**Chapter 1: Executive Summary**

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is one of a small but important set of organizations responsible for administering certain functions critical to the operation of the Internet. ICANN's primary responsibility is to facilitate the policy maintenance and enhancement of the Domain Name System (DNS), an integral part of the Internet.

ICANN is a California, public benefit corporation that undertakes periodic reviews to assess its efficacy in serving its various constituencies and the global public at large. In 2009, ICANN and the US Department of Commerce approved, signed, and published an Affirmation of Commitments (AoC) in which ICANN commits to undertake a number of high level reviews, including on Accountability and Transparency (completed December 2010), and WHOIS.

This report is the formal output of the Review Team responsible for assessing WHOIS and represents the culmination of an eighteen-month-long effort by a diverse group, representative of ICANN's makeup.

1. **History**

ICANN was formed in 1998 to fulfill the requirement that operation of the DNS move from the government to private sector control.

WHOIS (not an acronym) was first defined as a *protocol* of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) in 1982. WHOIS is one of the simplest in the suite of protocols that the IETF maintains. Any machine connected to the Internet can operate a WHOIS *service* by implementing the protocol and responding to requests as described in the *specification*.

Initially, the WHOIS *specification* described a set of information that was requested of anyone capable of transmitting information across the network. This information consisted of name and contact information which was to be stored on specific servers and would be returned upon receipt of an appropriate WHOIS request. It was used to provide points of contact for the network hosts.

As the Internet grew and it became impractical to maintain a single WHOIS server, updated versions of the *specification* were developed and approved. These specifications dropped the references to specific servers and required information, thereby enabling broader use of the specifications. It was then incumbent on any community desiring to use WHOIS to define required information and where that information could be found. ICANN is responsible for those definitions for the Domain Name System.

1. **Discussion**

Domain names are the familiar sequence of characters we see in our web browsers after the "http://www." and before the next "/"; e.g. "[google.com](http://google.com/)", "[redcross.org](http://redcross.org/)", and "[europa.eu](http://europa.eu/)". They are an integral part of the Internet, serving us as mnemonics for places we have been to or wish to be, and as keys for machines to perform the necessary translation from the abstract to the real.

Domain names sit on the human side of the man-machine interface and through the DNS are translated to machine-compatible Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. Internet-connected machines use IP addresses to send and receive messages transmitted over the Internet. They are fundamental to the Internet itself, as is uniform translation from name to address, and back again.

While the DNS presents a single, complete view of the Internet, no single machine holds all of the Internet's addressing and mapping information. Rather, that information is distributed across a series of name servers that cooperate to seamlessly provide that one comprehensive view.

Domain names and the DNS are used in virtually every aspect of the Internet, not just those parts most visible to most consumers, web browsers. Every email message, song or movie download, instant message, tweet, Facebook "like", or online transaction involves the DNS in some way. Without the DNS, the Internet would not exist as we know it.

As important as machine to machine communication is, there are times when human to human interaction related to the Internet is required. The reasons for this interaction are varied and include notice, abuse, and security amongst others. For these reasons, contact information (as specified by ICANN) related to a domain name must be provided in order to register a domain name, much like when registering a vehicle.

This information is stored and is available to the public through a system known colloquially as WHOIS. WHOIS predates the "commercial" Internet and remains largely unchanged since its earliest days, ca 1982.

1. **Debate**

WHOIS is the source of long-running discussion and debate at ICANN, other Internet Governance institutions, and elsewhere. This team and its successors hopefully will inform future debate and consensus-based decision making.

Issues in the WHOIS debate are varied. Any discussion of WHOIS will likely contain all of the words accuracy, privacy, anonymity, cost, policing, and SPAM. Each of the issues is important. This is sometimes lost in the heat of the debate and it is important to remind ourselves of this on a regular basis.

