.PL DOMAIN NAME MARKET

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Introduction

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Director of .pl Domain Registry

Dear Readers,

The year 2020 is behind us, when the COVID-19 pandemic globally set the framework for the work and functioning of millions of people and, in a way, imposed the need for intensive use of the Internet's capabilities. For many European ccTLD (country code top level domain) registries, the past year meant a shift to working in a 'home office' model and an online format for meetings and conferences. In Warsaw, at the end of February 2020, i.e. at the last moment before the suspension of border traffic, the .pl Domain Registry hosted 49th CENTR Administrative workshop, a session organised by CENTR (Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries) with the participation of European registries. In the following months, employees of the Polish Registry only remotely took part in CENTR events, devoted to technical issues, including Internet domain security and cooperation with registrars.

In COVID 2020 many European registries saw more interest in domain name registration and renewal services. In the .pl Domain Registry, the year ended with 2,473,487 names active in DNS, just over 40 thousand fewer than at the end of 2019, with an annual growth of -1.59%. It is therefore worth noting that compared to the data at the end of 2019, when it amounted to -3.21%, there was a deceleration of the downward trend. The number of registrants increased by more than 22,500 and stood at 1,095,122 at the end of 2020. However, the increase in the number of registrants did not translate into an increase or maintenance level of registrations as compared to the data at the end of 2019. The number of new registrations in 2020 amounted to 743,659 names, down by 70,761 compared to the previous year. On average, just over 2,000 names were registered per day in 2020. The best month in this respect was April, when an average of 2 369 names were registered per day. In the discussed year we observed a greater interest of registrants in renewing their domain names for the next billing period. At the end of December 2020 the renewal rate amounted to 68.82%. It is worth noting that in each consecutive quarter the percentage of renewed .pl domain names was higher and at the end of the third quarter the rate reached 67.13%, the highest level since the beginning of 2009.

At the end of December 2020 new statistics were made available at dns.pl, including information on the number of renewed .pl domain names and

Intruduction

the number of .pl domain names released due to lack of renewal.
2020 was also a year of increasing awareness of Internet fraud and crime, including Internet domain names. Many ccTLD registries have developed and activated services improving the security level of Internet domain names. Last year was very important for DNSSEC infrastructure of the .pl Domain Registry due to the performed upgrades, which contributed to shortening the time of signing zones by several times. At the end of 2020 the option of securing a domain name with the DNSSEC protocol was offered by 34 out of 215 registrars, cooperating with NASK within the Partner Programme.
At the end of March a year passed since NASK introduced the .pl Registry Lock service, enabling the registrants to additionally secure their domain names by blocking current data pertaining thereto. Activation of the .pl Registry Lock prevents e.g. unauthorised change of the domain name delegation or change of a registrant. At the end of 2020 this service was offered by 27 NASK Partners.

In accordance with earlier announcements and due to the growing number of cyber threats, NASK counteracted illegal or fraudulent practices with the use of .pl domain names. Abuses, found in 2020, concerned mainly the use of domain names for phishing. In this report you will find more information on actions taken by NASK in this area.

I invite you to read the report presenting the year 2020 from the perspective of the .pl Domain Registry.

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2020 in .pl Domain Registry
Facts and figures

