# Volume 4:
# Issues and Challenges Impacting Domain Name Registrants

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**ICANN**

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# Introduction

One of the ongoing activities of the ICANN Registrant Program is to identify and raise awareness amongst the community about the issues and challenges that domain name registrants face in managing their domain names and navigating the Domain Name System (DNS) ecosystem. The ICANN organization periodically publishes quantitative data, observations, and trends for discussion around these issues.

Volume 4 is the fourth iteration of this reporting effort and covers six months (March 2020–August 2020) of data from the ICANN Contractual Compliance department and the ICANN Global Support Center (GSC).

This report aims to build upon the analysis presented in Volumes 1 (published September 2018), 2 (published April 2019), and 3 (published April 2020), and inform the community about the common trends ICANN org observes regarding inquiries and questions from domain name registrants. The complete report series can be accessed here.

Inquiries about this report or the ICANN Registrant Program can be directed to the ICANN Global Support Center at globalsupport@icann.org.
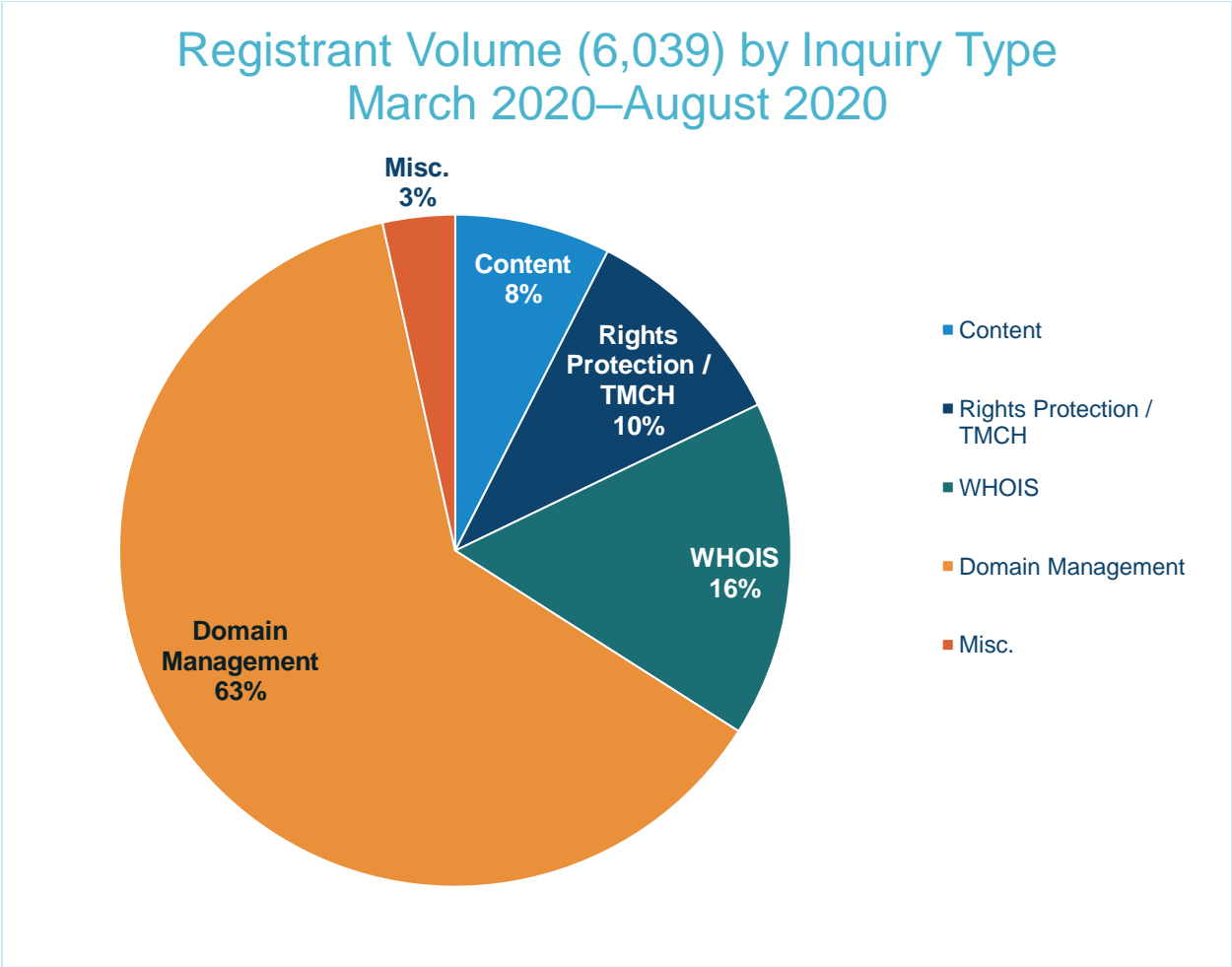
# ICANN Global Support Center (GSC) Data and Observations

ICANN GSC provides 24-hour global support five days a week to contracted parties, new gTLD applicants, and the Internet community at large, including domain name registrants. ICANN GSC received a total of 6,039 registrant inquiries during the reporting period (March 2020–August 2020). Approximately 80% of all inquiries came from domain name registrants.

