

# **Volume 3: Issues and Challenges Impacting Domain Name Registrants**

1 May 2020



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ICANN GLOBAL SUPPORT CENTER (GSC) DATA AND OBSERVATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
Top Inquiry Types for Registrant Contacts Sept 2019 – Feb 2020	4
<b>ICANN CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE DATA AND OBSERVATIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type Sept 2019 – Feb 2020	6
Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type and Closure Code Sept 2019 – Feb 2020	7
Common WHOIS-related Complaints	8
Common Transfer Complaints	8
Common Renewal Complaints	8
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>9</b>

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# Introduction

An ongoing activity of the [ICANN Registrant Program](#) is to identify and raise awareness amongst the community about the issues and challenges that domain name registrants face in managing their domain names and navigating the Domain Name System (DNS) ecosystem. In an effort to spur discussion and thinking around these issues, the ICANN organization periodically publishes quantitative data to inform the community.

This is the third iteration (Volume 3) of this reporting effort and covers six months (September 2019 – February 2020) of data from the [ICANN Contractual Compliance](#) department and the [ICANN Global Support Center \(GSC\)](#).

This report aims to build upon the data in Volumes 1 ([published in September 2018](#)) and 2 ([published in April 2019](#)) to inform the community of the common trends that ICANN org observes related to inquiries and questions from domain name registrants.

Inquiries about this report or the ICANN Registrant Program may be directed to the ICANN Global Support Center at [globalsupport@icann.org](mailto:globalsupport@icann.org).

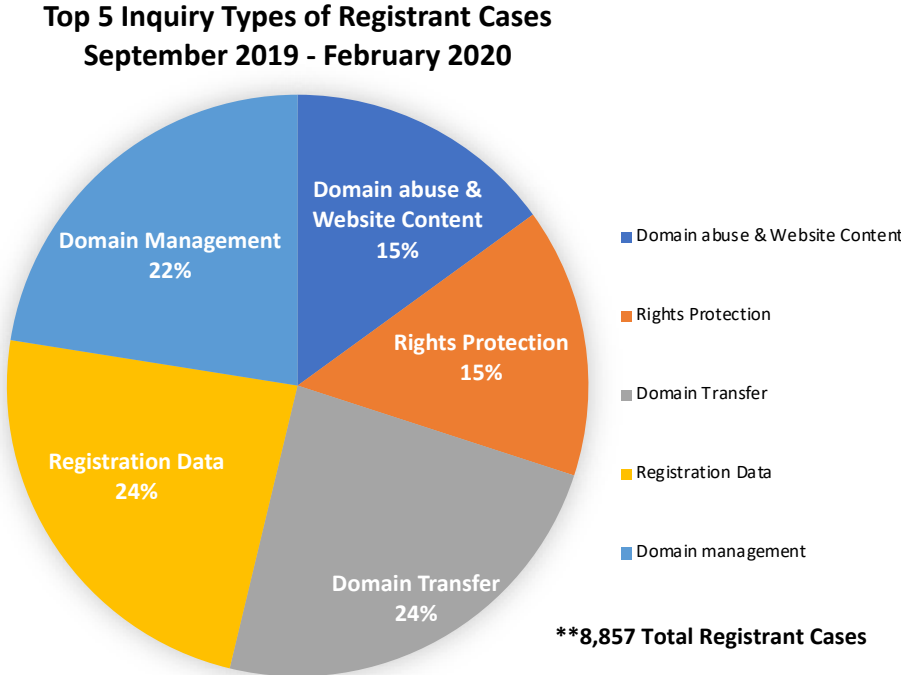
# ICANN Global Support Center (GSC) Data and Observations

ICANN GSC provides 24-hour global support five days a week to contracted parties, new gTLD applicants, and the Internet community at large, including domain name registrants. Approximately 80% of all inquiries that ICANN GSC received during this reporting period (September 2019 – February 2020) came from registrants.

ICANN GSC received a total of 8,857 registrant inquiries during this period. The chart below categorizes the main inquiry types received from September 2019 – February 2020.

## Top Inquiry Types for Registrant Contacts Sept 2019 – Feb 2020

Figure 1:



- **Registration Data** cases include inquiries about registrant domain registration and contact information.
- **Domain Transfer** cases include inquiries about how to transfer domains to another registrar.
- **Domain Management** cases include inquiries related to buying, renewing, and selling domains.

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- **Domain Abuse & Website Content** cases include inquiries about web content, spam, alleged fraud, phishing emails, and/or website content.
  - **Rights Protection** cases include inquiries about cybersquatting, trademark infringement, or domain name hijacking, etc.

People who reach out to ICANN GSC often misunderstand or are unaware of ICANN's limited technical role within the DNS. Regardless of whether the topic is in ICANN's remit or not, ICANN GSC carefully reviews every inquiry to provide guidance and relevant resources.

