

WHOIS - what it is, why it's useful, and quick checks for safer browsing

Gridinsoft Help Center

What it is

WHOIS (pronounced "who is") is a public lookup for domain names. Type a domain, and WHOIS tells you who owns it (or their registrar/proxy), when it was registered, when it expires, and where it's hosted. It's like a phone book for websites.

Why it matters

WHOIS helps you spot sketchy sites and solve simple web mysteries. New domain with hidden ownership and lots of complaints? Be careful. Legit sites usually have consistent details that match their brand.

How it works

- Query: you enter a domain in a WHOIS tool.
- Records: the service returns owner/registrar, dates, name servers, and status.
- Privacy: many owners use privacy/proxy services, so you'll see the proxy instead of a person.
- Clues: dates, registrar, and DNS can hint whether a site is established or throwaway.

Red flags

- Domain registered very recently for a site asking for payments or logins.
- Owner info hidden and other signs look off (typos, look-alike brand name).
- Frequent changes to registrar or name servers in a short time.
- Domain expires soon but claims to be a major brand.

Do it right

- Check WHOIS before trusting a new shop or download site.
- Compare details with the brand's official info (support pages, socials).
- Treat proxy/hidden ownership as a signal, not proof-look at the full picture.
- If it seems risky, don't enter passwords or card details; find a verified alternative.