In order to inform the debate, and perhaps make the decision-making process easier, ICANN has adopted the age-old tradition of "the study" in lieu of or as a precursor to action. Significant sums have been spent studying WHOIS, more is being spent, and yet more is planned with the span of time now stretching into decades. While the studies are welcome, and their results will be available to future WHOIS Review Teams, we are disappointed to note that these studies were called for by the GAC in 2007, and are only now being undertaken 5 years later. Having an evidence base for policy making is a good thing, but the delay in commissioning these studies is symptomatic of the lack of priority which ICANN the organisation and sections of the community have afforded to WHOIS issues.

Each study addresses some different aspect of WHOIS; accuracy, proxy/privacy reveal/request, availability, ... They take time to be approved, conducted, reported, and of course debated. This time is measured in years and could be called ICANN time as compared to Internet time. The one constant throughout has been WHOIS itself; protocol, service, data.

1. **Conclusions**

A gross understatement is that tensions exist between the various ICANN constituencies regarding WHOIS. Issues abound including right to privacy, anonymity, intellectual property protection, security and abuse, among others. Each is important. None more so than the other.

We find little consensus within the ICANN community on the issues. More concerning, there appears to be no coordinated effort to achieve consensus on these important, and admittedly difficult issues. Neither ICANN the corporation nor ICANN the community have seen the need to charge an individual or group as responsible for WHOIS. We find this a significant oversight and surmise that without such a coordinating effort, the small steps required for consensus may never be taken. It is hoped that the establishment of regular WHOIS Reviews will assist in this regard.

Where does this leave the issue of “promotes consumer trust”? Having struggled with what “consumer” means in the context of WHOIS, and aware of the Affirmation of Commitments’ observation that there are key stakeholders who do not engage in the ICANN environment, the WHOIS Review Team commissioned consumer research. This found that drivers of consumer trust include knowing the entity with whom they are dealing, and being able to find reliable contact information. The vast majority of consumers were unaware of the existence of the WHOIS service, and many struggled to understand the format of WHOIS outputs. This led us to conclude that the current implementation of WHOIS services does not help to build consumer trust, and more could be done to raise awareness of the service, and to improve its user-friendliness.

For something so simple as WHOIS the protocol, it is unfortunate that WHOIS the policy has become so complex and unmanageable.

This summary discussion is not a condemnation of the debate, the studies, or the people that invested their time, emotion, and personal capital over the years. Rather, it is an attempt to concisely present in a balanced and fair manner the very real truth that the current system is broken and needs to be repaired.

This Review Team reflects the diversity of ICANN's multi-stakeholder model. We have been given time to conduct our review, receiving invaluable feedback from the community. We agree to disagree yet we have found consensus, for each and every one of the recommendations we make. We look forward to participating in the debates that follow, and monitoring their implementation if adopted by the Board.

1. **Work of this RT**

The WHOIS Review Team’s scope, guided by the Affirmation of Commitments was to review the extent to which ICANN’s WHOIS policy and its implementation are effective, meet the legitimate needs of law enforcement and promote consumer trust.

Formed in October 2010, the WHOIS Review Team comprised representatives from across the ICANN constituencies, a representative of law enforcement and two independent experts. The Review Team held two dedicated face-to-face meetings during its term, as well as working and outreach sessions at each of the ICANN meetings in 2011. Fortnightly calls were held. Apart from rare occasions where the Chatham House Rule was invoked, all the Review Team’s calls, meetings and e-mail list were open to observers, and the public wiki <https://community.icann.org/display/whoisreview/WHOIS+Policy+Review+Team> provides an archive of our activities.

1. **Findings & Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1: Strategic priority**

***Findings***

WHOIS policy and its implementation are one of four central issues highlighted in the Affirmation of Commitments, the others being Accountability and Transparency, Security and Stability, and Consumer Trust.

