WHOIS Data Elements

Bruce Tonkin
Chief Technology Officer
Melbourne IT
Data Collected

• Registered Name Holder (Registrant)
  – The legal holder of the domain name
  – Should be corporate entity or individual
• Administration Contact
• Technical Contact
• Billing Contact (optional)
• Payment details (credit card etc)
• Domain name details (name, nameservers)
Registrant data

- Name
- Organisation (optional)
- Full postal address (for land mail)
- Phone (optional)
- Fax (optional)
- Email (optional)
- Authentication data (optional)
  - E.g password, auth-info
Admin and Tech contacts

• Name (e.g John Smith)
• Organisation (optional)
• Full postal address (for land mail)
• Phone
• Fax (if available)
• Email
• Authentication data (optional)
  – E.g password, auth-info
Billing Contact (optional)

- As for admin and tech (all elements optional)
- Payment information (e.g. credit card)
Issues

• No clear purposes defined for registrant, admin, and tech contacts
  – Often default to be the same person
• Registrars and registrants handle them in different ways
• Often confusion between individual registering the name, and the legal holder of the name (could be the employer of the individual)
Data access technologies

• WHOIS protocol (port-43 WHOIS)
  – Send some ASCII text and get some ASCII text back
  – Usually used to provide exact match lookup

• Interactive Web page
  – Wide range of implements by registries and registrars
  – Usually only exact match lookup

• File Transfer
  – For bulk access
  – subject to a user entering into a legal agreement (bulk access agreement)
Data Displayed

• Domain details (name, nameservers)
• Creation date and time
• Expiry date and time
• Status (optional)
• Registrar (optional)
• Last update date and time (optional)
• Last transfer date and time (optional)
Data displayed

• Registrant data
  – name and address

• Admin and tech
  – (name, address, phone, fax, email)
Problems

• Port-43 WHOIS and interactive WHOIS used anonymously for data mining to collect large quantities of contact information
  – Non-standard approaches used by registrars to limit this
• Registrants not clear on purpose for data collected and how data users are given access to this data
• Concerns about accuracy and privacy of data
• Authorisation problems (who has authority to change domain name record, and who is responsible for the use of the name)