Nearly
744 thousand
new names

Nearly
1.1 million
registrants

35.5%
of registrants are natural persons

64.5%
of registrants are organizations

2.26
domain names fell for one registrant

Over
2.47 million
active .pl domain names

215
Partners of the .pl Domain Registry

Over
405 thousand
names secured with DNSSEC

Over
2 thousand
new registrations daily

Over
115 thousand
transfers

Over
1.7 million
renewed names

42
domain names secured with .pl Registry Lock

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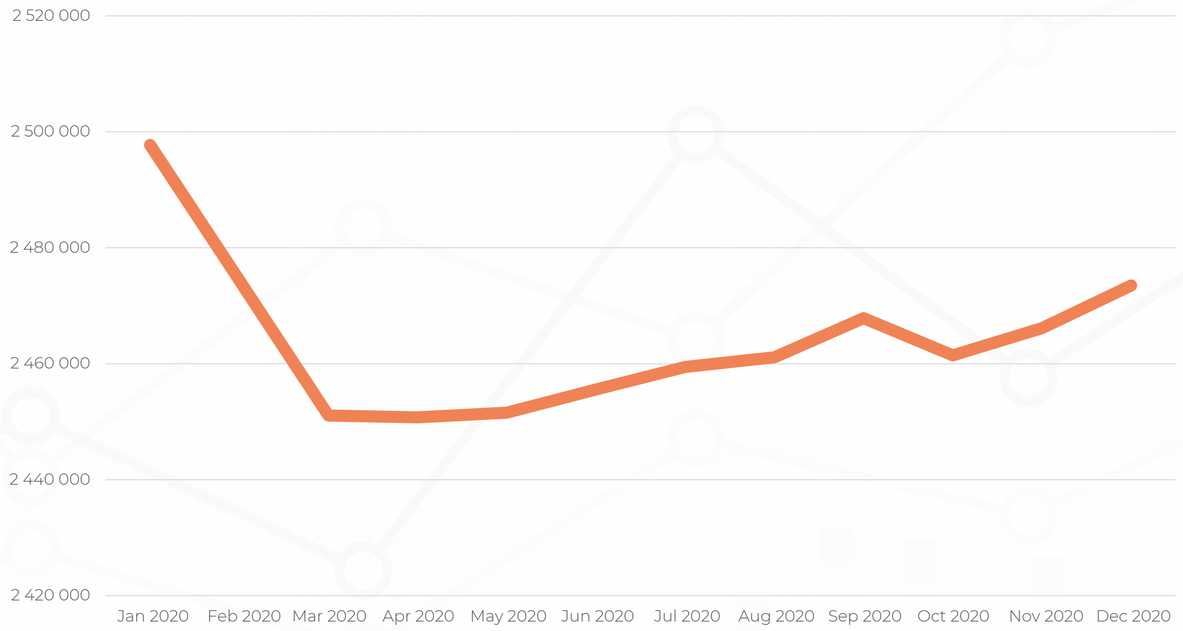
.pl NASK

Number of maintained .pl domain names



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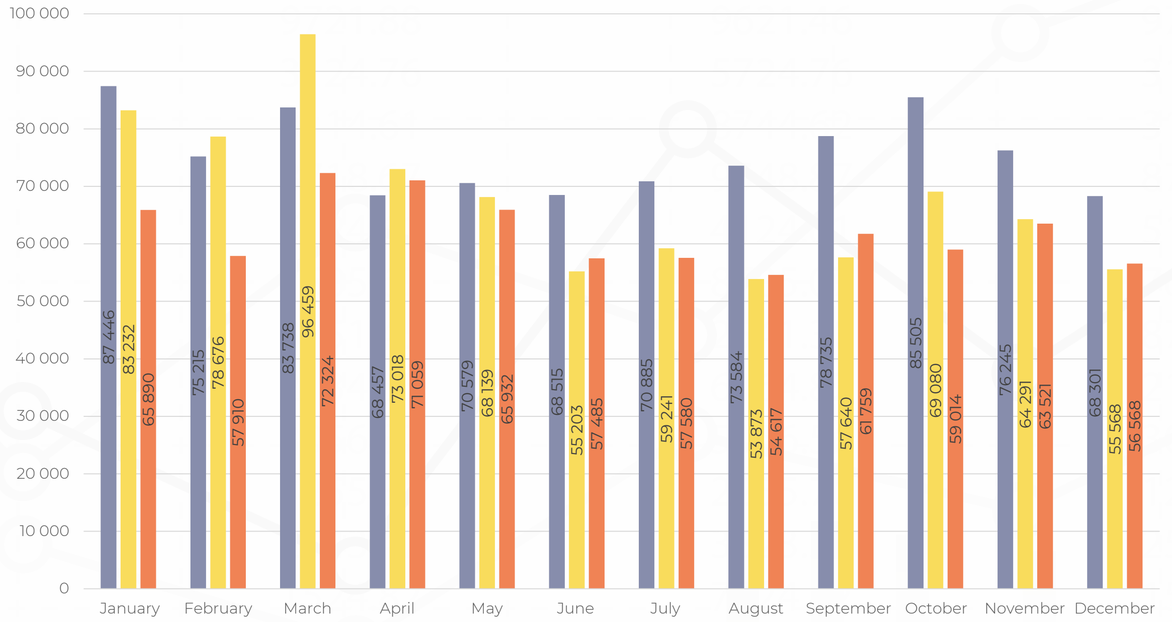
01

