at least 1% of their registrant data. As a result, Whois data accuracy is believed to be improved, but technical limitations in tracking WDRP notification results have made meaningful analysis difficult.

While compliance among registrars responding to this survey has been very good, ICANN is mindful of the possibility that non-responsive registrars may not be complying with the WDRP. Continued success in improving Whois data accuracy will depend on increased compliance with the policy and a strengthened commitment by registrars to the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the WDRP. For its part, ICANN continues to work proactively with registrars to address their concerns about the notification process while also monitoring compliance with the WDRP through follow-up to this survey and extensive compliance testing during the registrar accreditation renewal process. The recent appointment of a Registrar Liaison Manager will improve ICANN’s ability to ensure compliance among registrars.

Appendix A - Whois Data Reminder Policy

Whois Data Reminder Policy

- At least annually, a registrar must present to the registrant the current Whois information, and remind the registrant that provision of false Whois information can be grounds for cancellation of their domain name registration. Registrants must review their Whois data, and make any corrections.
-

Notes

Introduction: The Whois Data Reminder Policy (WDRP) was adopted by ICANN as a consensus policy on 27 March 2003. All ICANN-accredited registrars must comply with the WDRP with respect to registrations they sponsor in all top-level domains for which they are accredited. Details of compliance requirements are provided below.

Process by Which the Policy Was Adopted: The WDRP was established as a consensus policy by ICANN Board [resolution 03.41](#), which was adopted by a [13-1-0 vote by ICANN's Board of Directors on 27 March 2003](#). It was one of [four policies](#) concerning Whois issues that the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council, by a [21-3-0 vote on 20 February 2003](#), recommended be established as consensus policies.

The GNSO Council and Board votes were based on the [Final Report of the GNSO Council's Whois Task Force on Whois Data Accuracy and Bulk Access](#). That report documented [the extent of agreement and disagreement among impacted groups](#), the [outreach process](#) used to seek to achieve adequate representation of the views of groups that are likely to be impacted, and the [nature and intensity of reasoned support and opposition to the proposed policy](#).

The report was posted on the ICANN web site on 11 March 2003, with a call for public comment. [Various public comments](#) were received and considered by the Board, and the report was discussed at the [ICANN Public Forum session held in Rio de Janeiro on 26 March 2003](#).

Pursuant to [Resolution 03.42](#), notice of the adoption of this policy was given to all registrars on 16 June 2003.

Time for Coming into Compliance: As provided in subsections [3.7.8](#), [4.1](#) and [4.4](#) of [the ICANN Registrar Accreditation Agreement](#), all ICANN-accredited registrars must come into

compliance with the WDRP by their "Compliance Date", as described in the next two sentences. The Compliance Date for registrars accredited before 16 June 2003 is 31 October 2003. The Compliance Date for registrars accredited after 16 June 2003 is the effective date of their accreditation agreements.

Beginning on its Compliance Date, each registrar must provide, before the passage of the anniversary of the creation date of each registration the registrar sponsors, a WDRP notice (described below) to the registrant for that registration. By way of example, a registrar with a Compliance Date of 31 October 2003 is required to give a WDRP notice for registrations it sponsors on the following schedule:

Compliance Date is 31 October 2003		
Domain Name	Creation Date	WDRP Notice Required No Later Than
example.com	14 October 1995	14 October 2004 (and by 14 October of every year thereafter)
example.biz	25 June 2003	25 June 2004 (and by 25 June of every year thereafter)
example.info	15 June 2003	15 June 2004 (and by 15 June of every year thereafter)
example.net	12 November 1997	12 November 2003 (and by 12 November of every year thereafter)
example.org	1 January 1993	1 January 2004 (and by 1 January of every year thereafter)
example.example.name	31 December 2002	31 December 2003 (and by 31 December of every year thereafter)

(Note: WDRP notices for registrations with creation dates of 29 February may be given no later than 1 March in non-leap years.)

What the WDRP Notice Must Include: Each WDRP notice must include a copy of the data elements listed in [RAA subsection 3.3.1](#) as contained in the registrar's database for each registration, plus a statement reminding the registrant that under the terms of the registration agreement [the provision of false Whois information can be grounds for cancellation of a domain name registration](#).

How, and to Whom, the WDRP Notice May Be Presented: The WDRP notice can be presented via web, fax, postal mail, email, or other appropriate means. It can be presented in one or more languages, including at least the language of the registration agreement. The notice may be presented to the registrant either directly or through the administrative contact

for each registration.

