# WHOIS Privacy and Proxy Relays & Reveal – Pre-Survey Feasibility survey

***“This survey particularly assessed the feasibility of conducting a future in-depth study into communication Relay and identity Reveal requests sent for gTLD domain names registered using Proxy and Privacy services”[[1]](#footnote-1)***

The document recaps the following:

On the march 7th of 2011, the GNSO council issued a motion to conduct a feasibility survey on the matter titled above. However, ICANN staff concluded after many investigations that it was too premature for such a survey to be conducted. Instead, a pre-survey was suggested with the aim to determine whether the launch of the full study is feasible and how. Actually many barriers to conduction a full survey were identified and among them we can name the difficulty to find diverse participants for a very large outreach and the fact that many of the willing participants are likely no able to provide all the data elements intended to be collected by the survey.

The goal of this pre-survey is mainly to determine study cost and duration associated with the full survey. So the proposed approach was to build a team of senior researchers with a solid background on the problem, study goals, and contacts needed for community outreach. The Interisle Consulting Group in Boston, MA, USA performed this survey and posted final results in August 2012. The report of this survey, available via this [link](http://gnso.icann.org/en/issues/whois/whois-pp-survey-final-report-22aug12-en.pdf), stated that a full study is feasible mainly if some strong decisions are taken to overcome the barriers cited in the pre-survey document.

# Study on WHOIS Proxy/Privacy Abuse

The objective of this document was to answer a critical question submitted by ICANN on how to assess truth on the following hypothesis: “A significant percentage of the domain names used to conduct illegal or harmful Internet activities are registered via privacy or proxy services to obscure the perpetrator’s identity”. The study was conducted by the National Physical Laboratory of Cambridge, and directed by Dr Richard CLAYTON. The research found it useful, also, to consider the following hypothesis: “The percentage of domain names used to conduct illegal or harmful Internet activities that are registered via privacy or proxy services to obscure identity is significantly greater than the equivalent percentage of domain names used for entirely lawful Internet activities”.

On the issue raised above, the research team concluded that when domains names are maliciously registered, privacy/proxy services are used more than the average. But some legal and harmless activities also use privacy/proxy services. When those types of services are not used in a malicious registration, 90% of the registrants cannot reached directly by phone.

**Farell FOLLY, to the GNSO-PDP-Privacy-Subgroup**

1. http://gnso.icann.org/en/group-activities/other/whois/studies [↑](#footnote-ref-1)