

# Repairing Trust in Domain Name Disputes: Insights from a Quarter-Century's Worth of Squabbles

Vinny Adjibi, Athanasios Avgetidis, Manos Antonakakis, Alberto Dainotti, Michael Bailey, Fabian Monroe

# Domain names



Easy to remember



Readily available



Quasi-unlimited supply



Affordable

## Benign Uses

- Websites (Commercial, Non-Profit, Personal, etc.)
- eGovernment
- APIs

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## Malicious Uses

- Phishing
- Spamming
- Malware Command & Control
- Sale of counterfeit products
- Brand impersonation

# Existing Defenses Against Domain Name Abuse

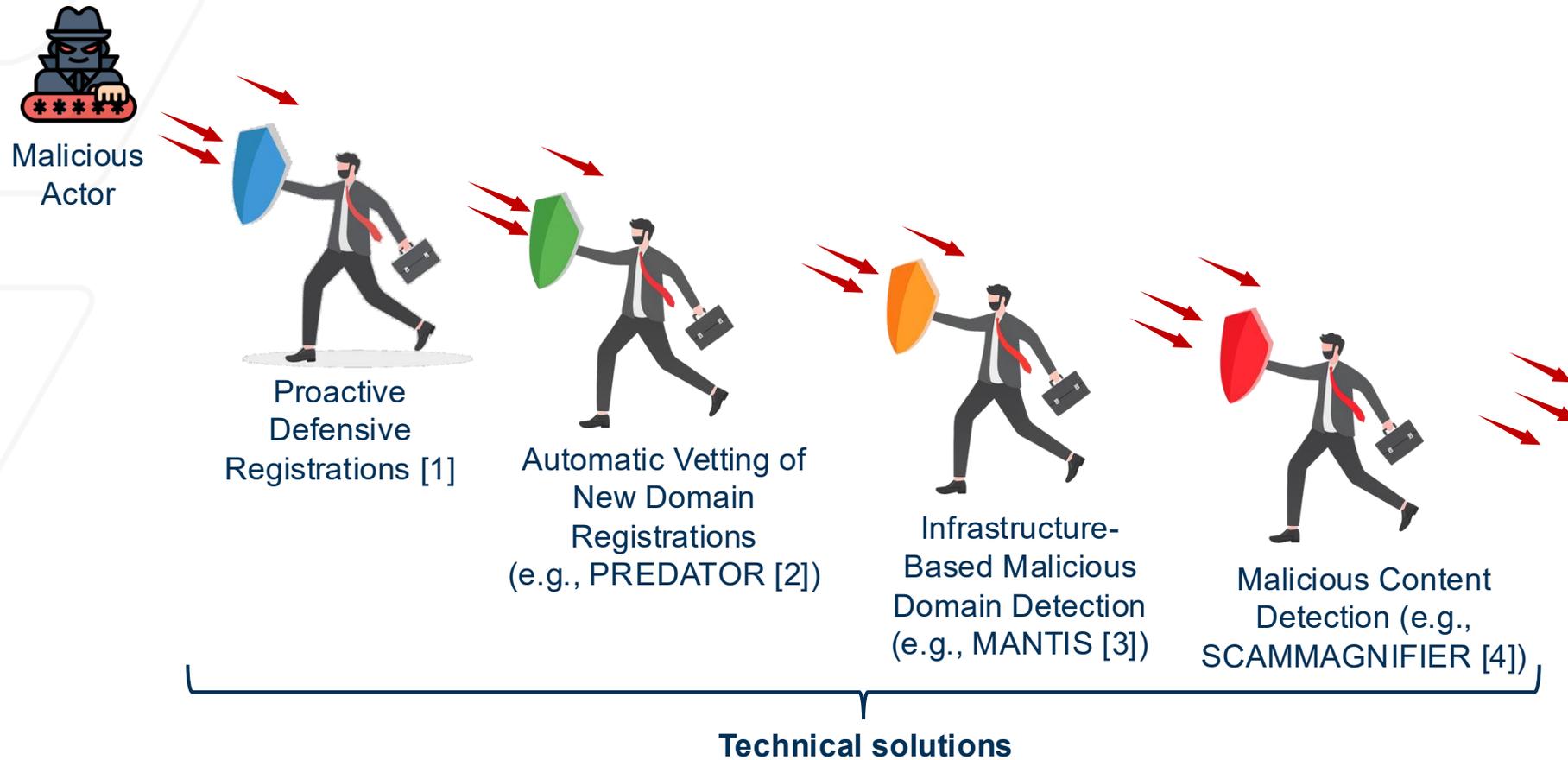


Malicious  
Actor



End User

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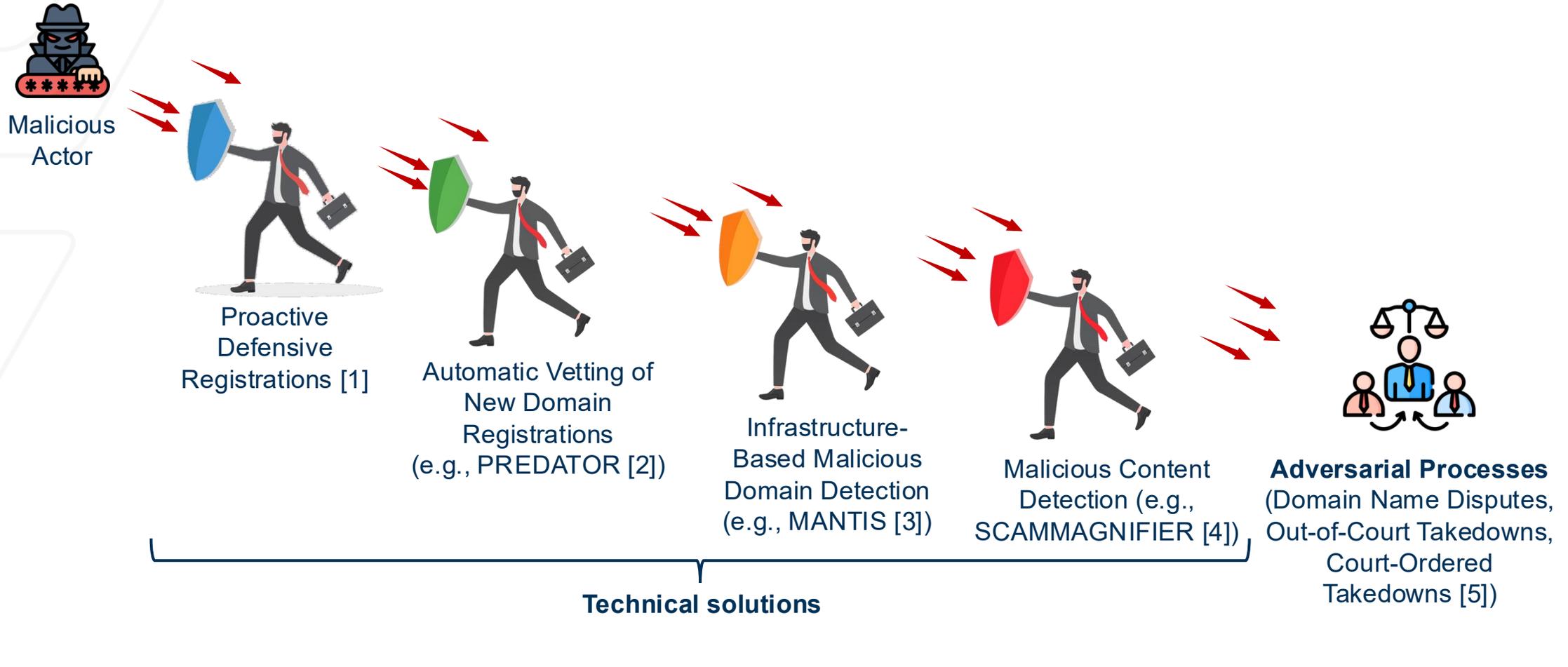
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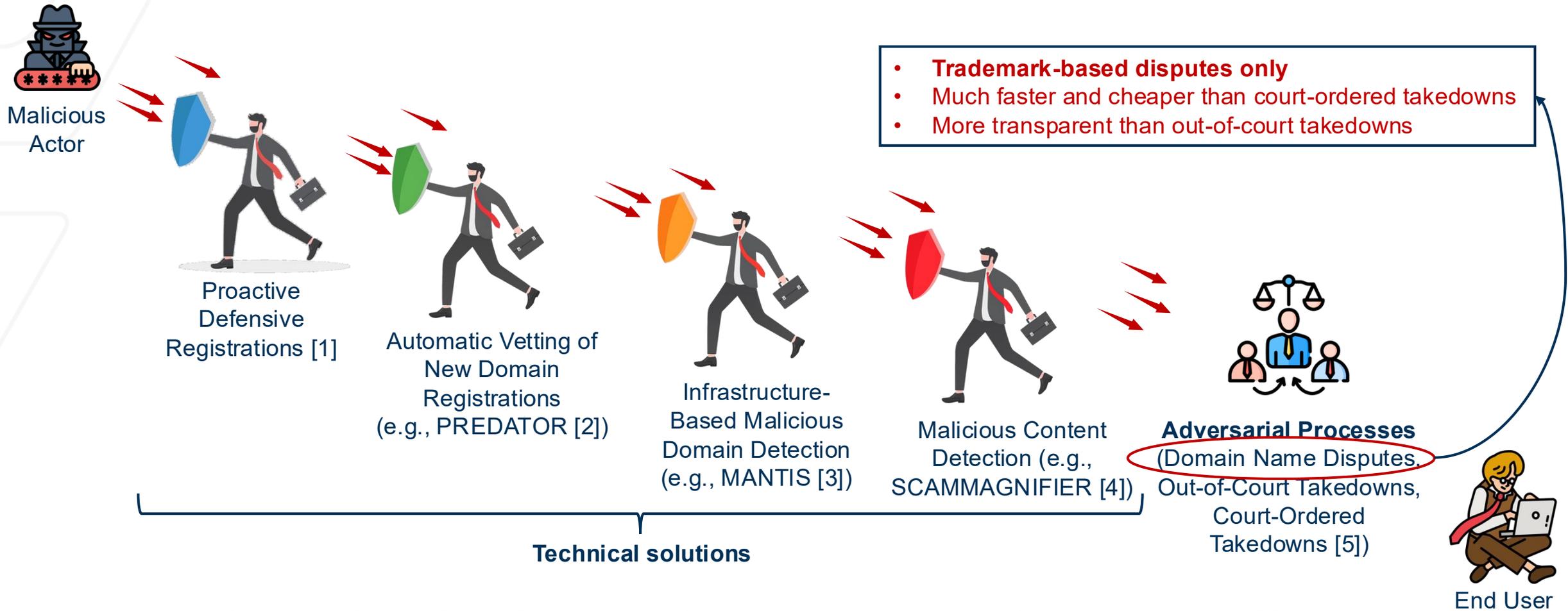
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# Description of Domain Name Disputes: Examples of UDRP (Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy) Decisions



## Trigger

A domain name is suspected of being registered and used in bad faith



## Dispute Process

A dispute is filed, and both parties can submit their contentions for analysis by a panel.



## Outcome

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### Netflix Wins KPop Demon Hunters Domain Dispute

By Richard Lawson — ENTERTAINMENT  
Last updated: January 18, 2026 6:42 pm

### Parking dooms owner of F5.net in UDRP

 [Andrew Allemann](#)  [6 Comments](#) June 24, 2016

**UDRP: the improper and unjustified transfer of the domain name home-goods.shop**

by Emmanuel Gillet / 13 June 2020

### Akamai loses cybersquatting fight with Cloudflare

 [Andrew Allemann](#)  [2 Comments](#) March 10, 2022

### Soccer Star Lionel Messi Files UDRP Seeking Control of 2 Domains Including Messi.com

AUGUST 14, 2015 // BY MICHAEL BERKENS