That WHOIS placed alongside such issues shows that the authors of the Affirmation of Commitments, the US Government and ICANN's senior executive, viewed it as one of the four barometers of ICANN's effective performance and service to the Internet Community. One reason for this may be that, although WHOIS services are provided by ICANN's contracted parties, WHOIS look ups have now become detached from the domain name supply chain. Users of WHOIS tend not to be customers of registries and registrars, but are law enforcement, or those enforcing private law rights, and those seeking to get in touch with registrants for whatever reason. There are no income streams associated with providing WHOIS. It is viewed by many in the industry as a cost, and is often difficult to locate on registrar websites.

As a result, it is not a priority for many of ICANN's contracted parties - who provide funding for ICANN the corporation. It is, however, a high priority for many users who are outside the ICANN inner circle, but for whatever reason their needs have not found organisational priority to date.

Although compliance is one essential element of WHOIS Policy and its implementation, it is not the whole story. WHOIS as an issue encompasses:

• The WHOIS Protocol, including its continued fitness for purpose given that both the Internet and uses of WHOIS have expanded beyond what their original designers would have imagined possible;

• Internationalisation of WHOIS Data, and the consistent handling of non-ASCII text in both the records and the display of the domain name itself;

• Ongoing development of WHOIS policy within ICANN's existing machinery, and the impact of other policy development on WHOIS;

• Maintaining some coordination role to ensure that so far as possible, policy development effort is not duplicated, relevant research is brought to the attention of relevant working groups or staff, and is followed up in a timely way; and

• That compliance with contractual obligations, and outreach to affected communities of users is managed effectively and that honest timely reporting be given to the Community.

The WHOIS Review Team finds that in all of the above points, ICANN the corporation has failed to meet expectations. It is ideally placed to play a proactive role, for example in stimulating work on protocol reform, and working with the IETF to share its learnings, and encourage adoption or at least test beds by the industry of appropriate replacement protocols. Expensive and valuable research studies, for example the NORC study on Data Accuracy have been left to languish for years, with no follow up, and no individual ownership of the issues. ICANN's contractual compliance effort has historically been under resourced, understaffed, and has struggled for organisational priority.

***Recommendation 1 - Strategic Priority***

It is recommended that WHOIS, in all its aspects, should be a strategic priority for ICANN the organisation. It should form the basis of staff incentivisation and published organisational objectives.

To support WHOIS as a strategic priority, the ICANN board should create a committee that includes the CEO. The committee should be responsible for advancing the strategic priorities required to ensure the following:

• Implementation of this report’s recommendations;

• Fulfillment of data accuracy objectives over time;

• Follow up on relevant reports (eg NORC data accuracy study);

• Reporting on progress on all aspects of WHOIS (policy development, compliance, and advances in the protocol / liaison with SSAC and IETF);

• Monitoring effectiveness of senior staff performance and the extent to which ICANN Compliance function is effective in delivering WHOIS outcomes, and taking appropriate action to remedy any gaps (see Recommendation 4 for more discussion of compliance).

Advancement of the WHOIS strategic priority objectives should be a major factor in staff incentivization programs for ICANN staff participating in the committee, including the CEO. Regular (at least annual) updates on progress against targets should be given to the Community within ICANN's regular reporting channels, and should cover all aspects of WHOIS including protocol, policy development, studies and their follow up.

**Recommendation 2: Single WHOIS Policy**

***Findings***

One of our earliest "findings" was our inability to find a clear, concise, well-communicated WHOIS Policy. The Team was assured that one existed and that it had been in force for some time. Several versions of Registrar and Registry contracts were reviewed as were compliance activities related to the policy. Throughout, we were unable to locate a document labeled WHOIS Policy as referenced by the ICANN-approved Affirmation of Commitments. Overall, we found elements of the Whois Policy in Registrar and Registry contracts, GNSO Consensus Policies and a Consensus Procedure, the IETF Requests for Comments (RFCs) and domain name history.

***Recommendation 2 - Single WHOIS Policy***

ICANN's WHOIS policy is poorly defined and decentralized The ICANN Board should oversee the creation of a single WHOIS policy document, and reference it in subsequent versions of agreements with Contracted Parties. In doing so, ICANN should clearly document the current gTLD WHOIS policy as set out in the gTLD Registry and Registrar contracts and GNSO Consensus Policies and Procedure.