Documentation Requirements: Registrars [must maintain](#) either copies of each WDRP notice or an electronic database documenting the date and time, and the content, of each WDRP notice sent under this policy. Registrars shall [make these records available for inspection by ICANN](#) in accordance with the usual terms of the Registrar Accreditation Agreement. ICANN will consider proper notification to have been given for a registration if the registrar can show that a WDRP notice meeting the requirements stated above was given at any time in the year before each anniversary of the registration's creation date (for anniversary dates on or after the Compliance Date).

Model WDRP Notice: In order to assist registrars in preparing the required notice, ICANN has provided the following [Model WDRP Notice](#):

[Sample] Whois Data Reminder

Dear Valued Customer,

This message is a reminder to help you keep the contact data associated with your domain registration up-to-date. Our records include the following information:

Domain: example.com
Registrar Name: IANA_RESERVED

Registrant:
Name: Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)
Address: 4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330
City: Marina del Rey
State/Province: CA
Country: US
Postal Code: 92092

Administrative Contact:
Name: Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)
Address: 4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330
City: Marina del Rey
State/Province: CA
Country: US
Postal Code: 92092
Phone: 310-823-9358
Fax: 310-823-8649

Email: res-dom@iana.org

Technical Contact:

Name: Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA)

Address: 4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330

City: Marina del Rey

State/Province: CA

Country: US

Postal Code: 92092

Phone: 310-823-9358

Fax: 310-823-8649

Email: res-dom@iana.org

Original Creation Date: 11/01/2001

Expiration Date: 11/01/2001

Nameserver Information:

Nameserver: a.iana-servers.net.

Nameserver: b.iana-servers.net.

Nameserver: c.iana-servers.net.

If any of the information above is inaccurate, you must correct it by visiting our website. (If your review indicates that all of the information above is accurate, you do not need to take any action.) Please remember that under the terms of your registration agreement, the provision of false Whois information can be grounds for cancellation of your domain name registration.

Thank you for your attention.

Best regards,

Your ICANN-Accredited Registrar

Appendix B - RAA Whois Requirements

Whois data for generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs) includes information about the registrant, administrative contact, technical contact, and name servers associated with each domain name. Whois services have been available on the Internet since the early 1980s and are widely used. Whois accuracy is important to many users of the Internet.

The Registration Accreditation Agreement (RAA - <http://www.icann.org/registrars/ra-agreement-17may01.htm>) with ICANN-accredited registrars requires registrars to obtain contact information from registrants, provide it to published Whois services, and investigate and correct any reported inaccuracies.

Several provisions of the RAA relate to Whois data:

“3.3.1 At its expense, Registrar shall provide an interactive web page and a port 43 Whois service providing free public query-based access to up-to-date (i.e., updated at least daily) data concerning all active Registered Names sponsored by Registrar for each TLD in which it is accredited. The data accessible shall consist of elements that are designated from time to time according to an ICANN adopted specification or policy. Until ICANN otherwise specifies by means of an ICANN adopted specification or policy, this data shall consist of the following elements as contained in Registrar's database:

3.3.1.1 The name of the Registered Name;

3.3.1.2 The names of the primary nameserver and secondary nameserver(s) for the Registered Name;

3.3.1.3 The identity of Registrar (which may be provided through Registrar's website);

3.3.1.4 The original creation date of the registration;

3.3.1.5 The expiration date of the registration;

3.3.1.6 The name and postal address of the Registered Name Holder;

3.3.1.7 The name, postal address, email address, voice telephone number, and (where available) fax number of the technical contact for the Registered Name; and

3.3.1.8 The name, postal address, email address, voice telephone number, and (where available) fax number of the administrative contact for the Registered Name.”

“3.7.7 Registrar shall require all Registered Name Holders to enter into an electronic or paper registration agreement with Registrar including at least the following provisions:

3.7.7.1 The Registered Name Holder shall provide to Registrar accurate and reliable contact details and promptly correct and update them during the term of the Registered Name registration, including: the full name, postal address, email address, voice telephone number, and fax number if available of the Registered Name Holder; name of authorized person for contact purposes in the case of an Registered Name Holder that is an organization, association, or corporation; and the data elements listed in Subsections 3.3.1.2, 3.3.1.7 and 3.3.1.8.

