Transcription ICANN Buenos Aires Meeting
IETF and WHOIS update
Sunday 17 November 2013

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Coordinator: This conference is being recorded for transcription purposes. Thank you.

Man: Okay everyone. If we could prepare for the next session, are we good?

((Crosstalk))

Man: Yes. Are we good to go with the recording? Great. Thank you (Natalie).

All right, so our next session today is hearing enough update on the work of the IETF on Whois. In fact I think it might be on the WEIRDS. It will be great for you to welcome (Olaf Kaufman) from - I'm not sure if - you may have to tell me who you're is representing but over to you (Olaf).

(Olaf Kaufman): Yes, my name is (Olaf Kaufman). I'm with (Anulment) Labs. And I speak about the IETF. That's something we usually do.

We don't usually speak for the IETF. Although in this case, I'm the working group chair, together with (unintelligible) co-chair (Riley). And we sort of know what is going on in this group so I can give you this update. Next slide.

This WEIRDS work is for those who don't know the context I'm going to provide some. The WEIRDS work is a follow-up on the Whois. It's protocol work. It's technical work.

And if you look at the Whois today from a protocol perspective, it's a very simple protocol. It's basically ask a single question, a single line question and get an answer in free format. It's very old. It's a very old specification.

RFC812 was updated by RFC3912. But in essence the protocol remains the same, ask a single question and you receive a free full answer. An example is on the next slide.

So the queries are single line. And what you query and how you query is a little context dependence. It depends on the names. It depends on the numbers, what the form of the query is.

And then the answer is completely on structures. Depending on what Whois server you're talking to the Whois server of today so to speak you get an unstructured answer with registration data.

Maybe somebody could close the door would be (great) Thank you. So that's the how. I'm now talking about the what.

The what Whois return is really a policy and context dependent thing that is beyond the scope of the protocol so next slide.

There's a bunch of Whois shortcomings. Whois currently doesn't have a standardized differentiated service. So do you disclose other information as a use case to law enforcement or the general public?

It is not internationalized in a standard way. Clients do not know what they return. So if you get Chinese characters this supposedly is my name. And it might be hard to parse or present on a screen.

The structure, the response is actually not structured at all. So if you want to automatically read out a response, it's very hard to find what a name is and what the address fields are and so on and so forth.

There's no standard redirection capability. There's been some efforts in the past but basically this says if you want more specific information you can go elsewhere.

Like in the number space if you go to an RIR and ask about information for a very specific block on a regional scale, you might be referring to a national Internet registry.

And also in the namespace this might be relevant. For instance, you ask UK for a specific name within their TLD and you might be referred to a list server that maintains the information for code (unintelligible) UK.

There is no mechanism that tells you where to start your queries. You sort of have to know that by magic.

The next slide. So we're talking specifically within the (ITF) about the how, the method of data delivery, the protocols that we call, so the registration data access protocol, our data.

The what, the content of the data that is returned is a public policy type of decision. So that's basically determined within your community within the RIR our community, the ccTLD communities and actually by local policy. Next slide.

So the Whois Working Group on WEIRD stance we have in the (ITF) we have - we usually come up with strange acronyms. So this is one.

And What Explainable Internet Registration Data Service is what the acronym stands for. And we're charter to deliver a protocol that delivers internationalization specifically (unintelligible) (syntax) redirection, authentication.

It's using HTTP and needs to deliver the same mechanisms for the people who operate name registries versus the people who operate member registries. So names are domain names and numbers are IP addresses.

And we want to build a protocol that doesn't require very specific client knowledge.

There are some assumptions about the what. And there's a base set of functionality that is being standardized but it is made extendable. So people that need more information to be put in the Whois can later explain this protocol to offer that information.

Next slide, the context that we use is RESTful. I'm not going to bother you with this but this is basically how HTTP works. This is basically how the Web works. So this is a Web service.

There have been previous trials to standardize Whois registration data access and they failed. And they failed because they were complex, complex to code, complex to operate. Ours was as an example, needed specific libraries, needed specific knowledge.

And what we did here is really take a new base approach of a - of built everything on top of a protocol that people know how to operate, basically Web services. So we believe that this makes a better way for success.

Continue.

The (ITF) works with milestones. The milestones are the plan. As with any plan, plans are subject to change and with gaining insight and a growing a set of deliverers - deliverables looks like this.

We've got two drafts that have been finished by the working group and are now at the central body of the (ITF), the IESG, the Internet Engineering Steering Group that needs to determine the (ITF) consensus for these documents.

