How the FTC Uses Whois Data

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Topics

• Background re FTC
• How we use Whois data
• FTC’s position on Whois data
Background about the FTC

- Only agency with jurisdiction over competition and consumer protection.
- On the consumer protection side, we are charged with protecting consumers from unfair, fraudulent, and deceptive practices.
- This includes Internet fraud.
- We are a civil agency.
  - We obtain injunctions.
  - We seek consumer redress.
Overview of Internet fraud efforts

- Fighting fraud is important
  - To address consumer injury
  - To build consumer confidence
- Since 1994, we have brought over 250 law enforcement actions involving Internet fraud against over 700 defendants, stopping over $2.1 billion in consumer injury.
- Internet fraud harms consumers.
How we use Whois data

• To identify where a perpetrator is located
  – TLD case
How we use Whois data

• To serve process
  – BTV case
How we use Whois data

• To get investigative leads
  – Premier Escrow case
  – We found registrar, web-hosting company, and asked for more info
How we use Whois data

- To conduct surfs
  - We find e-mail addresses through the Whois database.
FTC Testimony

- We summarized ways we use Whois data, concerns about inaccuracies, gave examples.
- 3 conclusions:
  - Law enforcement agencies should have access to all Whois data.
  - Public should have access to Whois data about commercial sites.
  - For noncommercial sites, we recognize privacy concerns with public availability, and want to continue to work with stakeholders on this issue.
- Searchability.