3.7.7.2 A Registered Name Holder's willful provision of inaccurate or unreliable information, its willful failure promptly to update information provided to Registrar, or its failure to respond for over fifteen calendar days to inquiries by Registrar concerning the accuracy of contact details associated with the Registered Name Holder's registration shall constitute a material breach of the Registered Name Holder-registrar contract and be a basis for cancellation of the Registered Name registration.

3.7.7.3 Any Registered Name Holder that intends to license use of a domain name to a third party is nonetheless the Registered Name Holder of record and is responsible for providing its own full contact information and for providing and updating accurate technical and administrative contact information adequate to facilitate timely resolution of any problems that arise in connection with the Registered Name. A Registered Name Holder licensing use of a Registered Name according to this provision shall accept liability for harm caused by wrongful use of the Registered Name, unless it promptly discloses the identity of the licensee to a party providing the Registered Name Holder reasonable evidence of actionable harm.”

“3.7.8 *Registrar shall abide by any specifications or policies established according to Section 4 requiring reasonable and commercially practicable (a) verification, at the time of registration, of contact information associated with a Registered Name sponsored by Registrar or (b) periodic re-verification of such information (emphasis added).* Registrar shall, upon notification by any person of an inaccuracy in the contact information associated with a Registered Name sponsored by Registrar, take reasonable steps to investigate that claimed inaccuracy. In the event Registrar learns of inaccurate contact information associated with a Registered Name it sponsors, it shall take reasonable steps to correct that inaccuracy.”

In summary, and based on the above provisions of the RAA, a registrar must:

- Require each registrant to submit (and keep updated) accurate contact details (3.7.7.1);
- Provide both a web-based and Port 43 Whois service providing access to complete contact information for all TLDs covered under the RAA (3.3.1);
- Require registrants to agree that willfully submitting inaccurate contact details (or failing to respond within 15 days to an inquiry regarding accuracy) shall be a basis for cancellation of the registration (3.7.7.2); and
- Take reasonable steps to investigate and correct the contact details in response to any reported inaccuracy (3.7.8).
- Comply with any consensus policies adopted by ICANN (4.1)

Appendix C - Whois Data Reminder Policy Survey and Compliance Audit, 2005

Second Annual Whois Data Reminder Policy Survey and Compliance Audit (2005)

Response Date: Friday, 28 October 2005

Registrar: XXXXXXXXXX

IANA-ID: XXXX

Note: Registrar responses to this survey will assist ICANN's efforts to ensure registrar compliance with the Whois Data Reminder Policy (WDRP). The data from this survey also will be aggregated to provide statistical information for a public report describing experiences with the implementation of the WDRP. At this time ICANN has no plans to publish individual registrar responses to this survey and compliance audit.

Instructions:

- Please review the text of the Whois Data Reminder Policy before completing this survey: [<http://www.icann.org/registrars/wdrp.htm>](http://www.icann.org/registrars/wdrp.htm)
- Select one answer for each of the multiple choice questions.
- Use free text to answer questions # 9 and 10. Note that it is only necessary to fill in question # 10 if you answer "f" for question # 2.
- Please send a sample copy of the WDRP Notice that was provided to your registrants, either by email to <wdrp-survey@icann.org>, or by fax to +1 310 823 8649, or by using the upload box below.

1. Please indicate how many total names were under your registrar's sponsorship as of 1 January 2005, in all TLDs in which it is accredited by ICANN:

- ☐ a. Fewer than 1,000
- ☐ b. Between 1,000 and 9,999
- ☐ c. Between 10,000 and 99,999
- ☐ d. Between 100,000 and 999,999
- ☐ e. 1,000,000 or More

2. For what percentage of all registrations under sponsorship have WDRP Notices been sent during the past year?

- ☐ a. Less than 1%
- ☐ b. 1% or more, but less than 10%
- ☐ c. 10% or more, but less than 50%
- ☐ d. 50% or more
- ☐ e. Unable to readily determine this information
- ☐ f. No WDRP Notices have yet been sent

If you check "f", please skip to question 10 below.