# Diverging Opinions About the UDRP



## Supporters

**FAST**, CHEAP, AND OUT OF CONTROL:  
LESSONS FROM THE ICANN DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

by  
*Elizabeth G. Thornburg\**

THE UDRP -  
FUNDAMENTALLY **FAIR**, BUT FAR FROM PERFECT

THE UDRP - **A MODEL** FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION  
IN E-COMMERCE?

by  
*Edward C. Anderson, Esq.\* & Timothy S. Cole, Esq.*



## Critics

Reforming UDRP Arbitration: The  
Suggestions to Eliminate Potential  
**Inefficiency**

*Soohye Cho, University of Virginia*

The Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution  
Process and the Appearance of **Partiality**  
*Panelists Impaled on the Horns of a Dilemma*

*M. Scott DONAHEY\**

~~UNE MAGOUILLE PLANETAIRE: THE  
UDRP IS AN **INTERNATIONAL SCAM**~~

An Independent Assessment of the Uniform Domain Name  
Dispute Resolution Policy of the Internet Corporation for  
Assigned Names and Numbers

*Benjamin G. Davis\**

# The UDRP 25 Years Later: Same Old Contested Rules

2008



Supporters

2025



Critics



No significant change

 **Computer Law & Security Report**  
Volume 24, Issue 4, 2008, Pages 349-359

Domain names and the uniform dispute resolution policy

**An analysis of the UDRP experience – Is it time for reform?**

[Home](#) > [Vol 6, No 2 \(2025\)](#) > [Rozhkova](#)

Domain disputes and arbitration under the UDRP: Legal issues and new (old) challenges

 [M. A. Rozhkova](#),  [E. V. Alymova](#)

The few empirical analyses that exist are **very old, highly contentious, or inconclusive.**

# ICANN's Latest Attempt To "Fix" the UDRP

## Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) Status Report

Policy Status Report

Prepared by ICANN Org for the Consideration of the GNSO  
Council

3 March 2022



**Fairness**



**Efficiency**

# ICANN's Latest Attempt To "Fix" the UDRP

The UDRP is **due for an update.**

As seen from the public comments submitted, **there is some disagreement as to what changes, if any, should be addressed** in Phase 2 with respect to the UDRP.

## Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) Status Report

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What the **Status Report's statistics do not convey** however, is the substantial delays that parties often encounter from the time that a Complaint is filed to the decision.

**In conclusion, we reject the report in its entirety.** It is irrevocably flawed and should be withdrawn.



Fairness



Efficiency

# Our Work: Empirical Assessment of the Contentious Issues Preventing a Productive UDRP Reform



**Fairness**



**Efficiency**

# Our Work: Empirical Assessment of the Contentious Issues Preventing a Productive UDRP Reform



## Fairness

1. Do complainants engage in forum shopping?
2. Are decisions made without conflicts of interest?



## Efficiency

1. How soon do registrars transfer successfully contested domains?
2. Do registrars communicate domain name owners' details with providers in a timely manner?
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# Our Work: Empirical Assessment of the Contentious Issues Preventing a Productive UDRP Reform



## Fairness

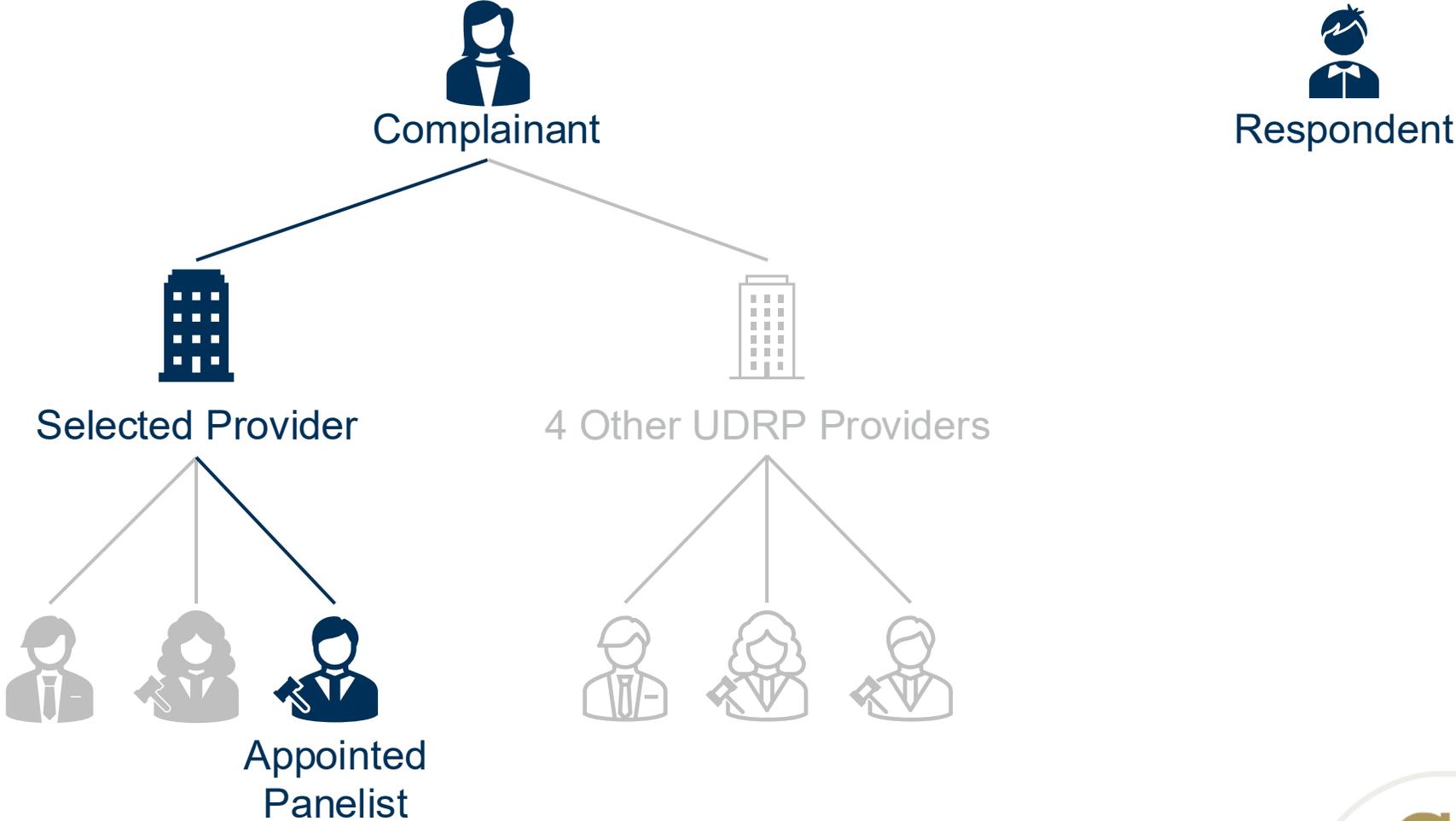
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# Large-Scale Evaluation of the Most Controversial Issue In UDRP History: Forum Shopping