And that's a process that will take at least a few weeks because there's a loss (clone) involved. And at this moment we - the IFT's waiting for the documents that we will be delivering in January so that the full set of (unintelligible) can be presented to the (ITF) and in one (goal) sort of specific context.

So the core documents basically are the HTTP, the security document, the query and the response documents. And when those - once those are there, we have a working protocol.

The other drafts, the redirect and the object inventory drafts are also working projects. The object inventory draft is a document that informs us about what is out there on what is being served. So that is a document about what that helps us inform about in the core functionality.

There are also working bootstrapping protocol, next slide.

So the major issues that we're currently working with we thought we'd go through a few, but currently are in discussions that we have ongoing that need to be forwarded to you to reach consensus before we can publish the documents.

And our search, our search is a difficult thing specifically if internationalization gets involved.

And the current thoughts that seem to be converging -- and there's not been a consensus call yet -- but it's the use of partial prefix matching. Now these are technical terms. But in essence, you basically fill in the start of a string. And the search can match the rest of that string.

There are some difficulties with internationalization in this one with pure ASCII. It works a little bit different than with our international strengths (UTFA) strengths.

And it allows for a lot of local policies for names that are linked within the data list so in the back end database. And that linking something that is probably very known as variance.

Next slide is the other major issue. It's the way to bootstrap. How do you find a specific UA server that has the information for (ATOD) or certain set of numbers, certain set of routers?

There's no emerging consensus on that issue yet. We had a long discussion in the last meetings in Berlin and last week in Vancouver. And there are a bunch of ideas floating around. But this discussion has not converged yet. And I'm not going to go into details here.

Next slide, there's a bunch of minor issues I would say, how to get from one server if you're asking something to a server how do you get to a server that has more detailed information or and has the authoritative information, the redirect problem. That's a problem that depends on the bootstrap. So we have to have this discussion first.

And there's - so protocol architectural cleanness that we need to address, we need to be new RESTful. And the object inventory is - needs to be finalized here. Not quite sure if it's complete but we're close.

So these are not major hurdles. I think the other ones are not major hurdles too but I think they're still under this discussion.

Next slide, there's some good news too or we - the rest is good news but this is even better news.

There are implementations out there. Well, the code is being or while the specs are being developed people are also implementing code. And there are a bunch of independent developers.

And we have five servers in total that are tested prior to each (ITF) and by which there is inter-operatively on a test or that the interoperability of the code is actually tested.

But also by doing that we find omissions in the protocol spec and that makes for a very new protocol.

So that's the good news. If you want to participate -- next slide -- we have a bunch of coordinates. The working group sites where the discussion takes place and how to subscribe.

And if you want to have some specifics about the last meeting the bottom URL will get you to all the meeting materials and you have to search for the WEIRD entry over there.

And with that I'll open for questions.

Man: Thanks you very much (Olaf). Thanks for bringing us up to speed on that.

We - our next session I hear the EWG is running slightly late. So we've got an opportunity to just have one or two questions now and then we'll break for a moment. (Patrick) do I see your hand up?

(Patrick):   Thanks (Patrick) (unintelligible). I saw your time schedule. And also one of the things that - to still have to solve obviously is what you call this - (all these) shortcomings sorry, thinking about specialty what we call internationalized, which is in fact very internationalized searches versus (unintelligible). When will we see a solution on that?

(Olaf Kaufman):   So we had a discussion in the Working Group last week. And the sense of the room, which is different than the sense of the mailing list and in the IETF the sense of the mailing list is prevailing.

The sense of the room was to use a search based brief on prefix only so not complicated, regular expressions and so on and so forth and basically leave believe what matches what to local policy.

So and I have an example on the slide where if you search for a CO and Star that could match (clearer), the French word (clearer) within the literature OE or a similar letter O and a similar letter E. Those are two different forms.

And in the back end system there would need to be a link for those to be returned. And we're getting into technical details now, but that is the solution about that our - that people are looking at.

And one of the reasons that that is on the table is because the general tenure of the group is to keep things simple, to keep things simple as possible to get a running protocol and be able to expand it later if there are actual use cases to address there. So I hope that answers your question.

(Patrick):   I didn't hear a date from you.

(Olaf Kaufman):   Oh, you didn't hear a date. Oh so this ends up into the query documents. And the query document is a January 14 milestone currently.

There's another question.

Man: Steve and then (James) and then I think we'll probably call it a day at that point. So Steve and then (James) in the queue.

Steve Metalitz: Hi Steve Metalitz again. Thank you (Olaf) for another very informative briefing on this.

