

Appendix D: Analysis of volume and nature of .uk WHOIS queries

This analysis was undertaken in May 2014 to determine the composition of user types and the frequency of use of the .uk WHOIS. The research enabled Nominet to make qualified assumptions about usage and intent of the user and to understand the potential impacts on users and Nominet if the nature and quantity of the information provided on the .uk WHOIS was changed.

As illustrated by the tables below, approximately 33 million .uk WHOIS queries were performed during May 2014. When analysing this data, we have assumed that each individual IP address represented a unique user. However, users can change IP addresses within the fieldwork period and there are circumstances where multiple users will be using a Corporate IP address or cloud based services. We therefore believe this to be a conservative estimate. The research results indicate that there is a large differential in usage between individual use and bulk users.

- 59 % of users conducted 2 % of the total number of lookups (between 1-5 searches in the month) 85 % of users conducted 5 % of total lookups (between 1-20 searches in the month). We concluded that these two groups were representative of users who were most likely using the .uk WHOIS to check either the details of their own domain or that of another registrant
- 103 users (out of more than 414,000 as identified by their IP address) account for more than 50 % of total searches (more than 25,000 searches in the month).

Figure 1: Number of unique IP addresses

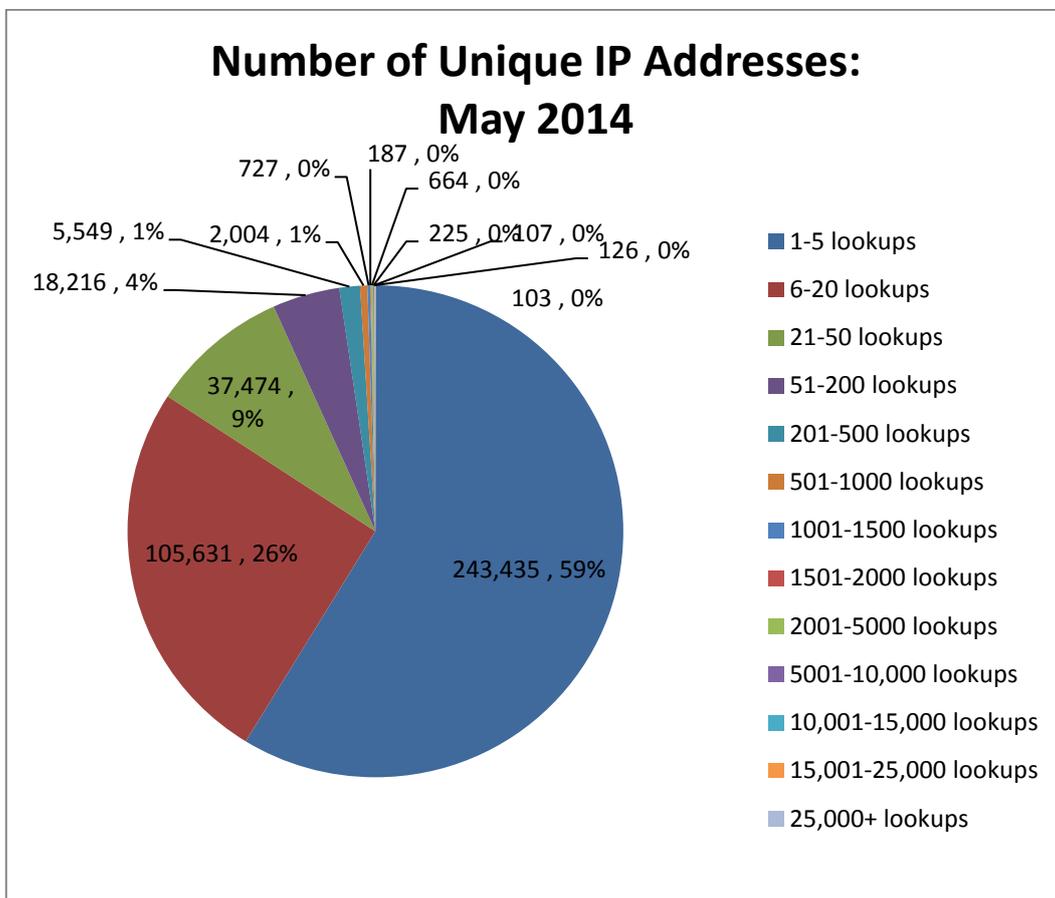
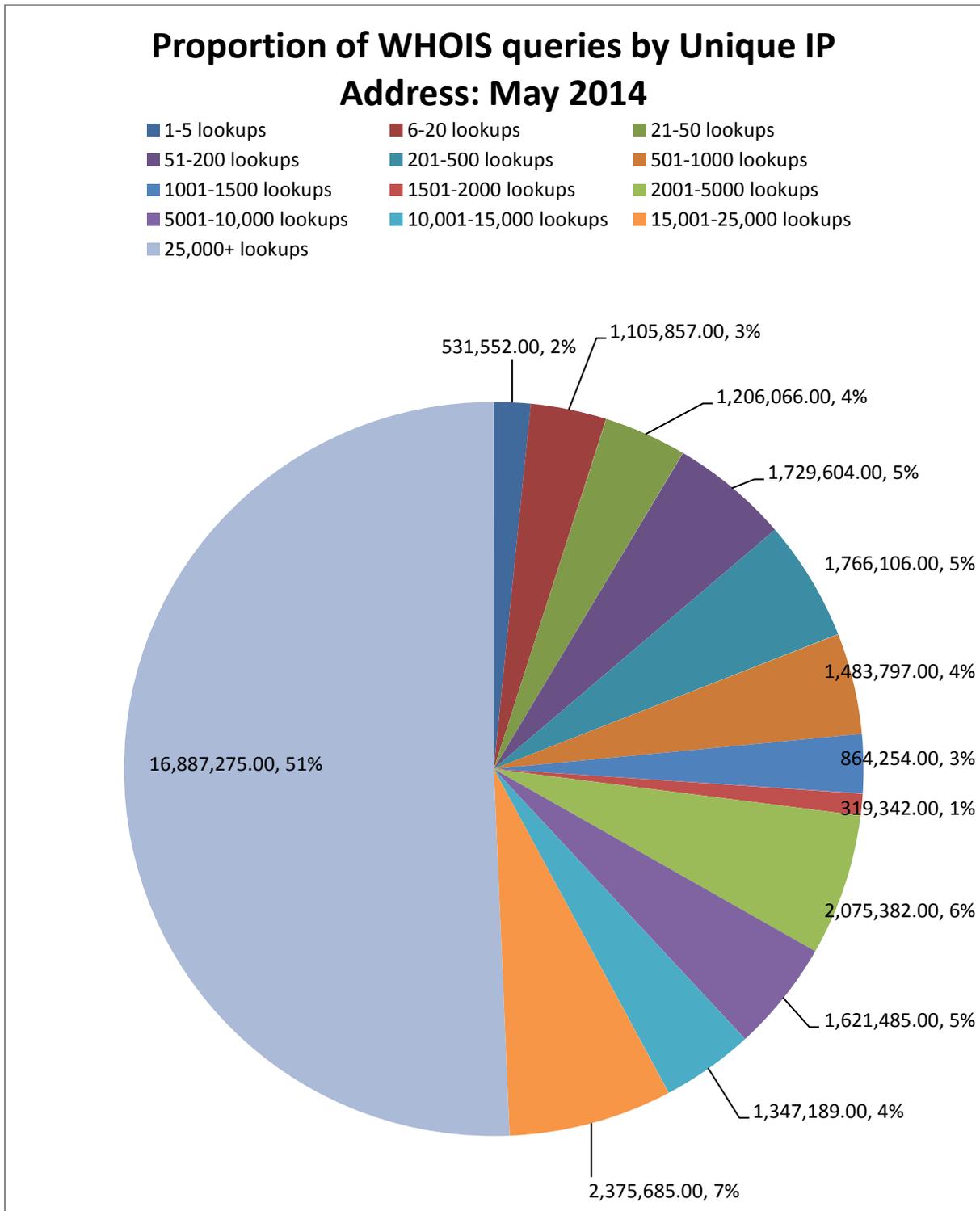


Figure 2: Proportion of WHOIS queries by unique IP address



As demonstrated by the results of the .uk WHOIS user survey (Appendix B), the Registrant survey (Appendix B) and our analysis of registry data, any potential changes to the availability of .uk WHOIS data are constrained by the potential impact on users of the .uk WHOIS and Nominet.

We analysed the data from May 2014 in order to seek to determine potential impacts resulting from changing the volume or access to the information on the .uk WHOIS. We considered the data from May, where 85 % of users conducted 5 % of searches, as representative of an average month. This group of users alone accounts for 1.6m WHOIS queries therefore any changes to the nature or quantity of the information that users expect to find would need to be considered carefully. Assuming a conservative estimate that 1 % of a potential 1.6m queries could result in an additional contact being made to Nominet e.g. requests for passwords for Online Services or a request for registration information, this would equate to 16,000 contacts per month. Placing an additional barrier to accessing WHOIS information could increase costs for users including those wishing to assert legal rights or Law Enforcement and may not be considered to be in the public interest. In addition this would place considerable strain on the registry.