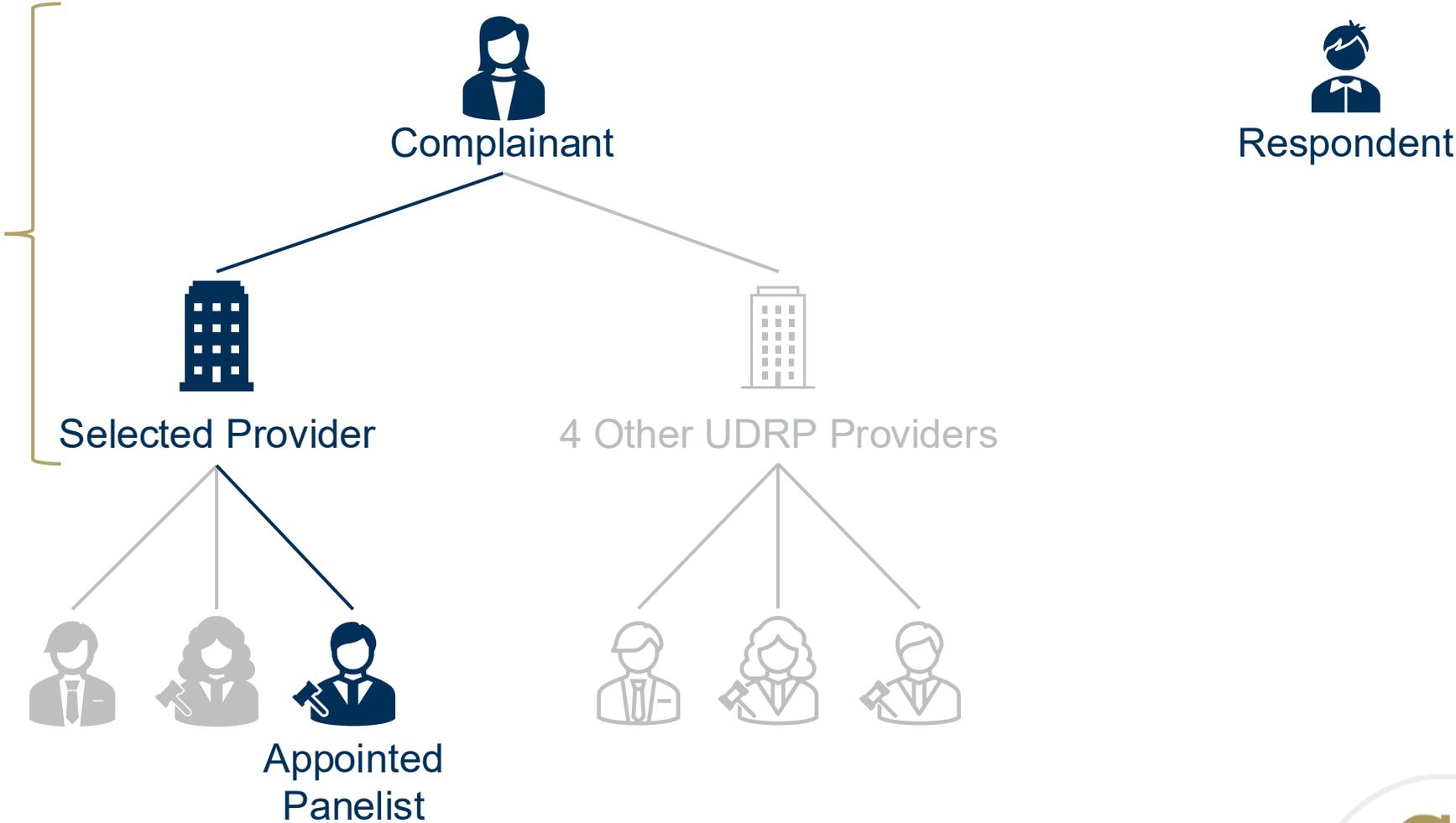


# Large-Scale Evaluation of the Most Controversial Issue In UDRP History: Forum Shopping

Did the Complainant select the provider most likely to decide in their favor?