2 497 744
Number of names at the beginning of 2020

12

2 473 487
Number of names at the end of 2020

Number of registrations of .pl domain names



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745 679
registrations in 2020

04.11.2020 3 443
the highest number of registrations

25.12.2020 744
the lowest number of registrations

Ranking of ccTLD registries (EU area)

	Germany	**.de**	16 699 533
	Great Britain	**.uk**	10 851 380
	Netherlands	**.nl**	6 110 098
	France	**.fr**	3 669 284
	Italy	**.it**	3 374 790

	Poland	**.pl**	2 473 487
	Spain	**.es**	1 966 673
	Belgium	**.be**	1 697 360
	Sweden	**.se**	1 588 850
	Czech Republic	**.cz**	1 370 707

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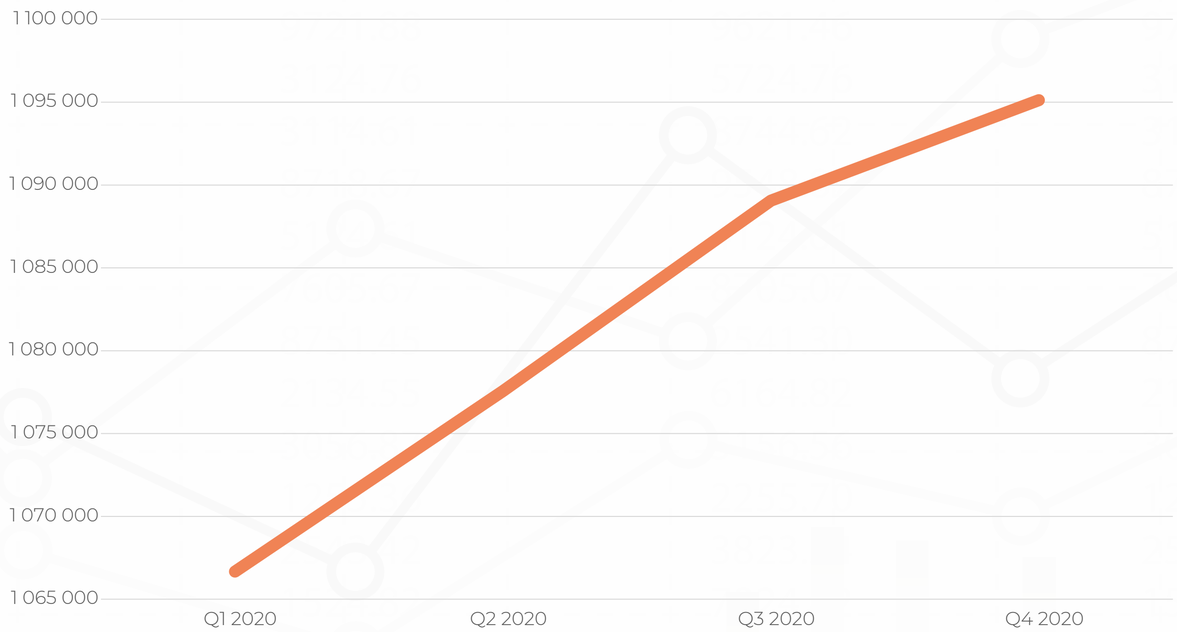
Number of .pl domain name registrants



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1 072 587
registrants at the beginning of 2020

1 095 122
registrants at the end of 2020

Location of .pl domain name registrants

mazowieckie	567 938	**24.89%**
śląskie	257 092	**11.27%**
wielkopolskie	227 321	**9.96%**
małopolskie	225 911	**9.90%**
dolnośląskie	192 332	**8.43%**
pomorskie	142 362	**6.24%**
łódzkie	117 063	**5.13%**
kujawsko-pomorskie	86 670	**3.80%**
zachodniopomorskie	85 533	**3.75%**
podkarpackie	81 163	**3.56%**
lubelskie	70 189	**3.08%**
warmińsko-mazurskie	49 212	**2.16%**
świętokrzyskie	48 638	**2.13%**
podlaskie	46 866	**2.05%**
lubuskie	41 929	**1.84%**
opolskie	41 339	**1.81%**

