IRT RECOMMENDATION OF THICK WHOIS MODEL
(FOR ALL NEW TLDS TO PROVIDE WHOIS INFORMATION UNDER THE THICK WHOIS OR REGISTRY LEVEL WHOIS MODEL)

As part of its charge, the IRT considered the public comments filed during the public comment period on the first Draft Guidebook for New gTLD Applicants ("DAG"). In doing so, the IRT identified numerous public comments calling for ICANN to amend the draft Registry Agreement set forth in the DAG to include a provision requiring all registry operators of new gTLDs to provide WHOIS information under the Thick WHOIS model as is done in the .info and .biz registries.

For clarity, the IRT defines the "Thick WHOIS" model as the central, registry-level provision of WHOIS information for all domain names registered within the registry. This model is in contrast to the "Thin WHOIS" model whereby the registry-level information is very limited and Internet users must rely on the registrar-level for the submission of robust WHOIS data.

As agreed upon by all the members of the IRT, the task force members considered this recommendation in light of the 10 guiding principals that the IRT used as a base line assessment for all possible solutions considered during the IRT process.

After carefully consideration, the IRT believes that the provision of WHOIS information at the registry level under the Thick WHOIS model is essential to the cost-effective protection of consumers and intellectual property owners. For this reason, the IRT recommends that ICANN amend the proposed Registry Agreement to include an obligation that all registry operators for new gTLDs must provide registry-level WHOIS under the Thick WHOIS model currently in place in the .info and .biz registries.[50]

In addition, the IRT recommends that ICANN immediately begin to explore the establishment of a central, universal WHOIS database to be maintained by ICANN. Such a Universal database would provide robust, publicly accessible WHOIS database covering all gTLDs. The IRT understands that ICANN requested that this initiative take place as part of the .net redelegation. However, the IRT is not aware that this project has ever been started.

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[50] The IRT acknowledges that some comments raised privacy concerns about this recommendation. However, it notes that the thick registry Whois model has been employed in many new gTLDs for many years without any evidence of legal problems, and also that ICANN, on the unanimous recommendation of the GNSO Council, has established a procedure that can be invoked by any registry that believes it faces a conflict between its contractual Whois obligations and requirements of national privacy laws. See http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-18dec07.htm. To date, this procedure has never been invoked.