3. Were the WDRP Notices sent/presented (primarily) by:

- ☐ a. Web
- ☐ b. Fax
- ☐ c. Postal mail
- ☐ d. Email
- ☐ e. Other

4. What percent, if any, of these WDRP Notices were undeliverable?

- ☐ a. Less than 1%
- ☐ b. 1% or more, but less than 10%
- ☐ c. 10% or more, but less than 50%
- ☐ d. 50% or more
- ☐ e. Unable to readily determine this information

5. In which language(s) were most WDRP Notices sent?

- ☐ a. Arabic
- ☐ b. Chinese
- ☐ c. English
- ☐ d. French
- ☐ e. German
- ☐ f. Italian
- ☐ g. Japanese
- ☐ h. Korean
- ☐ i. Portuguese
- ☐ j. Russian

- ☐ k. Spanish
- ☐ l. Other
- ☐ m. More than one language

6. When were the WDRP Notices sent in relation to the anniversary of the creation date of each registration?

- ☐ a. Primarily before the anniversary of the creation date
- ☐ b. Primarily on the anniversary of the creation date
- ☐ c. Primarily after the anniversary of the creation date
- ☐ d. Unable to readily determine this information

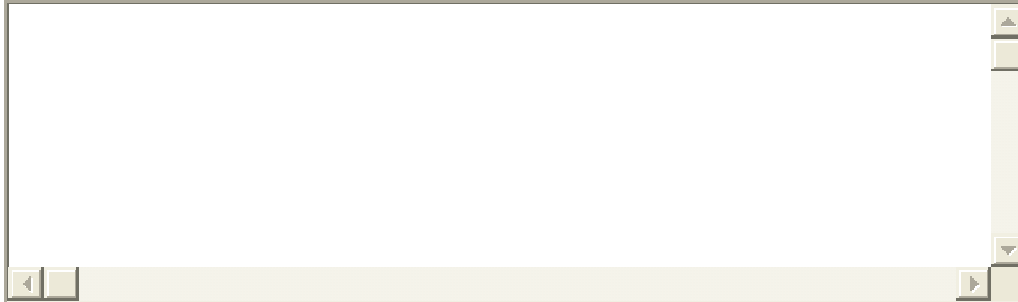
7. Of the WDRP Notices sent successfully, what percentage led to changes in registrant data?

- ☐ a. Less than 1%
- ☐ b. 1% or more, but less than 10%
- ☐ c. 10% or more, but less than 50%
- ☐ d. 50% or more
- ☐ e. Unable to readily determine this information

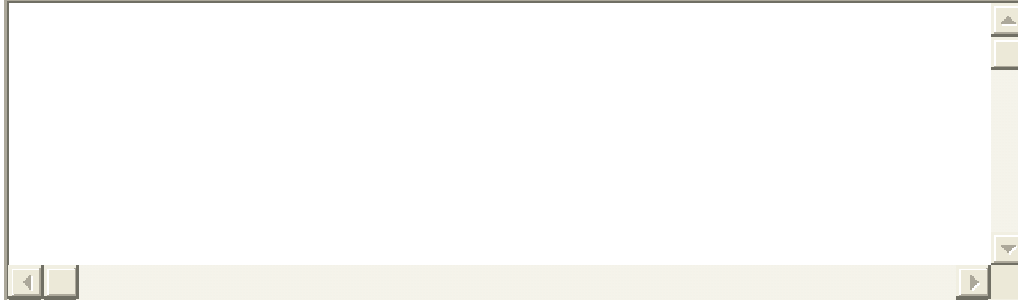
8. Which field was changed most frequently following a WDRP Notice?

- ☐ a. Name or postal address of registered name holder
- ☐ b. Name, postal address, email address, or telephone number of technical contact
- ☐ c. Name, postal address, email address, or telephone number of admin contact
- ☐ d. Unable to readily determine this information

9. Did you encounter any problems in implementation of the Whois Data Reminder Policy? Do you have any suggestions for how to improve the WDRP, or the accuracy of Whois data generally? (Please also indicate if you would be interested in participating in a brief interview to assist ICANN in preparing its public report on WDRP - if so, please include your name, email address, telephone number, and convenient times when you could be reached.)



10. If you answered "No notices sent" in question 2, please explain why below.



Please remember to send a sample copy of the WDRP Notice that was provided to your registrants, either by email to <wdrp-survey@icann.org>, or by fax to +1 310 823 8649.

Alternatively, you can upload a plain text, html, Microsoft Word, or pdf file:

Note: some configurations (browser and system) may not be able to use this facility. Filenames must not include special characters or spaces (the allowed characters are "-", "A"-"Z", "0"-"9", "a"-"z", and "."). Your system must correctly report the content type of the file.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PROMPT RESPONSE

Appendix D - Registrant WDRP FAQ Page

WDRP FAQs For Domain Name Registrants

What is the WDRP?