**Recommendation 3: Outreach**

***Findings***

We found great interest in the Whois policy among a number of groups that do not traditionally participate in ICANN’s more technical proceedings. They include the law enforcement community, Data Protection Commissioners, and the privacy community more generally. Further we found interest among those in support organizations and advisory committees including the SSAC, GAC, ccNSO, ASO, who may or may not closely follow proceedings in the GNSO, where much of the Whois discussion takes place.

These groups are worried that they miss a proceeding taking place within the GNSO on WHOIS matters, and their ability to substantively comment.

***Recommendation 3 - Outreach***

ICANN should ensure that WHOIS policy issues are accompanied by cross-community outreach, including outreach to the communities outside of ICANN with a specific interest in the issues, and an ongoing program for consumer awareness.

**Recommendation 4: Compliance**

***Findings***

Despite substantial efforts made, and dedicated staff, the Compliance function has suffered from lack of resources, and has struggled to maintain organisational priority.

Evidence of recent investment is welcome, but there remains much to do.

We find that basic information, for example on staffing, budget vs actual spend, and key performance metrics, remain difficult to obtain.

Concerns have been expressed in public comment as to whether the current structure of the Compliance team (ie being a department within ICANN) is helping. We have an open mind about whether the Compliance function should be located within the organisation or not. There is much to be said for structural independence. However, we note that the costs and upheaval associated with such a restructure (both human and financial) would be great. We believe that it should be possible to effect improvements through clearer lines of accountability particularly for Compliance’s leadership, and much greater transparency.

Finally, we note the sensitivity from some sections of the community about use of the term “regulator” to describe ICANN’s role within the industry. We have tried to avoid the term in our final recommendations. However, we do not fully understand the sensitivity: ICANN is part of a self-regulatory ecosystem. It accredits some actors (registries and registrars) and requires certain behaviours of them. It has an operational function to enforce contractual requirements. These activities can be properly described as regulation in the sense of private sector, self-regulation. If they were not done effectively, they would need to be done by someone – or something – else.

***Recommendation 4 - Compliance***

ICANN should act to ensure that its compliance function is managed in accordance with best practice principles, including that:

a. There should be full transparency regarding the resourcing and structure of its compliance function. To help achieve this ICANN should, at a minimum, publish annual reports that detail the following relevant to ICANN’s compliance activities: staffing levels; budgeted funds; actual expenditure; performance against published targets; and organizational structure (including the full lines of reporting and accountability).

 b.      There should be clear and appropriate lines of reporting and accountability, to allow compliance activities to be pursued pro-actively and independently of other interests. To help achieve this, ICANN should appoint a senior executive whose sole responsibility would be to oversee and manage ICANN’s compliance function. This senior executive should report directly and solely to a sub-committee of the ICANN Board. This sub-committee should include Board members with a range of relevant skills, and should include the CEO. The sub-committee should not include any representatives from the regulated industry, or any other Board members who could have conflicts of interest in this area.

c. ICANN should provide all necessary resources to ensure that the compliance team has the processes and technological tools it needs to efficiently and pro-actively manage and scale its compliance activities. The Review Team notes that this will be particularly important in light of the new gTLD program, and all relevant compliance processes and tools should be reviewed and improved, and new tools developed where necessary, in advance of any new gTLDs becoming operational.

**Recommendations 5-9: Data Accuracy**

***Findings***

In 2009-10, ICANN commissioned a study on data accuracy, which was undertaken by the National Opinion Research Council of the University of Chicago (NORC) (the “NORC WHOIS Data Accuracy Study 2009/10”). The study found that only 23% of WHOIS records were fully accurate and over 20% were completely inaccurate. Concerns about the accuracy of WHOIS records were raised in a number of responses to the WHOIS Review Team’s public Discussion Paper and in public sessions at four ICANN meetings.