The chart below categorizes the main inquiry types received during this period.

## Top Inquiry Types for Registrant Contacts March 2020–August 2020

*Figure 1:*



Registrant Volume (6,039) by Inquiry Type
March 2020–August 2020

Misc. 3%
Content 8%
Rights Protection / TMCH 10%
WHOIS 16%
Domain Management 63%

Legend:
- Content
- Rights Protection / TMCH
- WHOIS
- Domain Management
- Misc.

- ⊙ **WHOIS (registration data)** cases include inquiries about registrant domain registration and contact information.
- ⊙ **Domain Management** cases include inquires related to the domain name lifecycle, including initial registration, renewals, and transferring domains.
- ⊙ **Content** cases include inquiries about web content, spam, alleged fraud, phishing emails, and/or website content.
- ⊙ **Rights Protection/Trademark Clearinghouse (TMCH)** cases include inquiries about alleged cybersquatting, trademark infringement, or domain name hijacking, etc.

People who reach out to the ICANN GSC often misunderstand or are completely unaware of ICANN's limited technical role within the DNS. Regardless of whether the topic is within ICANN org's remit, ICANN GSC carefully reviews every inquiry to provide guidance and relevant resources.

For example, GSC provides information and education regarding:

- ⊙ How to use registration data directory services (WHOIS and RDAP) and what data is available.
- ⊙ The role of the players in the DNS ecosystem, including resellers, registrars, and registries.
- ⊙ The mission of the ICANN organization, Board, and community.
- ⊙ Available resources on ICANN.org.
- ⊙ Options they may have through the Contractual Compliance department or the ICANN Complaints Officer.
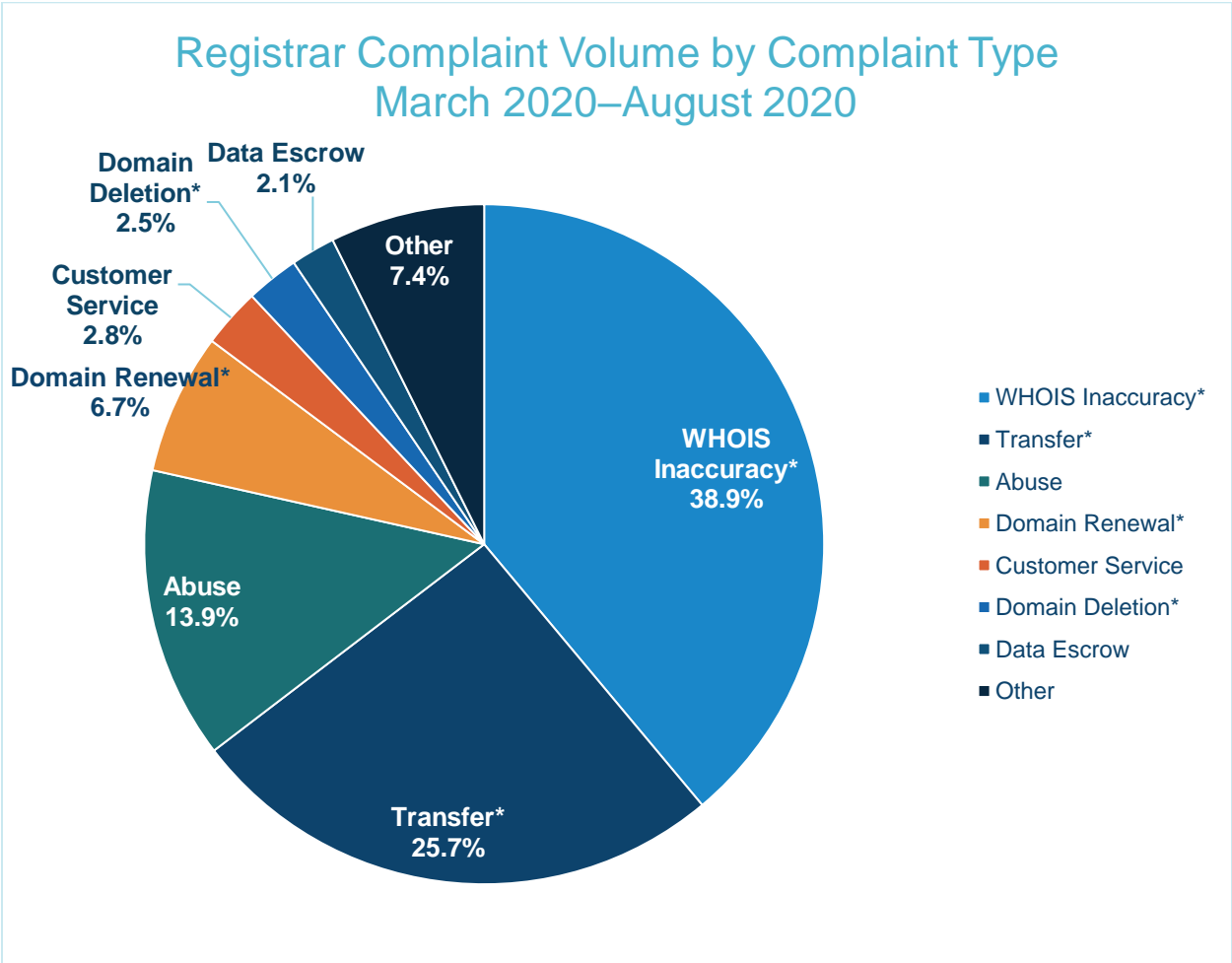
# ICANN Contractual Compliance Data

The goal of ICANN Contractual Compliance is to ensure that ICANN's contracted parties (registries and registrars) fulfill the requirements set forth in their contractual agreements with ICANN. ICANN Contractual Compliance publishes periodic reports on complaint types that have been received and closed. However, since complaint filing is open to anyone, not all complaints received by ICANN Contractual Compliance come from domain name registrants.

The following data sets were derived from ICANN Contractual Compliance's online metrics reporting, which can be accessed here.

The following graph illustrates the most common types of complaints received against registrars from March 2020–August 2020.

# Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type March 2020–August 2020

*Figure 2:*

## Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type March 2020–August 2020

- WHOIS Inaccuracy* 38.9%
- Transfer* 25.7%
- Abuse 13.9%
- Domain Renewal* 6.7%
- Customer Service 2.8%
- Domain Deletion* 2.5%
- Data Escrow 2.1%
- Other 7.4%

Legend:
- WHOIS Inaccuracy*
- Transfer*
- Abuse
- Domain Renewal*
- Customer Service
- Domain Deletion*
- Data Escrow
- Other

*Note: Complaints are submitted by various reporters, including domain name registrants. Contractual compliance data identifies registrant-related topics.*

Email any Contractual Compliance-related questions to: compliance@icann.org.

To view additional ICANN Contractual Compliance metrics, go to: https://features.icann.org/compliance.

To learn more about the different complaint types, go to: https://www.icann.org/compliance/complaint.

The next table analyzes complaint types against registrars during the same period. The closure code descriptions give insight into how the complaints were resolved/closed and may provide

further detail about the specific issue that the complainants, including domain name registrants, may have been facing.

# Registrar Complaint Volume by Complaint Type and Closure Code March 2020–August 2020

*Figure 3: Data is limited to only those Complaint Types which may be registrant-related.*

| Complaint Types | Closure Code Description | 2020-03 | 2020-04 | 2020-05 | 2020-06 | 2020-07 | 2020-08 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain Deletion** | | **4** | **28** | **16** | **13** | **12** | **4** | **77** |
| | The domain is no longer suspended. | 3 | 22 | 15 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 60 |
| | processed. | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | | | 9 |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance. | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | The registrar restored the domain. | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| | The registrar's deletion of the domain was compliant. | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| **Domain Renewal** | | **4** | **5** | **2** | **7** | **7** | **9** | **34** |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance. | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| | The domain has been renewed with the same registrant. | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| | The registrar corrected its Expired Registration Recovery Policy (ERRP) noncompliance. | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | 6 |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance with the Expired Registration Recovery Policy (ERRP) requirements. | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 23 |
| **Transfer** | | **52** | **49** | **31** | **54** | **48** | **41** | **275** |
| | The change of registrant has been completed. | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| | The change of registrant is not authorized. | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| | The registrar corrected its noncompliance. | 1 | 4 | 5 | | 5 | 2 | 17 |
| | requirements. | 6 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 4 | 36 |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance with the change of registrant requirements. | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance. | 2 | | 3 | | | | 5 |
| | The registrar provided evidence that the transfer AuthInfo code was provided to the registrant and the public WHOIS shows the domain is unlocked for transfer. | 7 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 29 |
| | The transfer cannot be completed due to a dispute over the identity of the registrant or administrative contact. | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 4 |
| | The transfer cannot be completed due to a transfer or registration within the past 60 days, or a change of registrant lock. | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 13 |
| | The transfer cannot be completed due to evidence of fraud. | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | 5 |
| | The transfer cannot be completed due to lack of payment for the prior or current registration period. | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| | The transfer cannot be completed due to the change of registrant lock. | | | | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| | The transfer cannot be completed without proof of the transfer contact's identity. | 1 | | | 6 | | | 7 |
| | The transfer has been completed. | 29 | 29 | 13 | 33 | 19 | 25 | 148 |
| | The transfer was denied because of a court order received by the | | | 1 | | | 1 | 2 |
| | The transfer was denied because of a pending dispute related to a previous Transfer pursuant to the Transfer Dispute Resolution Policy. | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| **Uniform Domain-Name Dispute-Resolution (UDRP)** | | **6** | **4** | **5** | **16** | **4** | **11** | **46** |
| | The registrar corrected its noncompliance. | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 1 | 7 | 17 |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance with the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) requirements. | | 1 | 3 | 1 | | | 5 |
| | The registrar locked a domain subject to a Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) proceeding. | 3 | | 2 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 23 |
| | The registrar verified the domain with the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) provider. | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| **WHOIS Inaccuracy** | | **86** | **106** | **107** | **104** | **48** | **61** | **512** |
| | The domain is suspended and the registrar is not required to address the WHOIS inaccuracy complaint. | 79 | 88 | 87 | 85 | 41 | 46 | 426 |
| | The registrar corrected its noncompliance. | | | | 2 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| | The registrar demonstrated compliance. | | | | 6 | | 1 | 7 |
| | The registrar verified the domain's WHOIS information is correct. | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 11 |
| | The WHOIS data has been updated. | 5 | 16 | 17 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 60 |
| **Grand Total** | | **152** | **192** | **161** | **194** | **119** | **126** | **944** |

Some of the most common complaint types from domain name registrants are about WHOIS Inaccuracies, Transfers, and Renewals. Below are some of the most common complaints from domain name registrants related to WHOIS, Transfers, and Renewals.

# Common WHOIS (Registration Data) - Related Complaints

- Incorrect/invalid registration data displayed in the WHOIS database.
- "Missing" registration data due to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Temporary Specification.
- Domain name registrants' inability to update registration records:
    - No access to Registration Data control panel or no ability to login.
    - No response from service provider or reseller.
- Domain name holder issues – domain names registered in the name of hosting. providers, resellers or former employees of registrant organization rather than the actual domain name holder, which can prevent the actual domain name holder from getting important information and managing their domain names.

# Common Transfer Complaints

- Unable to retrieve "AuthInfo" codes via control panel/user panel. "AuthInfo" codes are unique verification codes used to approve domain name transfers.
- Unable to unlock domain name via control panel/user panel.
- Transfer requests by someone not listed as registrant or admin contact.
- Transfer requests between web hosting or service providers.
- Registrar/reseller denied transfer due to additional fee, such as "Transfer Fee."
- Registrar/reseller denied transfer due to pending/future registration period.
- Unresponsive/uncooperative resellers or service providers.
- Hijacked domain/email accounts and unauthorized transfers.

# Common Renewal Complaints

- Registrant did not receive renewal reminders since registrant email is non-functional.
- Registrant was not able to renew/restore domain because control panel was inaccessible.
- Registrant paid renewal fee, but domain name was not renewed.
- Registrar/reseller did not provide information about renewal/redemption fees.

- ⊙ Customer service problems such as failed renewal due to payment methods and billing disputes (out of scope).
- ⊙ Reseller's failure to send reminders, inform customer, or other issue described above.

# Next Steps

The ICANN Registrant Program will continue to work with departments across the organization that interact with domain name registrants to regularly gather and analyze data. We will also continue to publish similar data online at icann.org/registrants as part of our broader effort to raise awareness about the issues and challenges that domain name registrants face.

We encourage the ICANN community and readers of this report to share any data they have regarding issues impacting domain name registrants to guide future conversations and analysis.

Feedback on this report and other relevant data on issues and challenges impacting domain name registrants can be sent to globalsupport@icann.org.