

**NAME**

**whois** - Internet domain name and network number directory service

**SYNOPSIS**

**whois** [-aAbfgiIkImPQrRS] [-c *TLD* | -h *host*] [-p *port*] [--] *name* ...

**DESCRIPTION**

The **whois** utility looks up records in the databases maintained by several Network Information Centers (NICs).

By default **whois** starts by querying the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) whois server, and follows referrals to whois servers that have more specific details about the query *name*. The IANA whois server knows about IP address and AS numbers as well as domain names.

There are a few special cases where referrals do not work, so **whois** goes directly to the appropriate server. These include point-of-contact handles for ARIN, *nic.at*, NORID, and RIPE, and domain names under *ac.uk*.

The options are as follows:

- a     Use the American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN) database. It contains network numbers used in those parts of the world covered neither by APNIC, AfriNIC, LACNIC, nor by RIPE. The query syntax is documented at [https://www.arin.net/resources/whoisrws/whois\\_api.html#nicname](https://www.arin.net/resources/whoisrws/whois_api.html#nicname)
- A     Use the Asia/Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC) database. It contains network numbers used in East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific islands. Get query syntax documentation using **whois -A help**
- b     Use the Network Abuse Clearinghouse database. It contains addresses to which network abuse should be reported, indexed by domain name.
- c *TLD*  
      This is the equivalent of using the -h option with an argument of "*TLD*.whois-servers.net". This can be helpful for locating country-class TLD whois servers.
- f     Use the African Network Information Centre (AfriNIC) database. It contains network numbers used in Africa and the islands of the western Indian Ocean. Get query syntax documentation using **whois -f help**

- g** Use the US non-military federal government database, which contains points of contact for subdomains of *.GOV*.
- h** *host*  
Use the specified host instead of the default. Either a host name or an IP address may be specified.
- i** Use the traditional Network Information Center (InterNIC) (*whois.internic.net*) database. This now contains only registrations for domain names under *.COM*, *.NET*, *.EDU*. You can specify the type of object to search for like **whois -i 'type name'** where *type* can be **domain**, **nameserver**, **registrar**. The *name* can contain \* wildcards.
- I** Use the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) database.
- k** Use the National Internet Development Agency of Korea's (KRNIC) database. It contains network numbers and domain contact information for Korea.
- l** Use the Latin American and Caribbean IP address Regional Registry (LACNIC) database. It contains network numbers used in much of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- m** Use the Route Arbiter Database (RADB) database. It contains route policy specifications for a large number of operators' networks.
- p** *port*  
Connect to the whois server on *port*. If this option is not specified, **whois** defaults to port 43.
- P** Use the PeeringDB database of AS numbers. It contains details about presence at internet peering points for many network operators.
- Q** Do a quick lookup; **whois** will not attempt to follow referrals to other whois servers. This is the default if a server is explicitly specified using one of the other options or in an environment variable. See also the **-R** option.
- r** Use the R'eseaux IP Europ'eens (RIPE) database. It contains network numbers and domain contact information for Europe. Get query syntax documentation using **whois -r help**
- R** Do a recursive lookup; **whois** will attempt to follow referrals to other whois servers. This is the default if no server is explicitly specified. See also the **-Q** option.
- S** By default **whois** adjusts simple queries (without spaces) to produce more useful output from

certain whois servers, and it suppresses some uninformative output. With the **-S** option, **whois** sends the query and prints the output verbatim.

The operands specified to **whois** are treated independently and may be used as queries on different whois servers.

## ENVIRONMENT

**WHOIS\_SERVER** The primary default whois server. If this is unset, **whois** uses the **RA\_SERVER** environment variable.

**RA\_SERVER** The secondary default whois server. If this is unset, **whois** will use *whois.iana.org*.

## EXIT STATUS

The **whois** utility exits 0 on success, and >0 if an error occurs.

## EXAMPLES

To obtain contact information about an administrator located in the Russian TLD domain "RU", use the **-c** option as shown in the following example, where *CONTACT-ID* is substituted with the actual contact identifier.

```
whois -c RU CONTACT-ID
```

(Note: This example is specific to the TLD "RU", but other TLDs can be queried by using a similar syntax.)

The following example demonstrates how to query a whois server using a non-standard port, where "query-data" is the query to be sent to "whois.example.com" on port "rwhois" (written numerically as 4321).

```
whois -h whois.example.com -p rwhois query-data
```

Some whois servers support complex queries with dash-letter options. You can use the **--** option to separate **whois** command options from whois server query options. A query containing spaces must be quoted as one argument to the **whois** command. The following example asks the RIPE whois server to return a brief description of its "domain" object type:

```
whois -r -- '-t domain'
```

## STANDARDS

K. Harrenstien, M. Stahl, and E. Feinler, *NICNAME/WHOIS*, RFC 954, October 1985.

L. Daigle, *WHOIS Protocol Specification*, RFC 3912, September 2004.

## HISTORY

The **whois** command appeared in 4.3BSD.