

## Criminal and Consumer Protection Law Enforcement Agency Uses of Whois

| User Type  | Data Elements  | Purpose  |
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| As a criminal law enforcement agency   | Our agency uses all of the Whois data elements (different data elements prove key to different investigations). The following are illustrative examples: registrant and registrar data combined with other purchasing information to identify sources of supply; common email accounts can link together a network of suspects; even fake names and false information can relate to a single payment source and relate to a primary defendant. | In order to identify for example, the sources of supply for counterfeit and misbranded medications; individuals engaging in illegal sales of online drugs; the individuals responsible for operation of illicit websites associated with counterfeit, misbranded and adulterated Botox.  |
| As a consumer protection agency  | Our agency uses all elements of Whois data (different data elements prove key to different investigations). The following are illustrative examples: Registrant information, registrar information, billing contact, payment information, IP addresses and email addresses, etc. may all be used in combination with other information to help identify perpetrators of false or deceptive practices.  | In order to identify, for example the perpetrators and facilitators of Tech support scams, a variety of on-line scams associated with spam, and false and/or misleading claims on websites.  |
| As a consumer protection agency that receives complaints from the public and other data contributors, including the Council of Better Business Bureaus, State Attorney Generals offices, other Federal agencies, money transfer companies, and the Canada Competition Bureau | We observe that fraud-related complaints submitted by the public often reference the public's use of a variety of Whois information (including but not limited to registrant, registrar, IP and email address, physical address, and phone numbers, etc.) to investigate on their own behalf, a domain that is related to a false or deceptive practice.   | A recent search of our Consumer Sentinel Database over the last five years revealed over <b>4000 fraud-related complaints</b> which referenced the use of Whois data for the public's own investigation of complaints related to, among other topics: internet information services, unsolicited email, internet web design promotions, shop at home, spyware, malware, imposter scams, advanced fee loans, debt collection, mortgage refinance offers, employment scams, credit |

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|  |  | card offers,<br>business opportunities\work-at-home plans, tech support scams, government impostors, telemarketing, sweepstakes and lotteries, vacations, real estate, and counterfeit checks. |
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