* Law enforcement agencies expressed a view that inaccurate or incomplete WHOIS data can potentially cause serious problems during the course of a criminal investigation;
* Inaccurate WHOIS data can also significantly impact consumer trust and confidence in the Internet;
* The Non-Commercial Users Constituency noted: If registrants have other channels to keep this information private, they may be more willing to share accurate data with their registrar;
* The concerns of businesses include issues relating to online counterfeiting and their ability to protect their intellectual property rights.

The low level of accurate WHOIS data is unacceptable, and decreases consumer trust in the WHOIS, in the industry which ICANN provides rules for and coordinates, and therefore in ICANN itself. The organisation’s priority in relation to WHOIS should be to improve WHOIS data accuracy and sustain improvement over time.

The WHOIS Data Reminder Policy is ineffective in achieving its goal of improving accuracy of data. Despite the dedication of considerable resources both by Registrars in sending out annual WHOIS Data Reminder Policy notices, and ICANN’s Compliance Team in auditing compliance, the lack of follow-up renders the entire action ineffective. Simply put, no one knows what impact the policy has in improving the accuracy of WHOIS data.

The Review Team notes that discussions of WHOIS data often include recommendations for WHOIS data "validation" or data "verification."   The team notes that the focus of its recommendations is on the desired outcome that ICANN work to improve the accuracy of WHOIS data.   WHOIS validation or verification would be one possible means to achieve this objective, whereas our intention is to allow latitude in how the objective is achieved.  Currently, there are a number of ongoing efforts in this area, including a potential Policy Development Process (PDP) and direct negotiations with Registrars on revisions to the RAA.  The Review Team therefore acknowledges these efforts and encourages ICANN Staff to continue this work while ensuring that all segments of the Community are involved in this process.  In any event, whether or not validation of new registration data is implemented, there is a significant legacy of inaccurate data in existing domain name records, which requires attention and improvement.

***Recommendations 5-9 - Data Accuracy***

1. ICANN should ensure that the requirements for accurate WHOIS data are widely and pro-actively communicated, including to current and prospective Registrants, and should use all means available to progress WHOIS accuracy, including any internationalized WHOIS data, as an organizational objective. As part of this effort, ICANN should ensure that its Registrant Rights and Responsibilities document is pro-actively and prominently circulated to all new and renewing registrants.
2. ICANN should take appropriate measures to reduce the number of WHOIS registrations that fall into the accuracy groups Substantial Failure and Full Failure (as defined by the NORC Data Accuracy Study, 2009/10) by 50% within 12 months and by 50% again over the following 12 months.
3. ICANN shall produce and publish an accuracy report focused on measured reduction in WHOIS registrations that fall into the accuracy groups Substantial Failure and Full Failure, on an annual basis.
4. ICANN should ensure that there is a clear, unambiguous and enforceable chain of contractual agreements with registries, registrars, and registrants to require the provision and maintenance of accurate WHOIS data. As part of these agreements, ICANN should ensure that clear, enforceable and graduated sanctions apply to registries, registrars and registrants that do not comply with its WHOIS policies. These sanctions should include de-registration and/or de-accreditation as appropriate in cases of serious or serial non-compliance.
5. The ICANN Board should ensure that the Compliance Team develop, in consultation with relevant contracted parties, metrics to track the impact of the annual WHOIS Data Reminder Policy (WDRP) notices to registrants. Such metrics should be used to develop and publish performance targets, to improve data accuracy over time. If this is unfeasible with the current system, the Board should ensure that an alternative, effective policy is developed and implemented in consultation with registrars that achieves the objective of improving data quality, in a measurable way.

**Recommendations 10: Data Access -- Privacy and Proxy Services**

***Findings***

Privacy and proxy services have arisen to fill an ICANN policy vacuum. These services are clearly meeting a market demand, and it is equally clear that these services are complicating the WHOIS landscape.

