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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ALAC Statement on the Whois Registrant Identification Study, Draft Report

Introduction

By the Staff of ICANN

An initial draft of this Statement was composed by Salanieta Tamanikaiwaimaro, ALAC member from the Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO) after discussion of the topic within At-Large and on the Mailing Lists.

On 7 March 2013, this Statement was posted on the [At-Large Whois Registrant Identification Study, Draft Report Workspace](#).

On that same day, Olivier Crépin-Leblond, the Chair of the ALAC, asked that a call for comments on the draft Statement be sent to At-Large members via the [ALAC Announce Mailing List](#).

On 8 March 2013, a version incorporating the comments received was posted on the Workspace.

On that same day, the Chair requested that Staff transmit the Statement to the Public Comment process, copying the ICANN Staff member responsible for this Public Comment topic, with a note stating that it was currently undergoing ALAC ratification.

[End of Introduction]

The original version of this document is the English text available at <http://www.atlarge.icann.org/correspondence>. Where a difference of interpretation exists or is perceived to exist between a non-English edition of this document and the original text, the original shall prevail.

ALAC Statement on the Whois Registrant Identification Study, Draft Report

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) would like to thank the GNSO and particularly NORC at the University of Chicago for its Draft Project Summary Report.

The WHOIS Registrant Identification Study was useful in identifying the types of registrants, in adding context to issues raised within previous WHOIS Reports and helped to inform the discussions on WHOIS Misuse, Abuse and Privacy related issues. The findings are very useful and will serve as an important factor in dealing with the development of Policies.

The breakdown of Apparent Domain Name users was interesting where:

- 37% were “legal person” users;
- 26% were tagged as “no usable online content”;
- 21% were “parked domains”;
- 12% were of an “unknown user type”; and
- 5% were “natural person” users.

As the second largest group, it is surprising to find the “non-usable online content” has such importance and we would like to see the breakdown of this figure from a geographical perspective.

On the methodology, we do not understand why NORC checked DNSBL listings, which are mostly used for fighting e-mail spam. This is even more of a paradox because the focus appeared to be on reviewing web sites and FTP servers. Today, the latter is seldom used. Domain names that may be used solely for e-mail do not appear to have been verified. Given the small sample, it would have been possible to send out an e-mail to the domain registrant, asking if they were an individual or a business. This might have reduced the large number of unknowns in the research.

It was interesting to discover the relative percentage of Privacy and Proxy use among legal persons and that of the 586 sampled domains, 55 % were legal person registrants, 25% were natural person registrants, 15% were privacy and proxy registrants and 5% were unknown.

A closer inspection of the study reveals that of the 320 domain registrants coded as Privacy/Proxy service providers, only 10 were determined to be privacy service providers. Therefore, 3 % of domain registrants appear to be using a privacy or proxy provider. The ALAC notes that this figure is significantly different from ICANN’s *Study on the Prevalence of Domain Names Registered using a Privacy or Proxy Service* which had found a much larger percentage: approximately 15 percent of domain registrants. The ALAC would be interested in receiving an explanation about this discrepancy.

We are concerned with the size of the “unknown country” data as per Table F.1 on pages 83-84 of the Draft Report. This appears to be very significant. Also, the study appeared to be using a data sample that was very US Centric. The ALAC would have preferred to see more sampling from the Asian and Eastern European regions since these are two areas with high Internet service growth.

The ALAC is grateful both for the Briefing and the Report and may revert with requests for clarifications on various aspects of the Study once we have completed un-packaging the Draft Report.