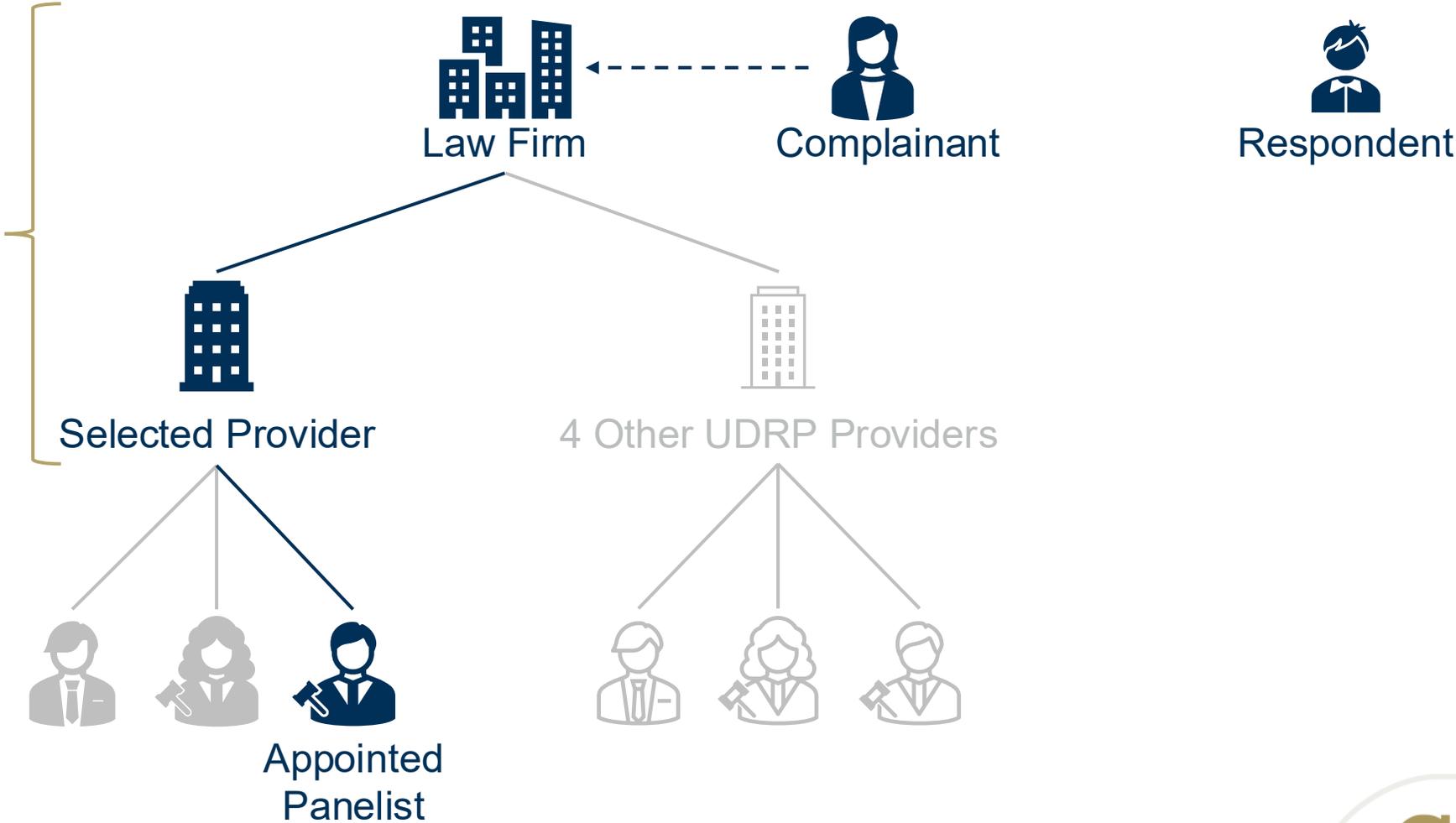


**Contentious or inconclusive results**



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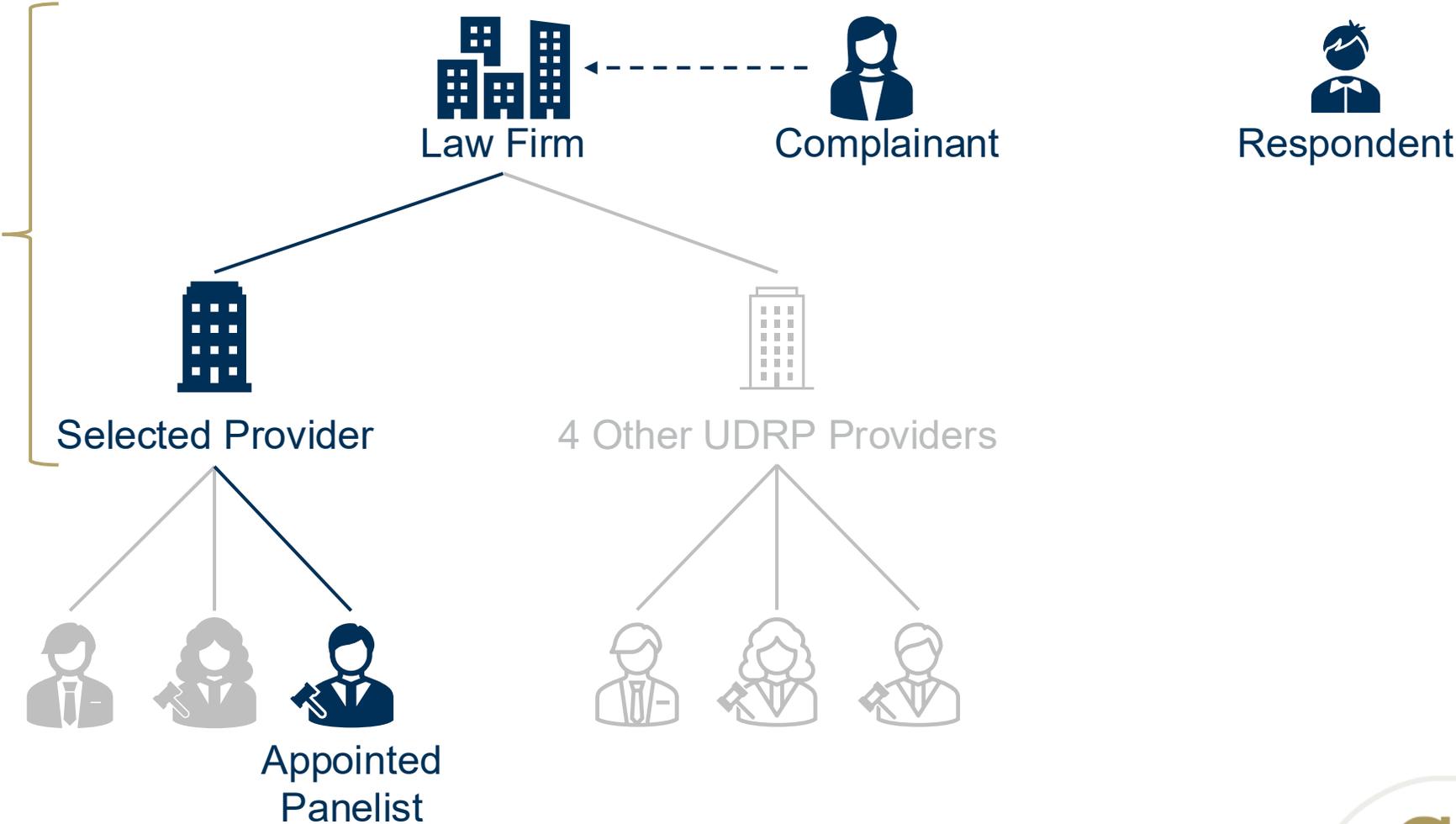
# The Frequent Participation of Law Firms in UDRP Disputes Makes Them Ideal For Studying Forum Shopping



No Complainants filed more than 1,000 disputes but 4 law firms represented complainants in more than 1,000 disputes.

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Did the Complainant the law firm representing the Complainant select the provider most likely to decide in their favor?



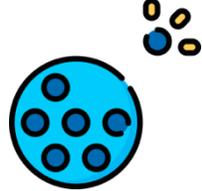
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Selected the **same provider** for all their disputes.



## One-Timers

Selected the same provider for **all but one** of their disputes.

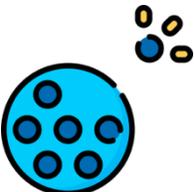
Not Forum Shoppers

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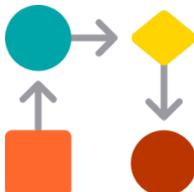
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## Brand Switchers

Selected the same provider for a while, then **completely switched to a different provider.**

Forum Shoppers if they switched at the first negative outcome with a provider.

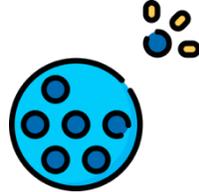
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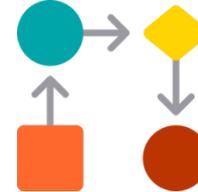
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## Brand Switchers

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## Opportunists

**Constantly switched between providers**, often within a day.

Not Forum Shoppers

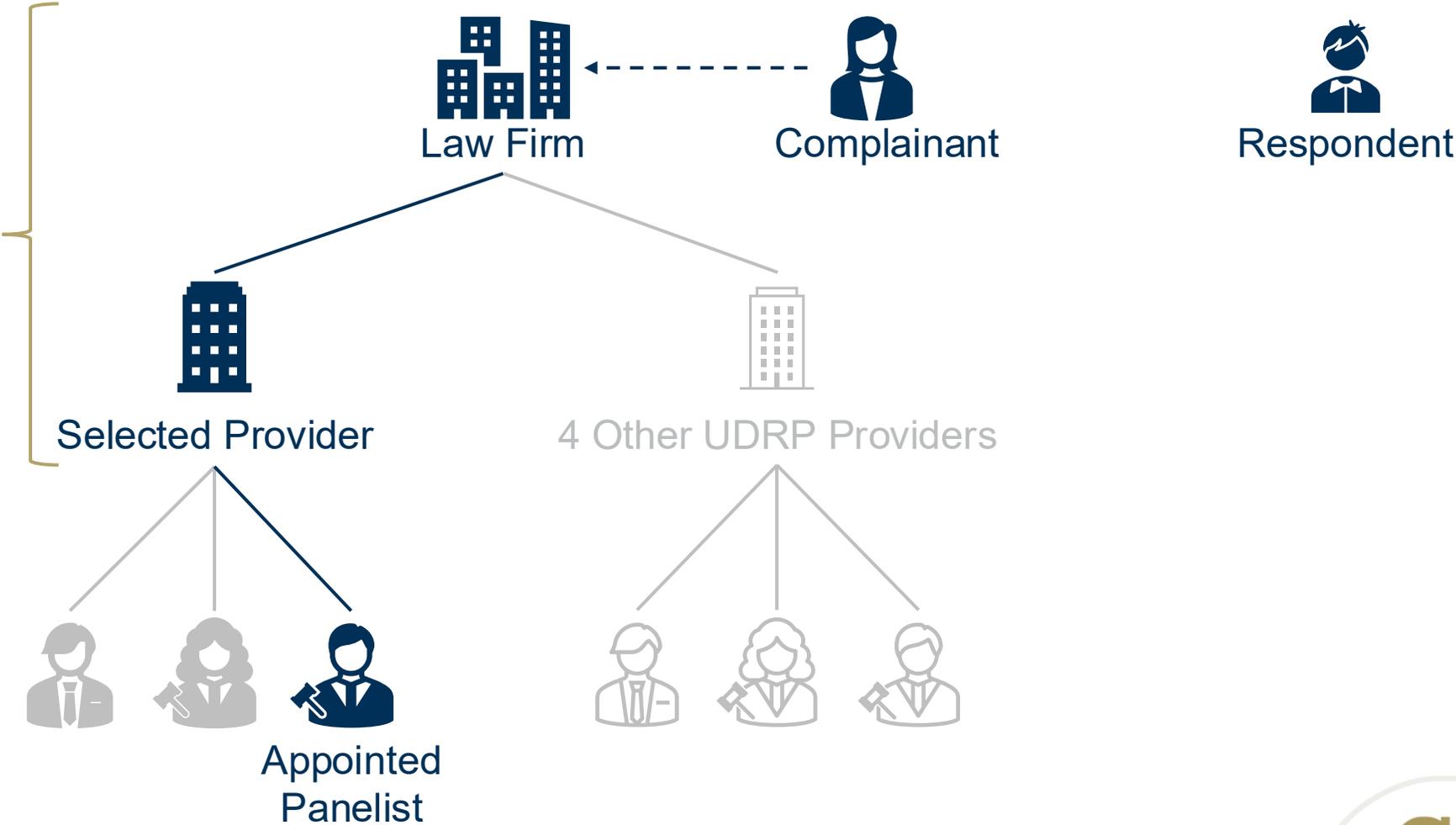
Forum Shoppers if they switched at the first negative outcome with a provider.