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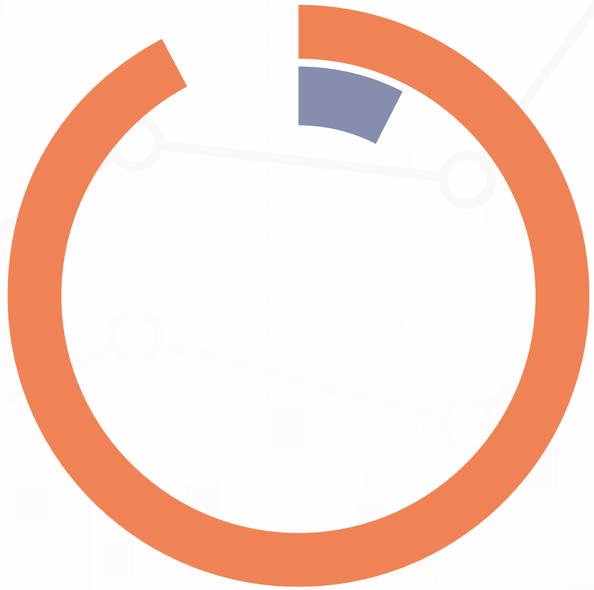

Poland
92.39%

abroad
7.61%

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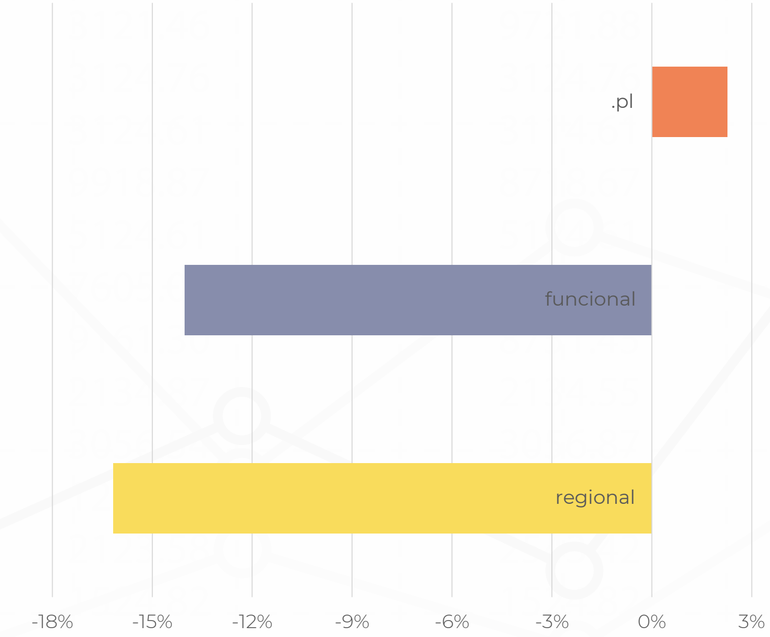
Dynamics of the .pl domain zones

Dynamics of the .pl domain zones (YoY)



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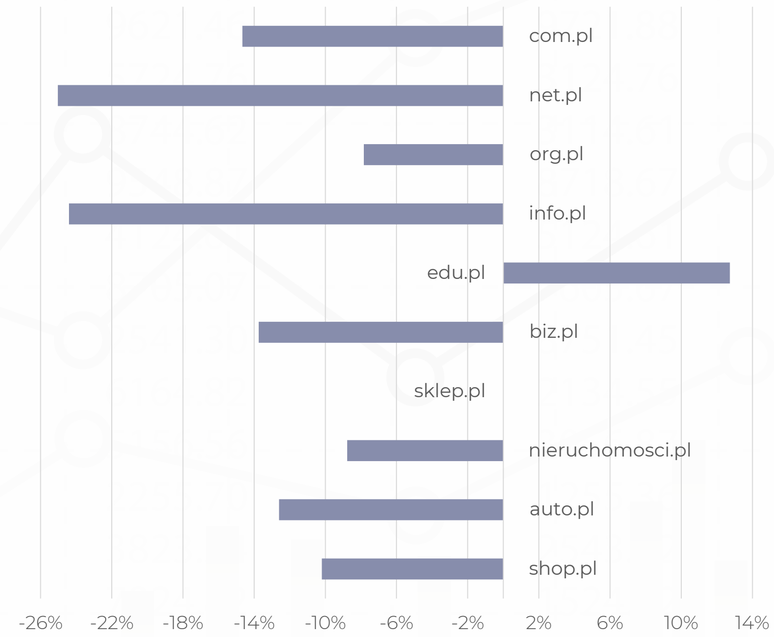
Dynamics of functional domains with the highest number of names (YoY)



