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Why we do not offer Whois masking at easyDNS

We get asked this a lot: Why do you guys not offer whois masking or whois contact privacy?

The brief background on this is: whenever you register a domain name, your contact details are published in a publicly visible database called "whois", where your contact details are instantly harvested by spambots and marketers who proceed to email and postal mail you marketing offers, deceptive "domain slamming" attempts, ads for dubious products, and perhaps even telemarketing calls.

Nobody likes that, so over the years people started resorting to various tactics to protect themselves from the deluge of crap that inevitably comes with simply registering a domain name: throwaway email addresses in whois records, fake postal addresses, fake phone numbers, etc. The problem is, Registrants are obligated under their various end user agreements to provide true and accurate data (not doing so is grounds to lose one's domain), and the US even passed legislation making it unlawful to use fake contact details in a domain name registration.

Our response to this, years ago, was MyPrivacy.ca which protects your email address from being harvested from your whois records, but leaves your other data intact. We didn't see it as a revenue opportunity, in fact we made it free and opened it up to competing registrars, many of whom started recommending it to their customers. We just wanted to drive a stake through the heart of the whois spammers.

It wasn't long though, before many registrars took it a step further and created the concept of "whois masking" or "contact privacy", where all of the domain-holder contact details would be masked from the public whois. Of course, this was heralded as a "value-add" and most outfits charge extra for it.

In today's long overdue post, we're finally revealing why so-called "whois privacy" puts your domains at risk, costs you more and doesn't really protect your privacy. Continue reading "Why we do not offer Whois masking at easyDNS"

Posted by easyDNS: of Interest in via easyDNS blog at 11:29