

Amendments to WHOIS output for Registrant Types

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1. Introduction

This paper proposes a small change to the whois output that will provide greater information about the registrant, using information that is already collected and stored.

2. Background

One of the items of information that we store about a registrant is their 'registrant type'. There are 13 separate types that we currently recognise, including IND for private individuals and OTHER for those that do not easily fit into any of the other categories. This information is supplied by the tag holder on initial registration, though it is not mandatory, and can be updated by the registrant using our online system.

In addition to the 'registrant type', we also store the 'company number' though this can also be the registered charity number or school DFES number. This too is not mandatory and can be maintained in variety of ways.

We have had a number of requests from stakeholders, in particular officials from the DTi, to provide more information on the whois about registrants in order to aid consumers and businesses using the Internet for online purchasing. In particular they are concerned that someone may have a website that appears to be a full trading enterprise and yet has their registrant type set to 'individual' and be opted out of the whois. By definition anyone using or planning to use their domain name in the course of trade cannot use the registrant type 'individual' which is only available to consumers.

At the same time we find that there are many occasions when the information shown on the whois appears ambiguous about what the registrant name represents. For example where the company name is easily mistaken for the name of an individual.

3. Proposal

It is the view of the executive that this information should be included on the whois and presented in a way that is easy for consumers to understand. This information would appear directly below the registrant name. So for example, if the registrant type is LTD then this will display as

```
Registrant Type:
  Limited company, (Company number: P12345)
```

If the information is not present then this will display as

```
Registrant Type:
  Not supplied
```

The full list of possible values will be documented and published long before this change goes live.

Board
Author: Jay Daley
Date: 21 February 2005

4. Recommendation

The PAB is asked to consider the following resolution

“The PAB resolves to recommend that the whois output be changed to display the registrant type and, where appropriate, the associated identifying number. This change is only to be made after the full details of the change have been published and sufficient time given to tag holders to change their systems.”