Privacy and proxy services are used to address noncommercial and commercial interests, which many view as legitimate. For example,

**Individuals –** who prefer not to have their personal data published on the Internet as part of a WHOIS record;

**Organizations** – as religious, political or ethnic minority, or sharing controversial moral or sexual information; and

**Companies** – for upcoming mergers, new product or service names, new movie names, or other product launches.

However, ICANN’s current lack of any clear and consistent rules with regards to privacy and proxy services[[1]](#footnote-1) has resulted in unpredictable outcomes for stakeholders. In terms of the Review Team’s scope:

* Law enforcement shared its concern over the abuse of proxy services by criminals seeking to hide, companies defrauding customers, and parties attacking the security of the Internet including by botnets and malware; and
* the current use of privacy and proxy services raises questions about whether ICANN is meeting its AoC commitments relating to ‘timely, unrestricted and public access’ to WHOIS data.

The Review Team considers that with appropriate regulation and oversight, privacy and proxy services appear capable of addressing stakeholder needs.

***Recommendation 10 - Data Access -- Privacy and Proxy Services***

The Review Team recommends that ICANN should initiate processes to regulate and oversee privacy and proxy service providers.

ICANN should develop these processes in consultation with all interested stakeholders.

This work should take note of the studies of existing practices used by proxy/privacy service providers now taking place within the GNSO.

The Review Team considers that one possible approach to achieving this would be to establish, through the appropriate means, an accreditation system for all proxy/privacy service providers. As part of this process, ICANN should consider the merits (if any) of establishing or maintaining a distinction between privacy and proxy services.

The goal of this process should be to provide clear, consistent and enforceable requirements for the operation of these services consistent with national laws, and to strike an appropriate balance between stakeholders with competing but legitimate interests. At a minimum, this would include privacy, data protection, law enforcement, the industry around law enforcement and the human rights community.

ICANN could, for example, use a mix of incentives and graduated sanctions to encourage proxy/privacy service providers to become accredited, and to ensure that registrars do not knowingly accept registrations from unaccredited providers.

ICANN could develop a graduated and enforceable series of penalties for proxy/privacy service providers who violate the requirements, with a clear path to de-accreditation for repeat, serial or otherwise serious breaches.

In considering the process to regulate and oversee privacy/proxy service providers, consideration should be given to the following objectives:

* Clearly labeling WHOIS entries to indicate that registrations have been made by a privacy or proxy service;
* Providing full WHOIS contact details for the privacy/proxy service provider, which are contactable and responsive;
* Adopting agreed standardized relay and reveal processes and timeframes; (these should be clearly published, and pro-actively advised to potential users of these services so they can make informed choices based on their individual circumstances);
* Registrars should disclose their relationship with any proxy/privacy service provider;
* Maintaining dedicated abuse points of contact for each provider;
* Conducting periodic due diligence checks on customer contact information;
* Maintaining the privacy and integrity of registrations in the event that major problems arise with a privacy/proxy provider.
* Providing clear and unambiguous guidance on the rights and responsibilities of registered name holders, and how those should be managed in the privacy/proxy environment.

**Recommendation 11: Data Access – Common Interface**

***Findings***

According to our consumer research, one of the aspects that consumers struggled with (once they had been informed of the existence of WHOIS in many cases) was locating WHOIS Services and interpreting WHOIS Data. This is particularly pronounced with 'thin' WHOIS Services[[2]](#footnote-2) which split the WHOIS data between the registry and registrar, and affect .com and .net, which together hold over 100 million domain name registrations at the time of writing.

We understand that ICANN already provides a WHOIS lookup service called Internic. The WHOIS Review Team supports the concept of the Internic service, as a 'go to' place for those wishing to find out information about domain name registrants. It finds that in practice, the Internic service is little known, and is not user friendly. For example, it delivers only the 'thin' WHOIS data for .com and .net. This requires users who are looking up through a web interface to find the relevant registrar's website, and their WHOIS Service before they are able to complete their query.

