

FROM WHOIS TO RDAP AFTER 28 JANUARY 2025

WHAT CHANGES FOR SECURITY, PRIVACY, AND DEVELOPERS?

The Day Everything Changed: 28 January 2025

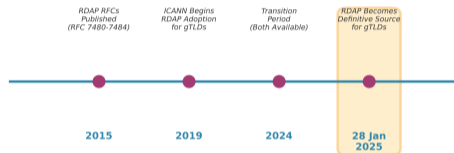
Real-world scenario

- A SOC analyst investigating a suspicious domain
- Opens WHOIS client: **"Data may not be authoritative"**
- ICANN announces: **RDAP is now the definitive source**

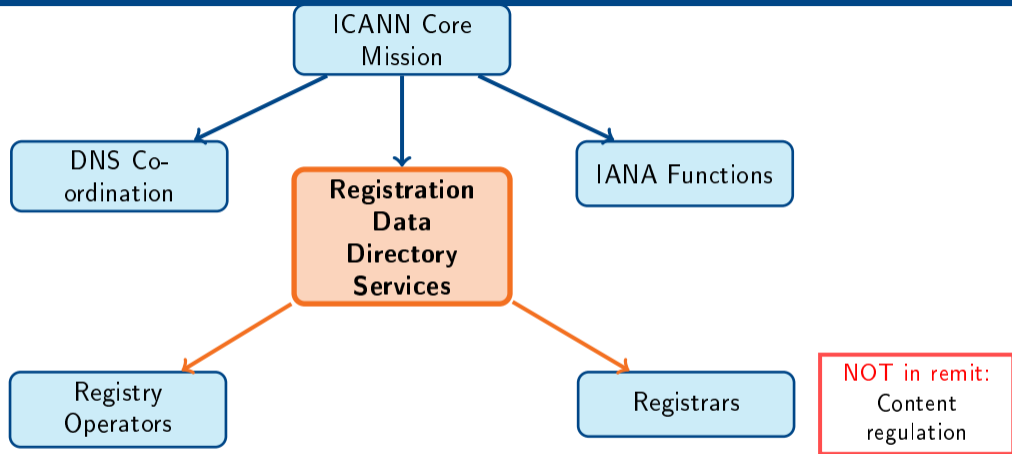
Key milestone

- WHOIS **no longer required** for gTLDs
- RDAP becomes **mandatory** for all gTLD registries/registrar

The Journey to RDAP as Definitive Source



Understanding ICANN's Remit: Where RDAP Fits



Why this matters: RDAP falls squarely within ICANN's technical coordination mandate—ensuring stable, secure access to registration data.

WHOIS vs RDAP: Three Key Differences

WHOIS vs RDAP: Key Differences

	WHOIS	RDAP
Object Linking	Not supported	Embedded links
Status Codes	Inconsistent	Standardized (RFC)
Bootstrapping	None	IANA Registry
Access Control	Public only	Differentiated
Internationalization	Limited (ASCII bias)	Full UTF-8
Service Discovery	Manual	Automated (Bootstrap)
Parsing	Regex (fragile)	Native (structured)
Data Format	Plain Text	JSON (RFC 9083)

1. Machine-Readable

- WHOIS: Plain text
- RDAP: JSON

2. Service Discovery

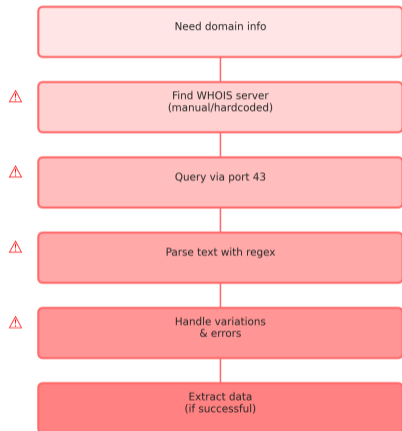
- WHOIS: Manual
- RDAP: Bootstrap

3. Access Control

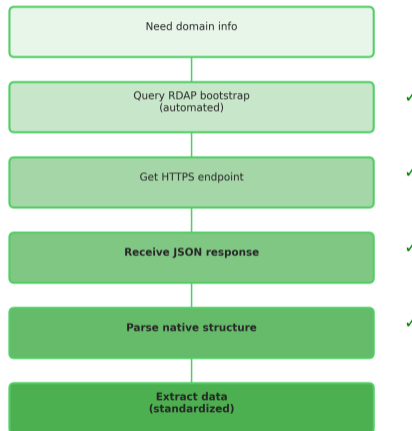
- WHOIS: Public only
- RDAP: Differentiated

Before/After: SOC & Threat Intel Workflow

BEFORE: WHOIS Workflow



AFTER: RDAP Workflow



What to Expect When Using RDAP (Realistic View)

✓ What you WILL get

- Structured JSON responses
- Standard object types
- Links to related resources
- Notices about redaction
- Standardized status codes

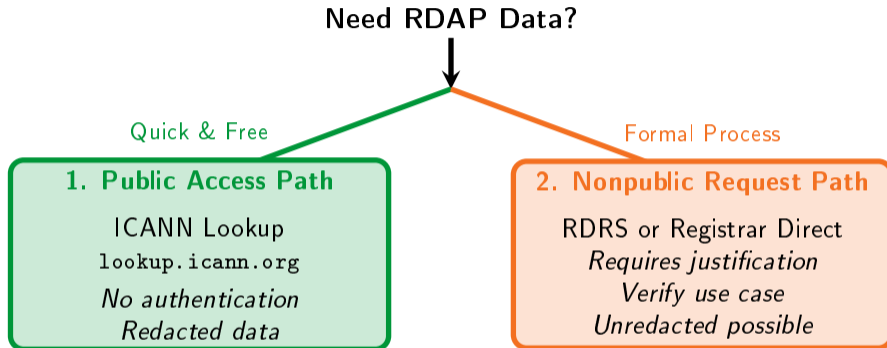
× What you may NOT get

- Full registrant details (redacted)
- Historical data (varies)
- Unlimited queries (rate limits)
- Real-time updates (delays)

Critical credibility metric: ICANN estimates **>10 billion RDAP queries/month** as of December 2024—demonstrating massive production adoption.

Source: ICANN RDAP Resources Page (accessed 17 Jan 2026)

Navigating Access: Public Lookup vs Nonpublic Request



Key distinction: Public path for quick lookups (redacted). Nonpublic requests via RDRS or direct to registrar for unredacted data with legitimate justification.

Source: ICANN RDRS page & RDRS Requestor FAQs (accessed 17 Jan 2026)

Migration Checklist: What Your Organization Must Do

Technical

- Replace WHOIS libraries with RDAP
- Migrate regex parsing to JSON
- Implement IANA bootstrap

Policy & Teams

- Train SOC/IR teams on RDAP
- Define data access needs
- Establish RDRS account if needed

Vietnam (.vn)

- Monitor .vn RDAP adoption
- Use tracuutenmien.gov.vn meanwhile

Start early. Migration is straightforward but takes planning—swap libraries, parse JSON, train teams.

Three Strategic Recommendations

1

Start migration now

Don't wait—gain experience early

2

Design for privacy

Redaction is the norm post-GDPR

3

Advocate locally

Engage ccTLDs (e.g., VNNIC)

The shift to RDAP is not just technical—it's cultural.

Balancing *privacy*, *security*, and *openness* in the modern Internet.

References

- 1 ICANN (27 Jan 2025). *ICANN Update: Launching RDAP; Sunsetting WHOIS*.
<https://www.icann.org/en/announcements/details/icann-update-launching-rdap-sunsetting-whois-27-01-2025-en>
- 2 ICANN. *Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) Overview*.
<https://www.icann.org/rdap>
- 3 ICANN. *Registration Data Access Protocol (RDAP) Resources*.
<https://www.icann.org/en/contracted-parties/registry-operators/resources/registration-data-access-protocol>
- 4 ICANN. *Registration Data Request Service (RDRS)*.
<https://www.icann.org/rdrs-en>
- 5 RDAP.ORG. *Deployment Dashboard*.
<https://deployment.rdap.org/>
- 6 VNNIC. *Vietnam Domain Name Lookup Portal*.
<https://tracuutenmien.gov.vn/>

All sources accessed 17 January 2026.

Thank You!

Questions?

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