Forum Shoppers if their probability of choosing a provider is positively correlated with their past winning rate.

# Large-Scale Evaluation of the Most Controversial Issue In UDRP History: Forum Shopping

Did the law firm representing the Complainant select the provider most likely to decide in their favor?

In **33.98% of cases** (Dec. 1999 – Aug. 2024), law firms' selection of a provider suggest behaviors consistent with forum shopping.



# Our Work: Empirical Assessment of the Contentious Issues Preventing a Productive UDRP Reform



## Fairness

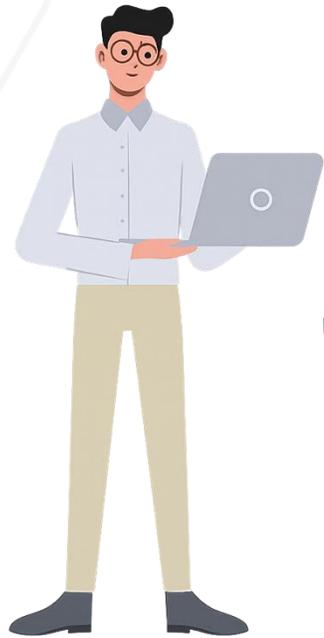
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# Actions to Be Taken By Registrars after a Dispute



## Denied

Unlock the domain name.



## Transferred

Transfer the domain name to the Complainant.

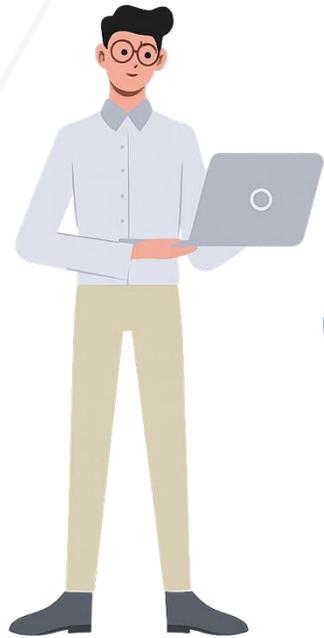


## Cancelled

Cancel the domain registration.



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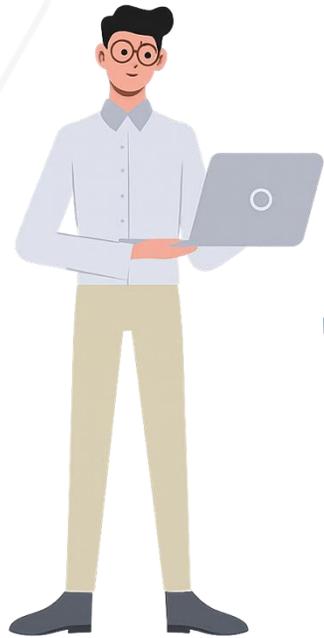
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Delayed action can extend malicious activity.

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**How long do registrars take to transfer domains?**

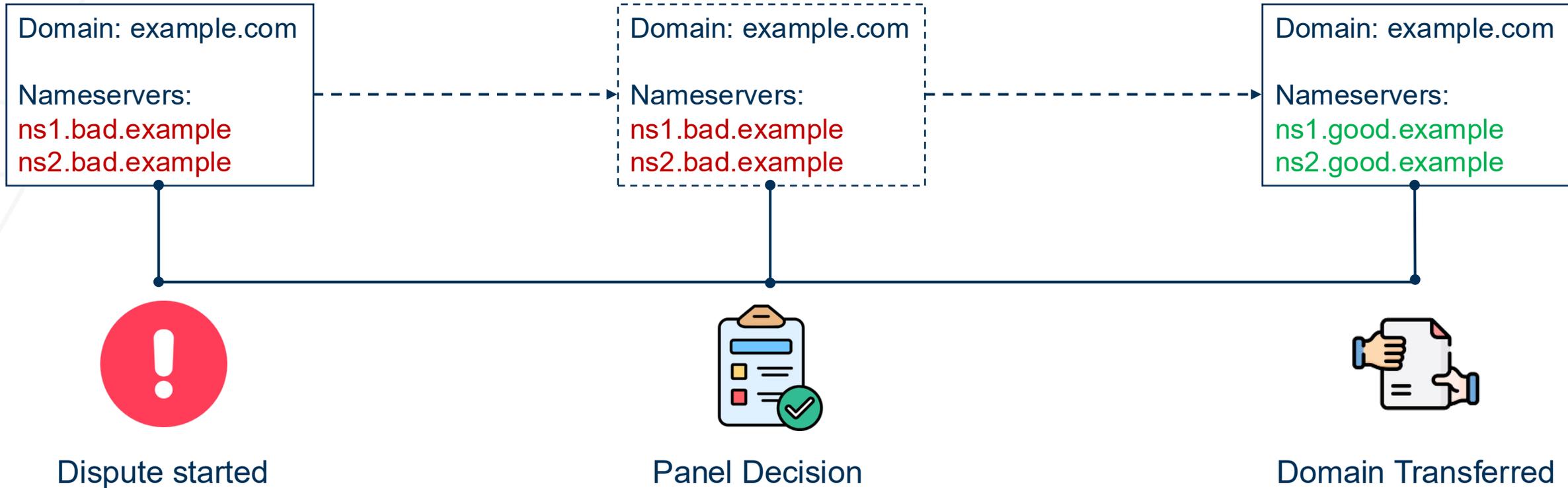
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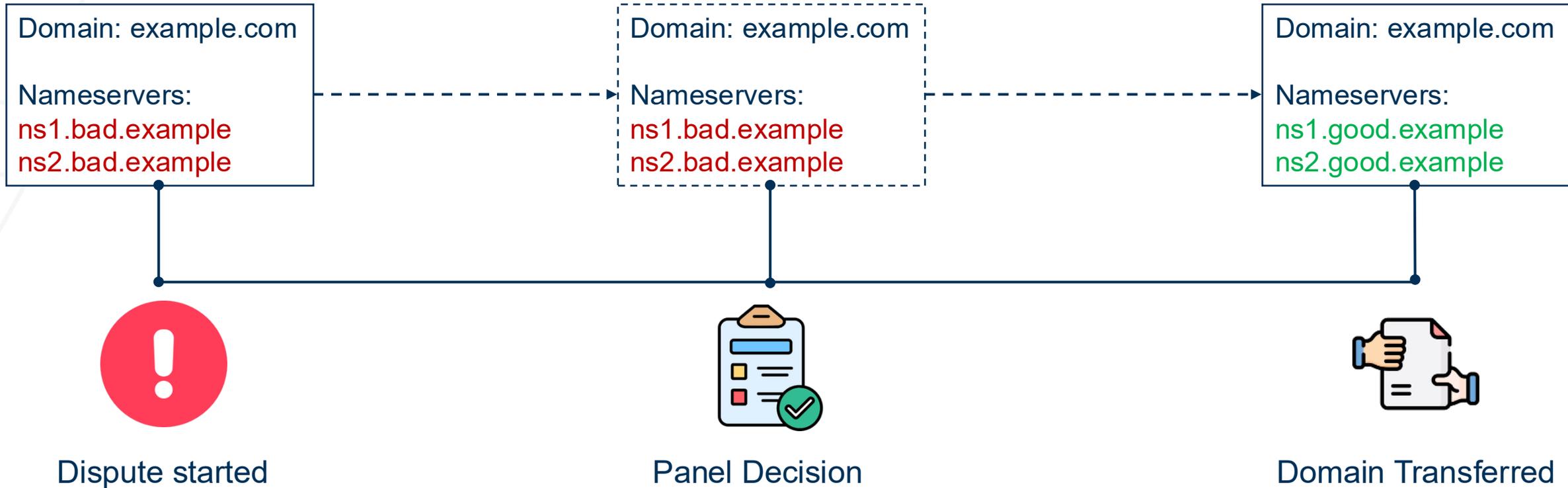
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# Estimation of the Transfer Date of Disputed Domains