The WHOIS Review Team unanimously believes that WHOIS Services in general and Internic in particular are not optimised for usability, and could do much more to promote consumer trust. Further, we believe that they prevent the WHOIS from being more widely used and relied on by consumers.

***Recommendation 11 - Data Access – Common Interface***

It is recommended that the Internic Service is overhauled to provide enhanced usability for consumers, including the display of full registrant data for all gTLD domain names (whether those gTLDs operate thin or thick WHOIS Services) in order to create a one stop shop, from a trusted provider, for consumers and other users of WHOIS Services.

In making this finding and recommendation, we are not proposing a change in the location where data is held, ownership of the data, nor do we see a policy development process as necessary or desirable. We are proposing an operational improvement to an existing service, the Internic. This should include enhanced promotion of the service, to increase user awareness.

**Recommendation 12-14: Internationalized Domain Names**

***Findings***

Perhaps it should be no surprise that within this environment, policy and implementation have not kept pace with the real world.  A significant example of this is Internationalised Domain Names (IDN), which have been available for registration at the second level for over a decade, and at the Top Level for more than a year. During this time, WHOIS policies were not amended to accommodate the obvious need to support non-ASCII character sets even though there was a recognition that Internationalisation is essential for the Internet’s development as a global resource. There is ongoing work within ICANN (e.g. joint gNSO and SSAC working group on Internationalised Registration Data – IRD WG) in this area.  As the need is imminent, this work needs to proceed with priority in coordination with other relevant work outside the ICANN’s ambit (e.g. WIERDS initiative at IETF), to make internationalised domain name registration data accessible.

The NORC Study on Data Accuracy highlighted IDN contact data as a major cause of apparent inaccuracy.  Having internationalized data will also address this source of inaccuracy.

***Recommendations 12-14 – Internationalized Domain Names***

**12.**ICANN Community should task a working group within 6 months of publication to determine the relevant internationalized domain name registration data requirements and evaluate the available solutions, especially those being successfully implemented by ccTLDs, at least for the adoption of IDN gTLDs, as already stipulated by the New gTLD Applicant Guidebook.The working group should aim for consistency of approach across the gTLD and – on a voluntary basis – the ccTLD space, and report within a year of being tasked.

**13.** The final data model, including (any) requirements for the translation or transliteration of the registration data, should be incorporated in the relevant Registrar and Registry agreements within 6 months of adoption of the working group’s recommendations by the ICANN Board. If these recommendations are not finalized in time for the next revision of such agreements, explicit placeholders for this purpose should be put in place in the agreements for the new gTLD program at this time, and in the existing agreements when they come up for renewal.

**14**. In addition, metrics should be developed to maintain and measure the accuracy of the internationalized registration data and corresponding data in ASCII, with clearly defined compliance methods and targets, as per the details in Recommendations 5-9 in this document.

**Recommendation 15: Annual Status Reports**

ICANN should provide at least annual written status reports on its progress towards implementing the recommendations of this WHOIS Review Team. The first of these reports should be published one year, at the latest, after ICANN tables the implementation plan mentioned in recommendation 16. Each of these reports should contain all relevant information, including all underlying facts, figures and analyses.

**Recommendation 16: Detailed and Comprehensive Plan**

ICANN should provide a detailed and comprehensive plan within 3 months after the submission of the Final WHOIS Review Team report that outlines how ICANN will move forward in implementing these recommendations.

1. Working definitions of Privacy and Proxy Services:

   Privacy Service a service that provides the Registrant Name and a subset of other information (possibly null set) but consistent across ICANN

   Proxy Service a relationship in which the registrant is acting on behalf of another. The WHOIS data is that of the agent and the agent alone obtains all rights and assumes all responsibility for the domain name and its manner of use. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See glossary for explanation of the terms “thick” and “thin” WHOIS services [↑](#footnote-ref-2)