For example, GSC provides information and education regarding:

- ⦿ How to use registration data directory services (WHOIS and RDAP) and what data is available.
- ⦿ The role of the participants in the DNS ecosystem, including resellers, registrars, and registries.
- ⦿ The mission of the ICANN organization, board, and community.
- ⦿ Resources available on ICANN.org.
- ⦿ Options they may have through Contractual Compliance or the ICANN Complaints Officer.

## ICANN Contractual Compliance Data and Observations

The goal of ICANN Contractual Compliance is to ensure that ICANN's contracted parties (registries and registrars) fulfill the requirements set forth in their contractual agreements with ICANN. ICANN Contractual Compliance publishes periodic reports on complaint types that have been received and closed. However, since complaint filing is open to anyone, not all complaints received by ICANN Contractual Compliance come from domain registrants.

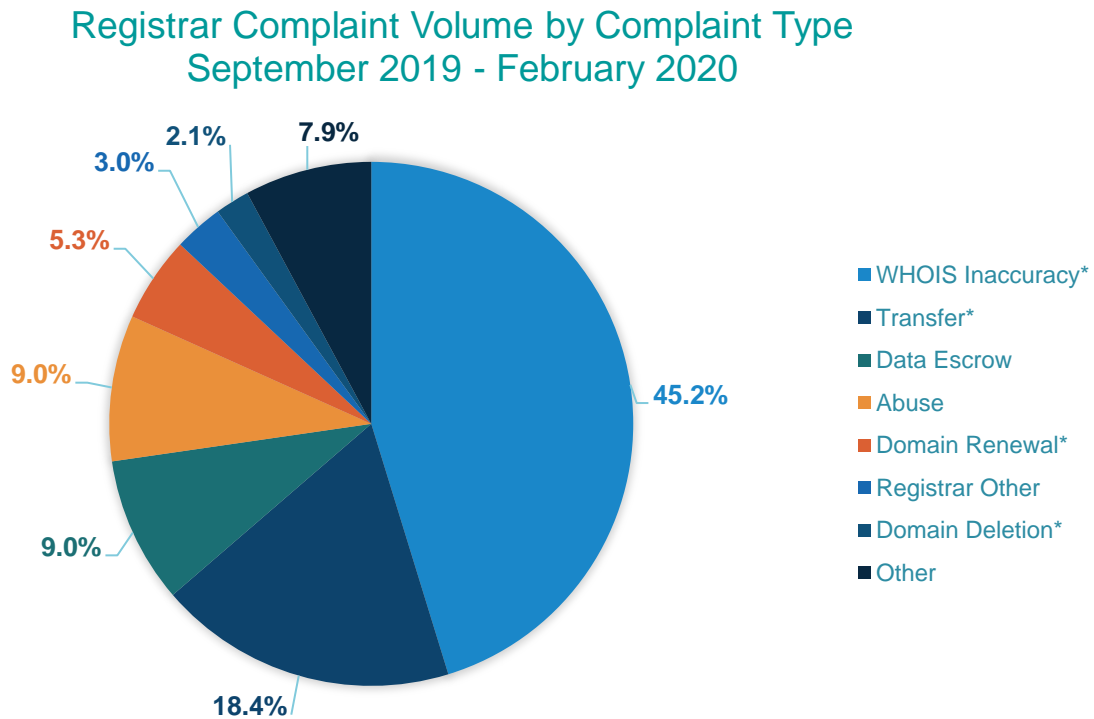
The following data sets were derived from ICANN Contractual Compliance's online metrics reporting, which can be [accessed here](#).

The following table illustrates the most common types of complaints received against registrars from September 2019 – February 2020.

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## Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type Sept 2019 – Feb 2020

Figure 2:



*Note: complaints are submitted by various reporters, including registrants.*

**Contractual compliance data identifies registrant-related topics.**

**If you have any Contractual Compliance related questions, email them to: [compliance@icann.org](mailto:compliance@icann.org).**

**To view additional ICANN Contractual Compliance metrics, go to: <https://features.icann.org/compliance>.**

**To learn more about the different complaint types, go to: <https://www.icann.org/compliance/complaint>.**

The next table analyzes complaint types against registrars during the same period. The closure code descriptions give insight into how the complaints were resolved/closed and may provide further detail about the specific issue that the complainants, including registrants, may have been facing.

## Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type and Closure Code Sept 2019 – Feb 2020

\*Figure 3 Data limited to only those Complaint Types which may be registrant-related

Complaint Types	Closure Code Description	Total
<b>Domain Deletion</b>		<b>83</b>
	The domain is no longer suspended.	56
	The domain was not suspended at the time the complaint was processed.	15
	The registrar corrected its noncompliance.	1
	The registrar restored the domain.	8
	The registrar's deletion of the domain was compliant.	3
<b>Domain Renewal</b>		<b>51</b>
	The registrar corrected its noncompliance.	2
	The registrar demonstrated compliance.	1
	The domain has been renewed with the same registrant.	2
	The registrant indicated the registrar provided the requested assistance for domain renewal.	2
	The registrar corrected its Expired Registration Recovery Policy (ERRP) noncompliance.	12
	The registrar demonstrated compliance with the Expired Registration Recovery Policy (ERRP) requirements.	32
<b>Transfer</b>		<b>209</b>
	The change of registrant has been completed.	1
	The change of registrant is not authorized.	3
	The registrar corrected its noncompliance.	5
	The registrar demonstrated compliance with its contractual requirements.	33
	The registrar demonstrated compliance with the change of registrant requirements.	1
	The registrar demonstrated compliance.	2
	The registrar provided evidence that the transfer AuthInfo code was provided to the registrant and the public WHOIS shows the domain is unlocked for transfer.	8
	The transfer cannot be completed due to a dispute over the identity of the registrant or administrative contact.	3
	The transfer cannot be completed due to a transfer or registration within the past 60 days, or a change of registrant lock.	23
	The transfer cannot be completed due to a transfer within the past 60 days.	1
	The transfer cannot be completed due to evidence of fraud.	2
	The transfer cannot be completed due to lack of payment for the prior or current registration period.	3
	The transfer cannot be completed due to the change of registrant lock.	5
	The transfer cannot be completed without proof of the transfer contact's identity.	7
	The transfer has been completed.	110
	The transfer was denied because of a court order received by the registrar.	2
<b>Uniform Domain-Name Dispute-Resolution (UDRP)</b>		<b>19</b>
	The registrar corrected its noncompliance.	4
	The registrar demonstrated compliance with the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) requirements.	4
	The registrar demonstrated compliance.	2
	The registrar locked a domain subject to a Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) proceeding.	3
	The registrar verified the domain with the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) provider.	5
	The Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) decision cannot be implemented due to an intervening lawsuit.	1
<b>WHOIS Inaccuracy</b>		<b>966</b>
	The domain is suspended and the registrar is not required to address the WHOIS inaccuracy complaint.	686
	The registrar corrected its noncompliance.	9
	The registrar demonstrated compliance.	2
	The registrar verified the domain's WHOIS information is correct.	13
	The WHOIS data has been updated.	256
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1,328</b>

Below are some of the most common complaints from registrants related to WHOIS, Transfers, and Renewals.

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## Common WHOIS-related Complaints

- ⦿ Incorrect/invalid registration data displayed in the WHOIS database.
- ⦿ “Missing” registration data due to the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Temporary Specification.
- ⦿ Registrants’ inability to update registration records:
  - No access to Registration Data control panel or no ability to login.
  - No response from service provider or reseller.
- ⦿ Domain name holder issues – domain names registered in the name of hosting providers, resellers or former employees of registrant organization rather than the actual domain name holder, which can prevent the actual domain name holder from getting important information and managing their domain names.

## Common Transfer Complaints

- ⦿ Unable to retrieve “AuthInfo” codes via control panel/user panel. “AuthInfo” codes are unique verification codes used to approve domain name transfers.
- ⦿ Unable to unlock domain name via control panel/user panel.
- ⦿ Transfer requests by someone not listed as registrant or Admin contact.
- ⦿ Request transfer between web hosting or service providers.
- ⦿ Registrar/reseller denied transfer due to additional fee, such as “Transfer Fee”.
- ⦿ Registrar/reseller denied transfer due to pending/future registration period.
- ⦿ Unresponsive/uncooperative resellers or service providers.
- ⦿ Hijacked domain/email accounts and unauthorized transfers.

## Common Renewal Complaints

- ⦿ Registrant did not receive renewal reminders since registrant email is non-functional.
- ⦿ Registrant not able to renew/restore domain because control panel was inaccessible.
- ⦿ Registrant paid renewal fee, but domain name was not renewed.
- ⦿ Registrar/reseller did not provide information about renewal/redemption fees.
- ⦿ Customer service problems such as failed renewal due to payment methods and billing disputes (out of scope).
- ⦿ Reseller’s failure to send reminders, inform customer, or other issue described above.



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## Next Steps

The ICANN Registrant Program will continue to work with departments across the organization that interact with registrants to regularly gather and analyze data in addition to publishing similar data online at [icann.org/registrants](https://icann.org/registrants) as part of our broader effort to raise awareness about the issues and challenges that registrants face.

We encourage the ICANN community and readers of this report to share any data they might have regarding issues impacting registrants to guide future conversations and analysis.

Feedback on this report and other relevant data on issues and challenges impacting domain name registrants can be sent to [globalsupport@icann.org](mailto:globalsupport@icann.org).