



Domain Name Abuse Forum

Finding solutions for a safer .nz

Registration abuse

Background

The Domain Name Abuse Forum has a broad focus, covering a variety of abusive behaviour online, specifically with respect to domain names. Abusive behaviour on the Internet is generally divided into three main categories: infrastructure abuse, registration abuse, and content abuse.

Working definition

Registration abuse refers to the registration of domain names using fake registration details, or details that don't meet .nz policy requirements. This can range from relatively innocuous cases of human error (incorrect country listed), to privacy-minded registrants listing their name as "registrant" or "private individual." It can also include malicious registrations using fake contact details to obfuscate the identity of scammers or online criminals.

Serious registration abuse often overlaps with other types of domain name abuse, such as content abuse or infrastructure abuse. Less serious cases of registration abuse often pose no immediate threat of harm, but nonetheless raise data quality concerns and can undermine the legitimacy and trust in a Country Code Top Level Domain (ccTLD). There are also privacy and security considerations.

Issues for consideration

An effective programme for dealing with registration abuse requires several important operational considerations. Central to these are the mechanisms that make up the registration detail validation process (outlined in the accompanying document, "our current approach"). These include:

- the sources that provide the Domain Name Commission with information about problem domain registrations
- the framework used to decide whether a referral should proceed in the validation process
- the contact processes used to validate the registration details
- how the outcomes of the validation process are recorded and reported on.

Each of these components presents unique challenges. Successfully meeting these challenges is vital to ensure the workability of the overall scheme. These challenges include:

- ensuring the DNC's sources are reliable, accurate and generate a low rate of false positives
- maintaining a robust and repeatable process for actioning referrals
- ensuring the validation of contact details is reliable, efficient and scalable
- sustaining trust and supporting continuous improvement through a reliable reporting process.



Meeting each of these challenges will assist in tackling the broader issues surrounding data integrity and data quality in the .nz space. However, successfully answering these broader questions may require the flexibility to re-evaluate the entire approach to registration abuse. The registration detail validation process is a simple and effective way to improve data quality and cancel domain names incorrectly registered. Nevertheless, it is intrinsically reactive and (at least in its current form) has limited scalability. It is also only able to remedy existing registration abuse and does little to encourage good practice on the part of registrars and registrants in the first instance.

Supporting and promoting good practice in the registration data field can be difficult, as there is often little incentive to encourage registrars and registrants to improve data quality. The .nz Registry currently offers .nz Registrars the use of a Registrar Portal, which includes reporting on data quality in their respective portfolios. It is unclear, however, to what degree this facilitates action on low quality registration data.

Questions

- Should the 'registration detail validation process' continue as the main compliance tool to tackle registration abuse?
- Are there more proactive methods or systems to improve data quality?
- Is improved data quality in the .nz register important to you as a stakeholder?
- Who should be responsible for improving data quality in the .nz register?