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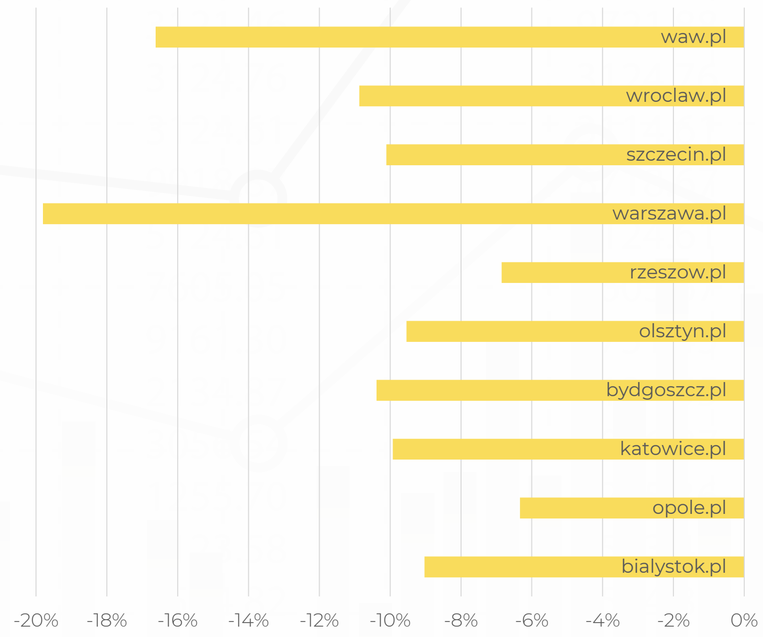
Dynamics of regional domains with the highest number of names (YoY)



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Dynamics of the .pl domain zones

The highest growth among functional domains

rel.pl
+1 154.39%

The highest growth among regional domains

sejny.pl
+15.88%

The highest decline among functional domains

atm.pl
- 30.51%

The highest decline among regional domains

konskowola.pl
- 59.40%

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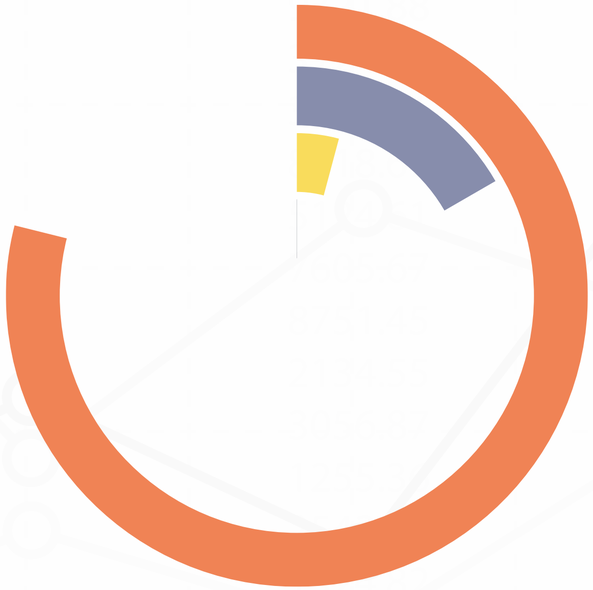
Structure of .pl domain names