(Olaf Kaufman):   Thank you.

Steve Metalitz: My question was about object inventory.

(Olaf Kaufman):   Yes.

Steve Metalitz: And I just want to make sure that I'm understanding this correctly. This is intended to be just a descriptive compilation of the objects that are in these data services now, but it would then potentially be extensible to other objects. And it's not intended to foreclose additional elements.

(Olaf Kaufman):   No. That is correct. But I was - I had the conversation yesterday, but somebody said never use the word but, use the word and.

That is correct and what we're doing within UH is taking basic functionality as affects us now and standardize as it is now, again in the spirit of keeping it simple go for what there is now and be - the acronym is actually has the word extendable in its word. So that's a key part. And it's not intended to foreclose future objects.

Steve Metalitz: Because as you know there've been several initiatives within ICANN to identify additional elements.

So maybe Experts Working Group that's about to brief here is one of them. But then there was a survey earlier than that. And there's been several of these.

So should we be confident that whatever additional data objects we - let's - let us assume that the community decides want - they want to have included in the registration data service for gTLDs anyway will be accommodated by this protocol?

(Olaf Kaufman): Can be accommodated by this protocol yes.

Yes and there is a bunch - there is some alignment what is in the current frameworks today and what will be in the protocol. But for that I do not actually know the details. Maybe Steve do you know that?

I don't want to put you on the spot but I do anyway.

Steve Metalitz: So the current draft of the object inventory take the data elements from today's gTLD service are taking to consideration of the data elements in the ccTLD space and also in the RIR space. And that's a descriptive model compile them together.

There is definitely room to extend that. So I don't know if that answers the question.

(Olaf Kaufman): Okay.

Man: (James) next.

(James): Thanks gentlemen and thank you for the presentation. I thought it was very good.

And this is probably more a question directed less to your group and more to ICANN policy staff which is knowing that the IT ETF is working in this direction, the Expert Working Group, several PDPs are pursuing various things relative to Whois.

We had one close with Thick Whois and we have another one I think that's just getting started for privacy and proxy accreditation services.

Is anyone taking the overarching visibility to make sure that - oh I'm sorry and we also have another Expert Working Group on the internationalization of registration data.

So who's minding the - all of these moving parts are going to work together when the outcomes come out that all of those public pieces will interoperate? Anybody?

Maybe the answer is nobody.

Man: Marika?

Marika Konings: This is Marika. I think we have some staff really try to coordinate an attorney. And Steve Shang on the other side is closely involved in this work. You know (Margie) is closely involved in the EDWG work from our side who support the GNSO initiatives.

So we, you know, have regular conversations internally and try to keep each other up to date and indeed flag as well if we see that there are discrepancies or things where we need to pay closer attention in them bring that back to the relevant initiatives that are ongoing and looking at it.

(James): Is there - are you concerned that there's any overlap or duplication from for example, a PDP versus an Expert Working Group that's happening kind of outside of the GNSO?

Marika Konings: Are you talking about that EWG then or...

(James): Or the internationalization Working Group which I don't know if that's even started yet.

Marika Konings: Yes that - I'll have Steve answer that one...

((Crosstalk))

Steve Metalitz: (James) I can answer that. Regarding your first question about the adoption of the protocol that's a policy question right?

And the - in 2011 ASAC wrote the report SAC 51 which calls out this issue. And as a result of the board action staff has prepared a implementation plan regarding updating of the protocol once the protocol is bending developed in the IETF.

So we refer to that - that plan creates a roadmap how to, you know, when the IETF finished the protocol what are the next steps? There are a couple several paths forward.

Regarding your question about the coordination between the GNSO PDP on the translation and transliteration of contact information as well as the Whois Review Team Working Group drafting internationalized requirements those two groups are closely working together.

The current understanding is the outputs - the output of the Expert Working Group needs to grow through a policy development process. Those are providing options for the requirements.

And that group will take into consideration cover - and cover the input of the GNSO PDP on this topic. So we can talk off-line be more on this. So there is some coordination. Thanks.

Man: Thanks Steve. Thanks (James). I think it's a very good question and I think it's a fair question. I think it's something (Lars) we may want to note that we want to pick this up afterwards and try and produce something which tries to summarize and integrate and look for relevant overlaps or not within all of this myriad apparently Whois related work that's going on.

Because, you know, it does - there are - there is a perception at least that it's not all adequately coordinated. So we need to address that.

Thank you very much again (Olaf). It's time to bring things to a close now and prepare ourselves for the meeting with the EWG on another Whois related topic.

END