Recommendation R5.1

The ICANN Board should direct the ICANN Organization to look for potentially-anomalous ARS results (e.g., 40% of ARS-generated tickets closed with no action because the RDS (WHOIS) record changed) to determine the underlying cause and take appropriate action to reduce anomalies.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Findings: Throughout ARS project Phase 2, a consistently high percentage of ARS-generated tickets have been closed with no action. As detailed in Section 3.5.4.5, changes in the RDS (WHOIS) record between ARS sampling and inaccuracy ticket processing appear to account for 40-60% of closures resulting in no compliance action. In follow-up discussions with ICANN Org, the review team was unable to obtain sufficient information about these record changes and concluded that further investigation is warranted to determine the underlying cause(s) and either rule out or remediate possible processing anomalies.

Rationale:

The intent of this recommendation is to improve the effectiveness of ARS in contributing to improvement of RDS (WHOIS) accuracy. If this unexpectedly high ratio of RDS (WHOIS) updates within a relatively short period of time can be extrapolated to all gTLDs, the review team believes that a better understanding of these RDS (WHOIS) changes may help to improve follow-up. For example, how many of such cases involve registrations that expire without renewal prior to ticket processing? How many involve domain names that are transferred to a new registrant and/or registrar prior to processing? How many involve RDS (WHOIS) records that are updated by the registrant or registrar, with or without remediating the ARS-detected inaccuracy? Analyzing the root cause behind closures resulting in no compliance action could uncover patterns that lead to better inaccuracy detection or more targeted compliance actions.

Impact of Recommendation:

The ARS project team, the registrars receiving ARS-generated tickets, and (probably) the ICANN Contractual Compliance team will be impacted by this recommendation. If this recommendation is successfully implemented, the ratio of ARS-generated tickets closed without action may be reduced. If this recommendation is not implemented, there could be anomalies in detection or processing that reduce the benefits obtained from ARS. Currently, the ARS project represents a major effort to improve RDS (WHOIS) accuracy. However, given the considerable number of ARS-generated tickets closed with no action refining ARS methodology will contribute the effectiveness of ARS.

Feasibility of Recommendation:

For every ARS-generated ticket, the ARS project team has worked closely with the identified registrar. To implement this recommendation, further actions are needed to examine ARS-generated tickets that result in closure with no action to determine and analyze the underlying causes. Depending upon common underlying cause(s), investigation and action could involve the ARS Team, ICANN Contractual Compliance, and (to the extent feasible) follow up with the registrar. The review team acknowledges that root cause analysis would add to the workload of affected parties, but believe this effort is feasible and manageable.

Implementation:

As described above, ICANN Org would be responsible for implementing this recommendation. In some cases registrars receiving ARS-generated tickets closed with no action could be involved as well. Given that ARS is an on-going project, this recommendation could be injected into the project's process for continuing improvement. The envisioned implementation timeline could be 12 months.

1. This is a place holder recommendation that will likely change because, in parallel with this Draft Report being published for Public Comment, the review team is further investigating this issue with the ICANN Org ARS team and ICANN Contractual Compliance. The review team wishes to better understand why the ARS reports indicate such an unexpectedly high ratio of RDS (WHOIS) updates, while there is little evidence that the overall data accuracy rate improved to a comparable extent. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)