# Estimation of the Transfer Date of Disputed Domains



We analyzed historical zone files to identify when domain names were transferred.

# Time Taken By Registrars to Implement Transfer Decisions



## Insights

- **>50%** domain names awarded to complainants are not transferred after a month.
- Registrars took **up to four months** to transfer domain names that were malicious (up to 22 VirusTotal detections)

# What Policy Changes Can Improve Transfer Speed?

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LESSONS FROM THE ICANN DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

by  
Elizabeth G. Thornburg\*

Reforming UDRP Arbitration: The  
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**Diverging  
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*policy analysis*



**Agreement  
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**Implementation  
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*quantitative and/or  
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**Identification of  
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*policy development*

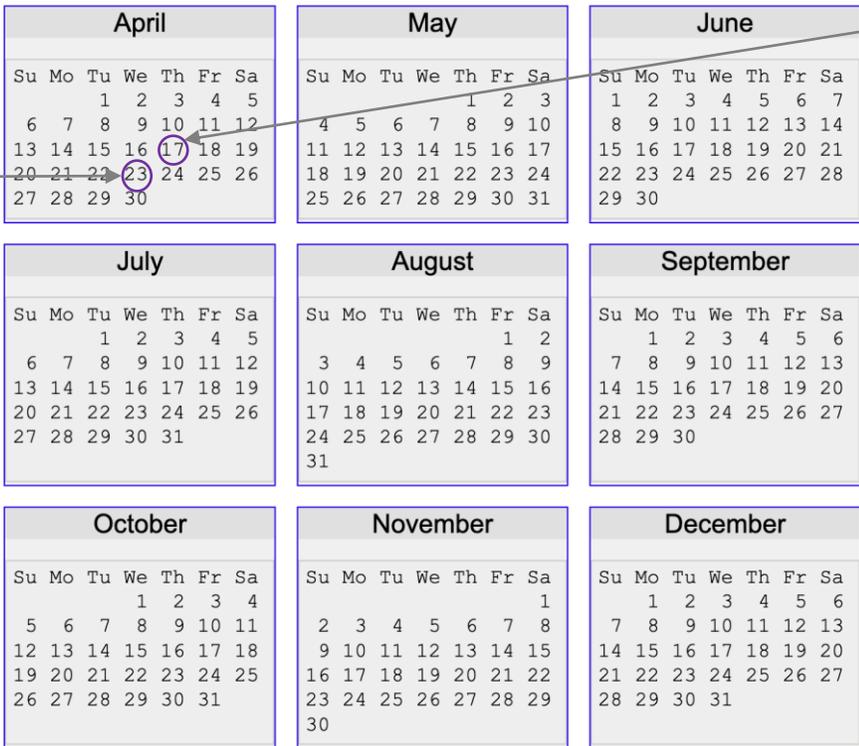


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# Shaping Policy: When Practical Experience Meets Empirical Evidence

