

February 19, 2017

Göran Marby  
President and CEO, ICANN  
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

Re: WHOIS Privacy / Domain Registration Extortion

Dear Mr. Marby:

As part of an ongoing scheme, GoDaddy.com and other internet Registrars extort exorbitant fees to provide WHOIS "Privacy Registration" which exceeds the original cost to register Internet Domain names.

In the case of HI-TECH Business Systems (HI-TECH), immediately after renewing 23 GoDaddy domain names, we've been slammed with SPAM, telemarketing calls and text messages to my personal cell phone.

ICANN requires Registrars such as GoDaddy to provide full contact information under WHOIS services that are bound by your Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA). RAA sections 3.3.6.3 and 3.3.6.5 require Registrars to prevent third party's from using this data for SPAM, etc. and not to sell or distribute this personal data<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, the RAA has been violated by GoDaddy.

Further, GoDaddy has developed a scheme to **frustrate** users when attempting to change your personal information without paying their additional Privacy Fees. Here's how:

1. GoDaddy creating a convoluted Change of Registrant system which suffers persistent errors including a 5-day cycle to notify of errors
2. GoDaddy providing substandard support requiring customers to email [invalidwhois@godaddy.com](mailto:invalidwhois@godaddy.com) instead of the usual GoDaddy Telephone Support
3. Limiting GoDaddy's Refund Policy a "special 5-day/120-hour Refund Period" which conveniently exceeds the 5-day Change of Registrant error cycle notification<sup>2</sup>. (The standard GoDaddy Refund Period is 30 days.)

How many people can figure this out without resorting to just paying GoDaddy's Privacy WHOIS service? Meanwhile, millions of private telephone numbers, business contact information and email addresses records are being harvested.



**HiTech**  
Business Systems



**The BIGGER the Privacy Problem – The GREATER the Profits**

Registrars have a major financial incentive to ignore and circumvent the current RAA related to personal data. The more consumers and businesses are tormented and unable to remove their personal contact data themselves, the greater the profits from WHOIS Privacy sales.

Many Foreign governments have enacted laws by which ICANN must adhere to protect WHOIS privacy<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, Privacy Advocates have been calling for WHOIS Privacy for many years<sup>4</sup>.

**It's time ICANN require ALL Registrars to provide WHOIS Privacy at no extra cost.** After all, ICANN and Registrars are the cause of this massive problem.

Until the ICANN RAA can be corrected, please urge all Registrars to voluntarily provide a no cost WHOIS Privacy option.

The owners of the 299 million worldwide Domains and I thank you for your attention to this matter<sup>5</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan T. Meehan, Sr., CDIA+  
President

CC: The Honorable Dutch Ruppersberger, Ranking Member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. House of Representatives

Congressman Andy Harris, M.D. 1<sup>st</sup> District of Maryland

Mr. Scott Wagner, President and COO, GoDaddy

<sup>1</sup> <https://whois.icann.org/en/icann-procedure-handling-whois-conflicts-privacy-law>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/showdoc.aspx?pageid=19963&prog\\_id=PROG\\_ID](https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/showdoc.aspx?pageid=19963&prog_id=PROG_ID)

<sup>3</sup> <https://whois.icann.org/en/icann-procedure-handling-whois-conflicts-privacy-law>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domain\\_privacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domain_privacy)

<sup>5</sup> <https://investor.verisign.com/releasedetail.cfm?releaseid=947518>