Characters in .pl domain names, 2020



Letters
78.94%

Hyphens and letters or digits
16.73%

Letters and digits
4.24%

Digits
0.09%

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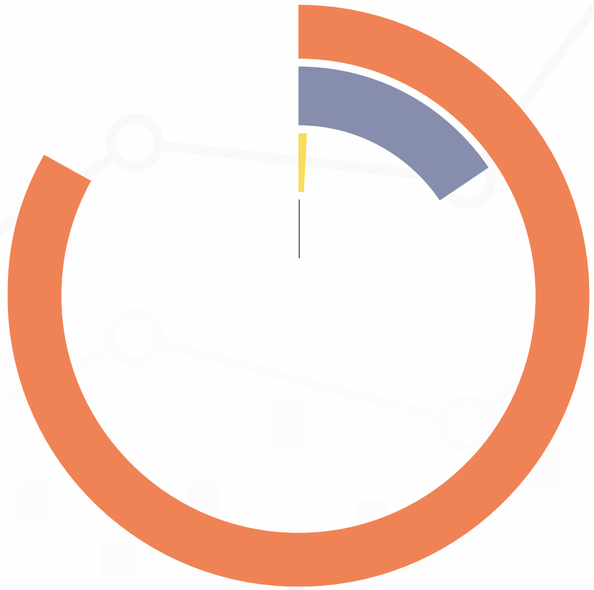
Number of parts in .pl domain names, 2020



Single-part domain names
83.24%

Two-part domain names
15.61%

Three-part domain names
0.98%

Four-part domain names
0.17%

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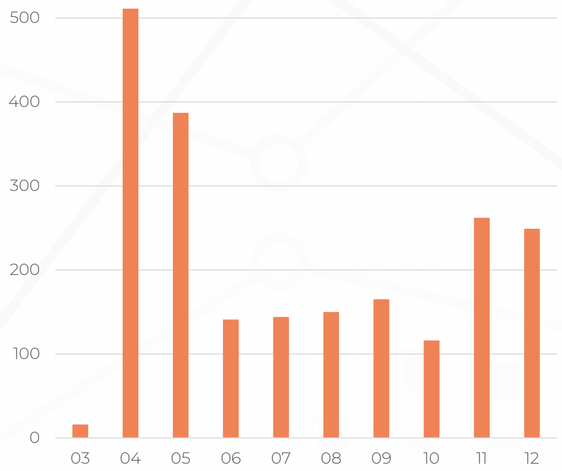
Counteracting abusive use of .pl domain names

List of alert warnings against unsafe sites

The impulse for joint actions of NASK and the Ministry of Digital Affairs in cooperation with UKE [Office of Electronic Communications] and telecom operators, was a significant increase (since the beginning of the pandemic) in the number of data phishing scams in respect to coronavirus-related content, posted on the Internet. The warning list, published on the website of CERT Polska, included a list of websites phishing for personal data and credentials to bank accounts and social networking sites. The list was compiled on the basis of submissions of suspicious domain names or websites, and each submission was verified by CERT Polska experts. Since March 2020, as a result of the analysis of breaches, carried out by this team, 2141 addresses in various domains, including the .pl country code domain, were entered on the warning list.

Number of websites added to the warning list of CERT Polska, 2020



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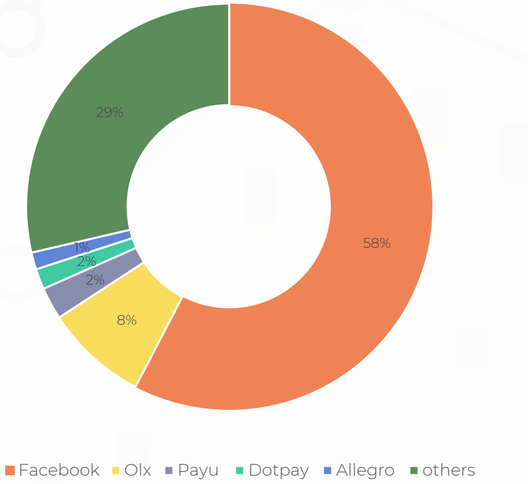
In 2020, as many as 58% of domain names, added to the warning list of CERT Polska, were linked to fake Facebook login panels. Many submissions were also related to fake e-payment gateways and other fraudulent sites, a pattern of activity that poses a threat to Internet users of phishing for personal data and bank account credentials. Analyses of the CERT team in the area of identifying unsafe websites and maintenance of the warning list were among the tasks of NASK to be continued in the coming months.