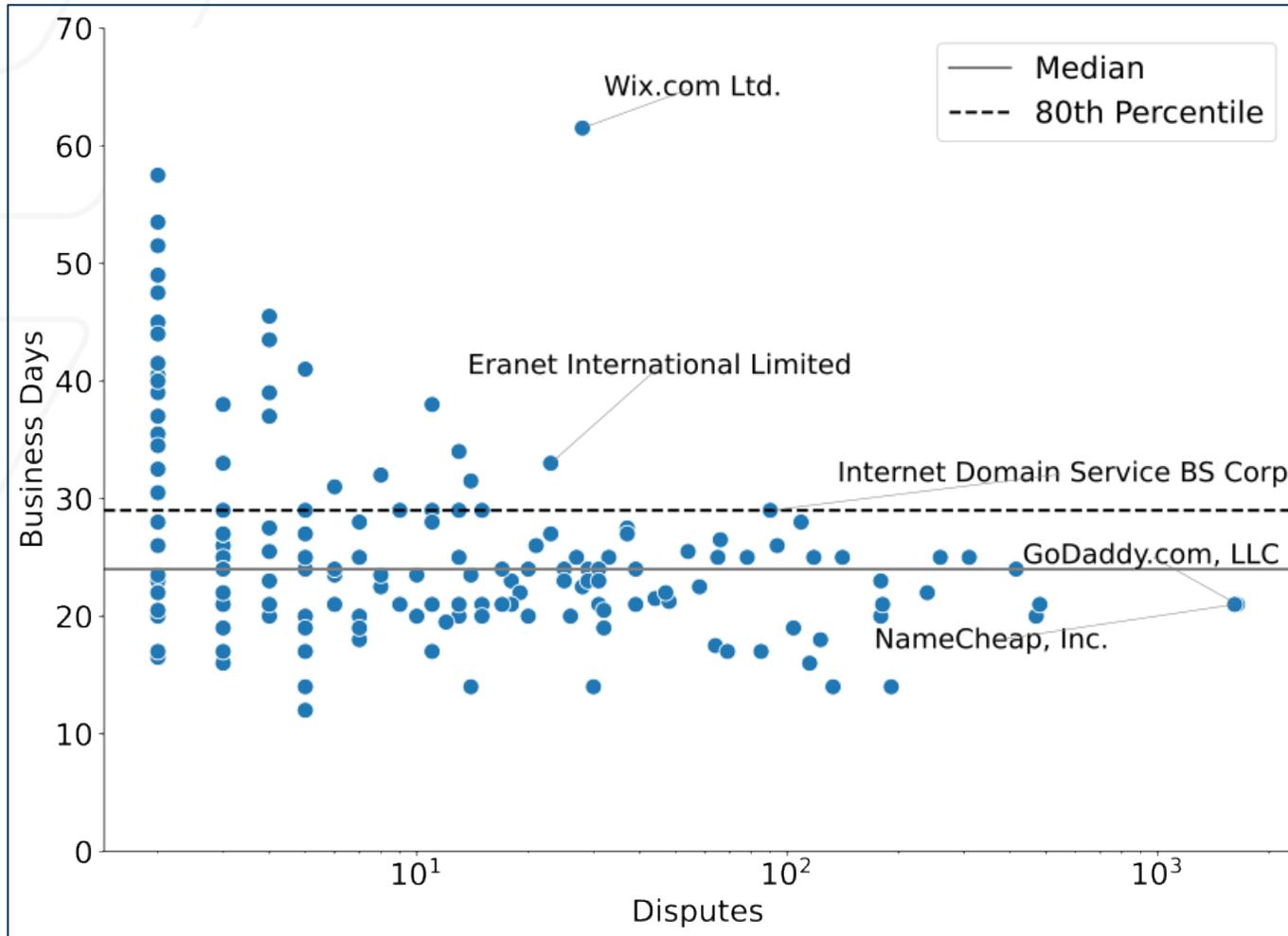
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## 2025



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# Possible Causes for Domain Transfer Delays

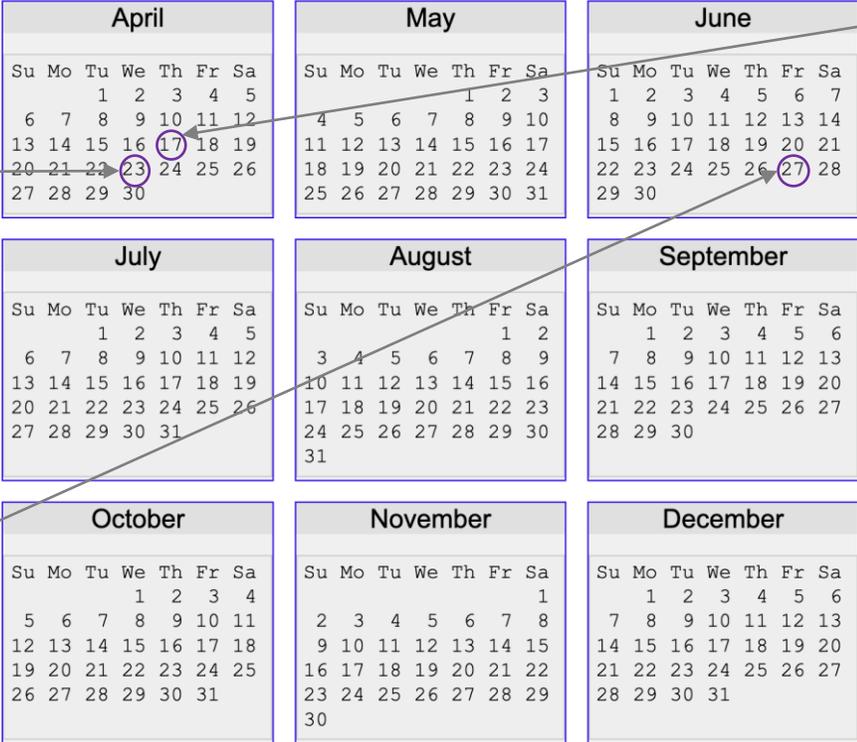


## Insights

- Most registrars (especially large ones) often transfer domain names **within a month**.
- Some registrars take **twice as long**, although they are involved in many disputes.

# Shaping Policy: When Practical Experience Meets Empirical Evidence

2025



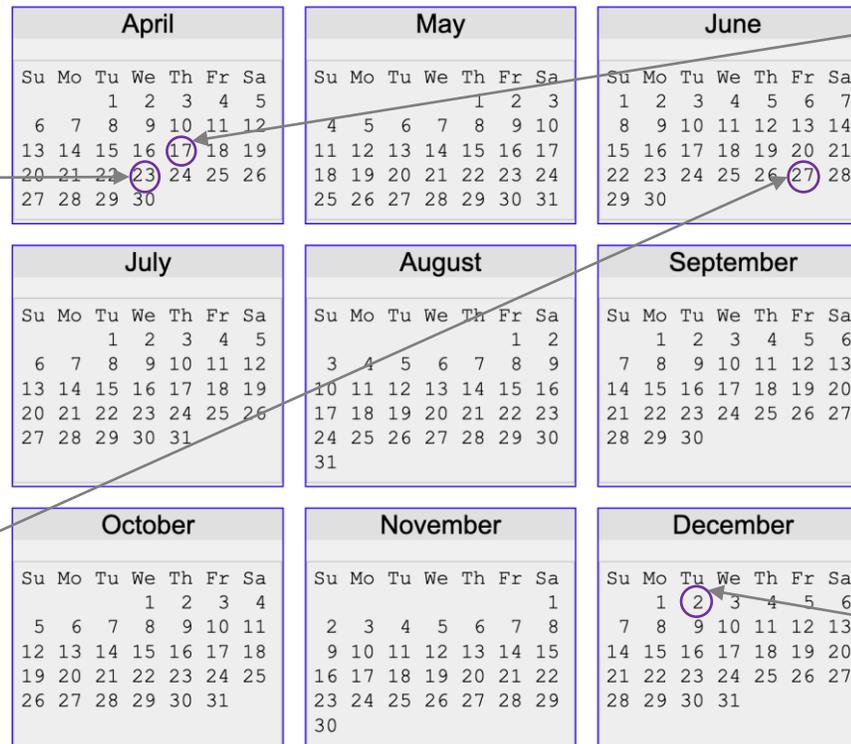
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(4) WIPO and ICA published their final report. The report integrates our comment and calls for automation, alongside a call for better oversight by ICANN.

# Thank you!

*Repairing Trust in Domain Name Disputes:  
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Vinny Adjibi (vinny.adjibi@gatech.edu)



Paper



Artifacts

“

[...] The people who *know* [...] and have sound evidence to *prove* it need to be speaking to the people who think that that is a canon of their faith.

-- **John Perry Barlow**, Co-Founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation