



20 September 2017

RE: Response to Domain Name Suspension

Martin Calder  
Via Email

Dear Martin Calder,

Thank you for your submission regarding the suspension of your domain name – henleyspace.com. I appreciate the frustration this has caused you. I've researched this issue with various departments inside the ICANN organization (all subsequent uses of "ICANN" refer to the ICANN organization) and worked with the Contractual Compliance team to provide you with this response.

After researching your issue, I found it was caused by a formatting inconsistency that led to a false-positive test result from a program ICANN has in place to improve the accuracy of Whois output. ICANN apologizes for the problems this caused you. ICANN is accountable for the work it delivers, to meeting its obligations, and to continuous improvement. As a result of your complaint, ICANN has identified the conditions which created this false-positive, and has made adjustments to prevent future occurrences.

I'd like to summarize my understanding of what happened. You received notification from your registrar that your domain name, henleyspace.com, was subject to a Whois inaccuracy claim related to the telephone contact information. The telephone number in the Whois was a working phone number and to your knowledge was properly formatted. It was not clear what the "inaccuracy" was and you were unable to locate the formatting requirements.

You later discovered the formatting requirements of ICANN's systems that test certain Whois contact details for accuracy did not allow for the inclusion of a local or trunk code, and required a decimal point between the international dial code and the telephone number. Despite having a working number, your Whois was determined to be inaccurate and you understood the correction needed to be made by 28 June 2017 or your domain name could be suspended. Your domain name was suspended on 25 June 2017, and when you submitted your complaint to ICANN on 27 June 2017, your domain name was unavailable.

In reviewing your submission, I identified six key points you would like answers to or would like additional information regarding. Your six key points are:

1. You would like the release of your domain name suspension to be expedited.
2. You understood the name would be suspended on 28 June 2017 if the telephone contact details were not updated. However, the domain name was suspended on 25 June 2017, three days earlier than expected.
3. Your domain name's telephone contact details were not inaccurate, but instead ICANN's system:
  - a. could not interpret the local code, and

- b. used an "...obscure, non-standard format of including a decimal point between the international dial code and the number."
4. You were unable to locate documentation defining the required format for telephone contact information, making it difficult for you to make the requested correction(s).
5. You want to know who raised the complaint that the telephone contact information was incorrect.
6. You want to know who has access to your contact details, and would like a list of "...people or companies that have access to our private contact information through your ownership of this data, as I want to investigate whether you are in breach of the Data Protection Act."

According to current Whois data, the "clientHold" status that was used to implement the suspension has been lifted. Additionally, the domain name appears to resolve in the Domain Name System, meaning the website is working. While your point number one was resolved some time ago, I will address each of the remaining points below.

#### **Relevant Contractual Provisions and/or Requirements:**

ICANN accredits registrars and registries to provide certain domain name registration services. ICANN's authority is purely contractual, and limited to [registrar agreements](#), [registry agreements](#), and [ICANN community developed consensus policies](#). The agreements between ICANN and registrars and registries outline certain responsibilities for both ICANN, the registrar and the registry. ICANN is responsible for overseeing and enforcing the contracts.

The contract between your registrar and ICANN (see: <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/approved-with-specs-2013-09-17-en>) contains several terms that are relevant. They are:

- ⦿ Whois Accuracy Program Specification, which describes obligations to validate that certain WHOIS data fields conform to standardized formats, verify the operability of either the email address or telephone number displayed, and the intervals at which this work must be performed.
- ⦿ Registration Data Directory Services (Whois) Specification, which describes query and response formats, service level agreements, format of data fields, and availability parameters related to Whois.
  - a. Section 1.5 of this Specification references RFC5733, an internet standards document created by the [Internet Engineering Task Force](#), describes additional response and command structures. To view RFC5733 in its entirety, see: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc5733#section-4>. To view the specific section of RFC5733 that describes criteria for telephone numbers, see: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc5733#section-2.5>.
- ⦿ Section 3.7.8, which describes a registrar's requirement to comply with the Whois Accuracy Program Specification, and to take reasonable steps to investigate claims of Whois inaccuracy.

The combination of the above contractual provisions define the Whois format requirements, however it may be easier to review ICANN's website where we summarize the criteria. To view the summarized criteria, see: <https://whois.icann.org/en/whoisars-validation-telephone>.

In addition to contractual requirements, there are a number of Whois related consensus policies the ICANN community has developed over the years. While it is a lot of information, you can find a list of the policies that are implemented today here: <https://whois.icann.org/en/implementation>.

Based on existing consensus policies and contracts, ICANN is committed to implementing measures to maintain timely, unrestricted and public access to accurate and complete Whois information, subject to applicable laws. In support of this commitment, ICANN, in collaboration with an outside vendor and the ICANN community, developed and launched a system to proactively identify potentially inaccurate Whois details. This system, the Whois Accuracy Reporting System was initially launched in 2014 and has been evolving ever since. The Whois Accuracy Reporting System is a framework for conducting repeatable assessments of Whois details to identify inaccurate or unreachable contact information. In short, the current system randomly selects domain name records from a statistically significant sample, checks the Whois data for syntax (format) and operability (reachable), tests the results and shares them with the ICANN Contractual Compliance team to follow up with registrars. For more details regarding the Whois Accuracy Reporting System program, please see: <https://whois.icann.org/en/whoisars>.

As part of their contracts, registrars and registries are required to provide public access to Whois data regarding registered domain names. Anyone can search the registrar and registry databases to view the domain name registrant details contained in the Whois. Therefore, the Whois data is not owned by ICANN, but instead is stored by your registrar of record and – in most cases – the registry operator for the generic top-level-domain (gTLD). ICANN has a webpage, [www.whois.icann.org](http://www.whois.icann.org), where the registrars Whois data can be viewed.

As you may be aware, the Whois has many uses including:

- ⦿ providing the real-world identity, business location and contact information of an online merchant or business,
- ⦿ contacting a domain name registrant on matters related to the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights,
- ⦿ to gather investigative leads to find email addresses and attempt to identify the location of an alleged perpetrator of a crime involving fraud,
- ⦿ and to contact network administrators for resolution of technical matters related to networks associated with a domain name.

Having accurate contact details in the Whois enables these uses and others and is something the ICANN community has spent significant effort developing the requirements for.

### **Summary of Research Findings:**

Your domain name, henleyspace.com, was randomly selected for testing by the Whois Accuracy Reporting System which evaluated the Whois against the requirements discussed above to see if there were any syntactical or operability issues. Your domain name was flagged for both syntax and operability. Once the domain name was flagged for an accuracy error, it was tested by ICANN's vendor for operability by having a system dial the number as an international call to see if it connected. In the case of henleyspace.com, it was not reachable because the

inclusion the (0), or trunk code, only works when making a domestic call. Therefore, henleyspace.com was flagged as being inoperable. The results were then sent to ICANN's Contractual Compliance department to review and follow-up on. ICANN's Contractual Compliance department contacted your registrar of record, provided them with the report results and asked them to resolve the issue within a specified timeframe.

Based on the correspondence between you and your registrar, it appears that they first contacted you on 7 June and requested a response within 15 days, or by 22 June. The registrar followed up on 16 June requesting a response within 7 days, or by 23 June. If the registrar does not receive an affirmative response from the registrant providing the required verification, the registrar can either verify the applicable contact information manually or suspend the registration, until such time as registrar has verified the applicable contact information. The registrar did not receive a response from you and suspended the name on 25 June.

**The ICANN Organization's Response and Next Steps:**

The dialing system operability check failed because of the type of trunk code. ICANN acknowledges that your number is an operable number when dialing from inside the United Kingdom, and apologizes that this led to your domain name being subject to suspension. As noted, the Whois Accuracy Reporting System has been evolving since its initial launch in 2014. Over the past 3+ years, ICANN has worked with our vendor to make adjustments to address false-positives.

As a result of your complaint, our vendor has fine-tuned the programming of the dialing system to better recognize and deal with this type of trunk code. While I appreciate this will not change the past or the experience you had, ICANN has taken measures to ensure these adjustments are in place. I appreciate you bringing this to our attention. Thank you again for your submission. I hope this response is useful and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you.

Kind regards,

Krista Papac  
Complaints Officer