Links of websites added to the warning list of CERT Polska, 2020



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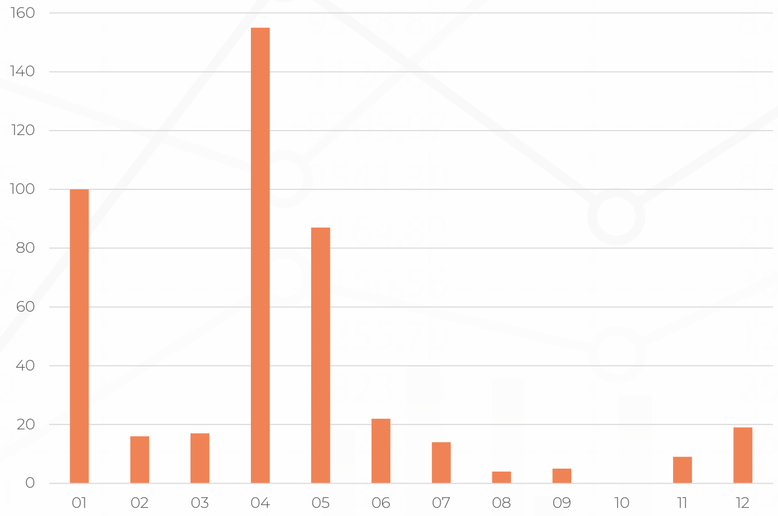
Counteracting abusive use of .pl domain names

Blocking of domain names in the .pl domain registry

In 2020 NASK blocked 448 .pl domain names. Most of them - as many as 155 - were blocked in April, whereas no domain name was blocked in October. Cybercriminals' activity at the beginning of the pandemic was clearly intensified; other national domain registries, associated in CENTR, also paid attention to similar threats.

Domain names blocked in 2020



Most of the identified violations concerned phishing sites, with almost 6 out of 10 .pl domain names, blocked in 2020, linked to fake Facebook login panels. Other abuses of .pl domain names included their use by cybercriminals for fake electronic payment gateways or malware campaigns.

It is worth reminding that the blocking of a .pl domain name - in the form of suspension of delegation of a given name to the DNS system by technically assigning an appropriate status - is an action, which may be reversed by the Registry at any time until the end of the billing period. Blocking a name does not deprive the registrant of their rights to the domain name. Pursuant to the Policy of the .pl domain registry on counteracting abusive use of .pl domain names, the .pl domain name registrant, that has been subject to the actions described above, has the right to appeal within 14 days from the date the Registry took those actions. In 2020, no appeal, with reference to domain names blocked by NASK, was filed.

Developed in collaboration with CERT Team

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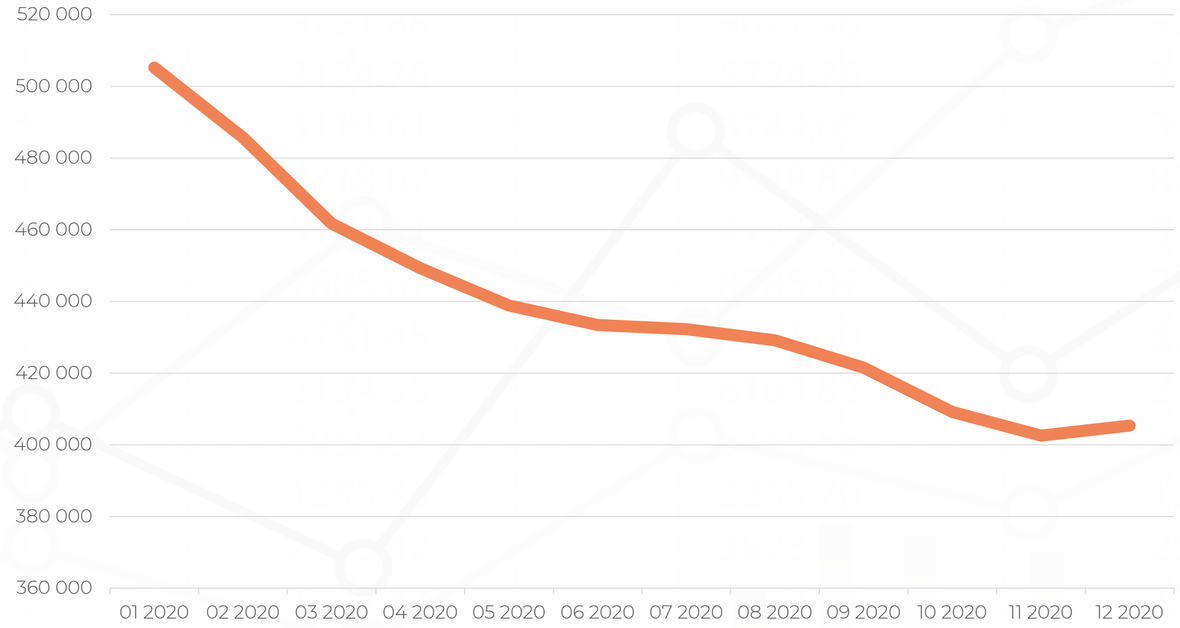
DNSSEC – number of secured .pl domain names

