DomainT Is

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Question:

What is Whois Information and Why is it Valuable?

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Answer:

Whois is a widely used Internet record listing that identifies who owns a domain and how to get in contact with them. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) regulates domain name registration and ownership. Whois records have proven to be extremely useful and have developed into an essential resource for maintaining the integrity of the domain name registration and website ownership process.

What is in a Whois record?

A Whois record contains all of the contact information associated with the person, group, or company that registers a particular domain name. Typically, each Whois record will contain information such as the name and contact information of the Registrant (who owns the domain), the name and contact information of the registrar Registrar (the organization or commercial entity that registered the domain name), the registration dates, the name servers, the most recent update, and the expiration date. Whois records may also provide the administrative and technical contact information (which is often, but not always, the registrant).

Whois Thick and Thin Models

There are two different data models for storing Whois resource information:

Thin Model. Thin Whois lookup only gives the registrar, name servers and registration dates. To acquire additional information, a secondary lookup at the registrar on file is necessary to attain full information on domain name ownership.

Thick Model. A thick Whois provides useful additional details beyond what is contained in a thin Whois record. Typically, the additional details contain contact (registrant, administrative, and technical) information. A lookup, then, will supply all the necessary information on who owns the domain, where it is registered, what name servers it uses, when it was registered and when it may expire.

It takes a lot of effort to track down Whois information given the large number of registrars and Whois servers out there. DomainTools makes it easy to find Whois information in one spot. Our Whois Lookup is a great place to start.

The purpose and value of the data in the Whois system has evolved in a number of ways over time including:

– Reinforcing the stability and security of the Internet by providing network operators, computer incident response teams and ISPs with appropriate contacts

– Regulating the registration status of domain names

– Supporting law enforcement officials participating in national and international investigations.

– Assisting in the battle against abusive uses of information communication technology, including illegal and other acts motivated by racial discrimination, violence, hatred, xenophobia, and related intolerance, any form of child abuse, child pornography, pedophilia, and exploitation of and trafficking in humans.

– Supporting inquiries and necessary steps to carry out trademark clearances and to help expose intellectual property infringement, theft and misuse in accordance with applicable international treaties and national laws.

– Upholding overall user confidence in the Internet as an efficient and reliable means of communication by helping users to identify which entities or persons are responsible for services and content online

– Tracking down spam or malicious behaviorists

Accuracy of Whois information. The information in a Whois record is initially provided when a domain name is registered. Over time, things change, and the information gets out of date. ICANN requires domain registrants have the ability to update their contact details. Each registrar has slightly different procedures for changing the information that appears on a Whois record. It generally involves accessing account information via the registrar's website, or via a call center representative. Whois record changes may take a period of time (often in the vicinity of 24 hours) to take effect. Having accurate, up-to-date Whois data makes it easier to contact a registrant or administrator.

Whois Privacy. It is important to note that there is no way to hide the existence of a domain registration since anyone can check Whois to confirm the status of a domain. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) requires that the contact information of those who own and manage a domain name to be made publicly available via Whois directories. This includes mailing addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

Some domain registrars offer private registration services (also known as proxy services) in which the registrar's contact information is shown, and not that of the registrant. With this "private registration", the organization providing the domain privacy service is the domain registrant and contact. It is also important to note that even if domain privacy services are leveraged, it is not necessarily a guarantee of true anonymity. Registrars may be bound by law to release private information.

There are even a few privacy caveats with certain domain extensions, such as .us and .ca domains. As of March 2005, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) declared that all owners of .us domains will not have the option to privatize their information, and that it must be made publicly available. Beginning in June of 2008, the Canadian Internet Registration Authority no longer posted details of domain registrants associated with .ca domains. However, corporations and organizations are still required to publicize information.

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