The Whois Data Reminder Policy or WDRP is a consensus policy adopted by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which requires domain name registrants to review the contact information associated with their domain names and make corrections when necessary. As a part of this, domain name registrars are required to formally remind their customers once a year to review and update their contact information. For detailed information about the adoption of the WDRP, see <http://www.icann.org/registrars/wdrp.htm>.

I just received a WDRP notice. Is this a legitimate request?

The purpose of the WDRP notice is to remind domain name registrants of their obligation to update contact information on file for their domain names. Although you should always be wary of phishing messages and other fraudulent emails, a legitimate WDRP notice email serves an important purpose. For suggestions to avoid phishing scams, visit <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/phishingalrt.htm>.

Why is ICANN contacting me regarding the WDRP? ICANN is not my registrar.

ICANN oversees the domain name system, but it does not send out WDRP notices. WDRP notices are sent by domain name registrars or resellers in order to comply with an ICANN policy. Although some registrars or resellers might send out messages from an "icann@" email account, these messages do not come from ICANN. ICANN requires domain name registrars to send WDRP notices to registrants in order to ensure that Whois records are maintained accurately.

What is a Whois record? What is my duty to keep the information in the record current?

Your registrar maintains a public database of contact information for all of the domain names it maintains. This database is known as a Whois database, and it is available to be searched by members of the public in order to allow rapid resolution of technical problems and to permit enforcement of consumer protection, trademark, and other laws. Your domain name registration agreement with your registrar requires that you keep this information accurate and current.

I received a WDRP notice, but my information is correct. Is any action required on my part to ensure my domain registration is not affected?

When sending WDRP notices, registrars are required to remind their customers that the provision of false Whois information can be grounds for cancellation of a domain name registration. If your information is correct, your domain name will not be cancelled and you do not need to take any action.

Does the WDRP notice indicate that someone complained about my website or domain name?

Annual WDRP notices are sent to all registrants of gTLD domain names (such as .com, .org, .info, etc.). If you received one of these notices, it does not mean that someone complained about your site or your domain name. Although your registrar might contact you if it receives a complaint about your domain name, this would not be in the form of a WDRP notice.

How do I update my contact information / Whois record?

ICANN does not maintain Whois data. In order to update your contact information in the Whois database, you will need to contact your registrar (or your reseller if you registered your domain name through a reseller).

I tried to update my information, but I cannot remember my user name or password. How can they be retrieved?

Because ICANN does not maintain Whois data, you will need to contact your registrar or reseller to update your contact information. If you lost your password or user name, only your registrar or reseller will be able to assist you.

The person who is listed as the administrative contact for my domain name is no longer available or is not responsible for my domain names any more. Can I still change my Whois record?

The person or organization listed as the registrant of the domain name can make changes to the whois data, including changes to the administrative contact. Contact your registrar or reseller to make the necessary changes.

Who is my registrar? How can I contact my registrar or reseller?

To locate your registrar, visit <http://www.internic.net/Whois.html> to perform a Whois search for your domain name. The results of the search will display the name and web address of your registrar. If you registered your domain name through a reseller and do not know how to contact the reseller, the registrar for your name should be able to help you.

I don't recognize the name of my registrar. What should I do?

There are several reasons why you might not recognize the name of your registrar.

If you registered your domain name through a reseller instead of directly with the registrar, the reseller's name might not appear on the Whois record. You should contact the company or person used to register your domain name to see if your registrar is correct.

It is also possible that your registrar's name may have changed since you registered the domain name. You should contact your registrar or ICANN (icann@icann.org) to determine if there has been a name change.

If you believe your domain name was transferred to another registrar without your permission, you should contact your original registrar or reseller for assistance. If you continue to have questions about the transfer of your domain name, please email ICANN at transfer-questions@icann.org.

I'm having trouble updating my Whois data. Can I just send it to ICANN?

No. ICANN does not maintain Whois records. We will gladly help you locate your registrar, but we cannot change your Whois information.

I cancelled the registration of my domain name and am still receiving WDRP emails. Is this appropriate?

You should contact your registrar or the sender of the email message for more information.

Who should I contact for any other questions I may have?

Most questions about your domain name registration can be answered by your registrar. To locate your registrar, visit <http://www.internic.net/Whois.html> to perform a Whois search for your domain name. The results of the search will display the name and web address of your registrar. Domain name questions may also be directed to ICANN at icann@icann.org.