

.nz Whois Server Policy Review

Consultation Paper

Introduction

The current Whois Server Policy (<http://dnc.org.nz/content/whois.pdf>) is being reviewed by a working group set up by the .nz Oversight Committee (NZOC) of InternetNZ.

This paper provides information and context for the current review of the Whois policy. It raises three key areas of discussion: the information displayed as a result of a Whois query; the nature of Whois queries that can be undertaken; and security arrangements for monitoring access to the Whois information.

Whois queries can be undertaken through a website (e.g. the DNC site at <http://dnc.org.nz> or through authorised .nz registrar sites) or through a command line to the SRS Whois Server.

All aspects of the Whois policy are being reviewed but the discussion in this paper focuses on the key issues as identified by the working group. At the end of the paper are specific questions which could be usefully addressed by people wishing to contribute submissions. In addition to these questions, comments are welcome on any issue people would like the working group to consider.

Current Policy

The current Whois Server Policy can be found at <http://dnc.org.nz/content/whois.pdf>.

A sample Whois query response is included below. As per the policy, the details displayed include the domain name, designated registrar, name server list, registrant contact details, administrative contact details, technical contact details, registration status, date registered and the date the domain name is billed until.

Example of current whois query result:

Users confirm on submission their agreement to all published Terms	
Query Time/Date	08:46, 17/9/2004
Domain Name	srs.net.nz
Status	Active
Date Registered	00:00, 7/2/2002
Date Billed Until	00:00, 7/10/2004
Date Last Modified	00:15, 7/9/2004
Include in DNS?	yes

Registrar Name	Domain Name Commissioner
Registrar Address1	PO Box 11881
Registrar City	Wellington
Registrar Country	NZ (NEW ZEALAND)
Registrar Phone	+64 4 472-1600
Registrar Fax	+64 4 495-2115
Registrar Email	info@dnc.org.nz
Registrant Contact Name	The Internet Society of New Zealand Incorporated
Registrant Contact Address1	PO Box 11-881
Registrant Contact City	Wellington
Registrant Contact Postalcode	6001
Registrant Contact Country	NZ (NEW ZEALAND)
Registrant Contact Phone	+64 4 472 1600
Registrant Contact Fax	+64 4 495 2115
Registrant Contact Email	exe.dir@internetcz.net.nz
Admin Contact Name	Executive Director
Admin Contact Address1	InternetNZ
Admin Contact Address2	PO Box 11-881
Admin Contact City	Wellington
Admin Contact Postalcode	6001
Admin Contact Country	NZ (NEW ZEALAND)
Admin Contact Phone	+64 4 472 1600
Admin Contact Fax	+64 4 495 2115
Admin Contact Email	exe.dir@internetcz.net.nz
Technical Contact Name	Technical Manager
Technical Contact Address1	InternetNZ
Technical Contact Address2	PO Box 11-881
Technical Contact City	Wellington
Technical Contact Postalcode	6001
Technical Contact Country	NZ (NEW ZEALAND)
Technical Contact Phone	+64 4 472 1600
Technical Contact Fax	+64 4 495 2115
Technical Contact Email	soa@internetcz.net.nz
Ns Name 01	internetcz.net.nz
Ns Ip4 01	202.36.204.4
Ns Name 02	ns1.actrix.co.nz
Ns Ip4 02	203.96.16.35
Ns Name 03	ns1.srs.net.nz

Ns Ip4 03	202.46.191.17
Ns Name 04	ns2.srs.net.nz
Ns Ip4 04	202.49.159.2
Users are advised that the following activities are strictly forbidden.	
Using multiple WHOIS queries, or using the output of multiple WHOIS queries in conjunction with any other facility or service, to enable or effect a download of part or all of the .nz Register.	
Using any information contained in the WHOIS query output to attempt a targeted contact campaign with any person, or any organisation, using any medium.	
A breach of these conditions will be treated as a breach of the .nz Policies and Procedures. Sanctions in line with those specified in the policies and procedures at www.dnc.org.nz may result from any breach.	

There are additional SRS fields of 'date cancelled' (where the domain name is in 'PendingRelease' status) and 'date locked' (only shown if the domain name concerned has been locked to prevent any changes from being made - refer clause 10 of the [Registering, Managing and Cancelling](#) policy). These fields are not shown on the above example.

Issue 1 – Information Displayed

As per the example above, results from a Whois query can return a full record that includes all registrant, administration and technical contact details. Details regarding the domain name registration and the registrar are also enclosed.

This information will continue to be required regardless of the outcome of this review as the fields currently displayed are all part of the technical operation of the Shared Registry System (SRS) and that is not being reviewed at this time.

There is no difference in the response fields based on the nature of the registrant, that is, whether the registrant is an individual or an organisation.

One of the major issues to be considered as part of this review is whether all the details currently displayed should continue to be returned as part of a Whois query, or whether the information made public should be restricted.

Issue 2 – Whois Query Options

Whois queries can only be undertaken by domain name. It is not possible for the public, or registrars, to search the .nz register by registrant or any field other than the domain name. There are no plans to change this situation.

Also at present, it is not possible to undertake wildcard queries or to do bulk Whois queries. One question is whether this policy position should remain. (Note: multiple Whois queries are possible within a registrar transaction but each domain name queried counts as one Whois query.)

Issue 3 – Security and System Access

Clause 4.5 of the current policy states that the Whois server will be monitored to detect high transaction rates. The level at which alarms are triggered is not currently published for the .nz domain name space. There are a number of different checks in place covering more than just the number of domain names queried and the flexibility enables more proactive management by the registry.

Though the current policy states that monitoring will take place to ensure the Whois is not checked in a speculative manner, it is silent in what action can be taken where a potential abuse is detected. Currently the registry does take steps to follow up on what is considered excessive levels of Whois queries and, where necessary, block access to the .nz Whois by the IP address undertaking the queries. The working group is considering whether specific powers to block access should be covered in the revised Whois policy.

Conclusion

This paper provides a brief overview of the issues being considered by the Whois policy review working group. This is part of a Call for Public Comment and indicates the key areas on which feedback is sought. Responses addressing the questions in the Appendix, and feedback on any other area relating to the Whois function, would be appreciated.

An online feedback form is available on the DNC site at http://dnc.org.nz/content/whois_form_1.html. The form allows for input on the questions outlined in the Appendix, as well as general feedback for the review. You are free to use the form, or to generate your own response to the Review.

Please send comments by email to policies@dnc.org.nz, by fax to +64 4 495 2115 or by post to the Office of the Domain Name Commissioner, InternetNZ, P O Box 11-881, Wellington, New Zealand.

All feedback is due by 5pm on Monday 1 November 2004

Notice of all comments will be published on the DNC website. Confidential comments can be made on application; people wishing to make a confidential comment should forward a request with reasons to the submission address above.

Appendix 1 – Discussion Questions

The questions below are for your consideration. They provide some specific ideas which the working group would like feedback on. Submissions are not bound to follow the lines of thinking the working group suggests, they are simply here as an additional prompt.

Issue 1 – Information Displayed

1. Should all the information currently displayed (see example above), continue to be available as a result of a whois query?
2. If yes to question 1 – why?
3. If no to question 1
 - a. What fields should be displayed and why?
 - b. What fields should not be displayed and why?
4. Should there be any distinction between information displayed where the domain name is registered to an individual compared to one registered to an organisation?
5. If yes to question 4
 - a. What should and shouldn't be displayed where an individual and why?
 - b. What should and shouldn't be displayed where an organisation and why?

Issue 2 – Whois Query Options

6. Do you agree with the current policy position that wild card searches, and bulk whois queries, should not be permitted? Why?

Issue 3 – Security and System Access

7. What are your views on the position of InternetNZ to not publish the levels set for monitoring Whois query transactions?
8. Should the Whois policy specify the actions the registry can take when abuse of the Whois is suspected? Why?

General Feedback

9. Are there any other issues you think the working group needs to consider in the course of the review?