Number of .pl domain names secured with DNSSEC



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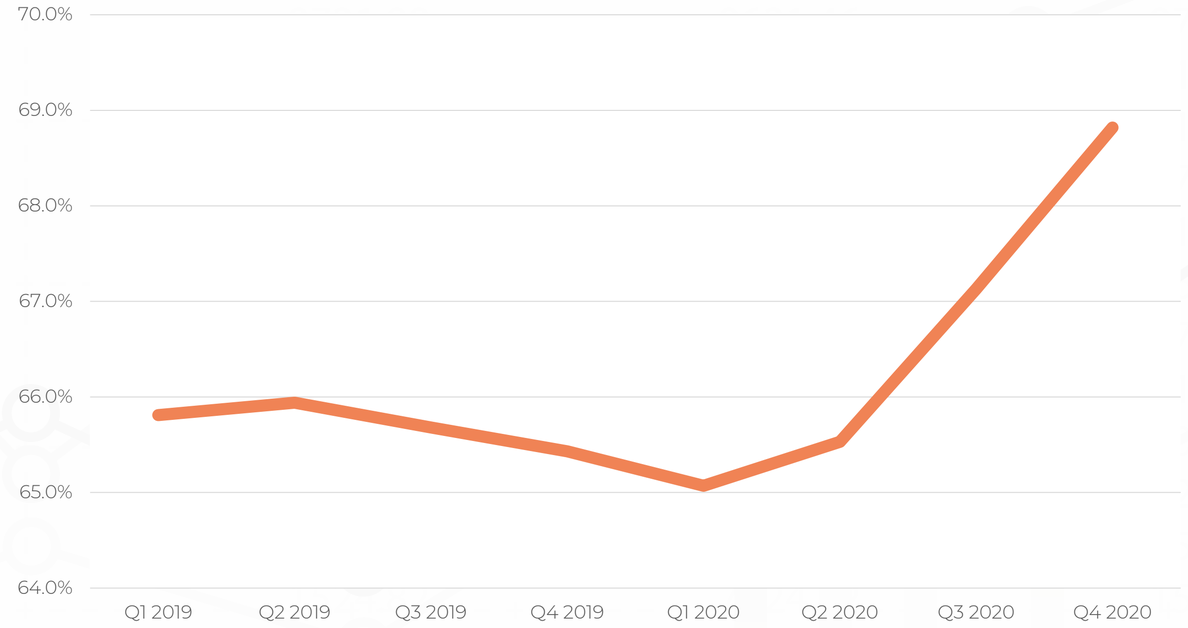
Year 2020 was very important for the DNSSEC infrastructure of the .pl Domain Registry. In the first quarter technical devices and software were modernised, which directly translated into shortening the time of signing zones by several times. To manage the system, proprietary tools, created by the .pl Domain Registry, were used. New procedures of handling the signing system were also implemented in order to ensure an appropriate security level of private keys, whose confidentiality is one of the most important aspects of the DNSSEC system.

After operating the system for a considerable part of 2020, we can observe that the current system is stable and much faster than the previous solution.

Domain names renewed for a consecutive billing period

Renewal rate of .pl domain names



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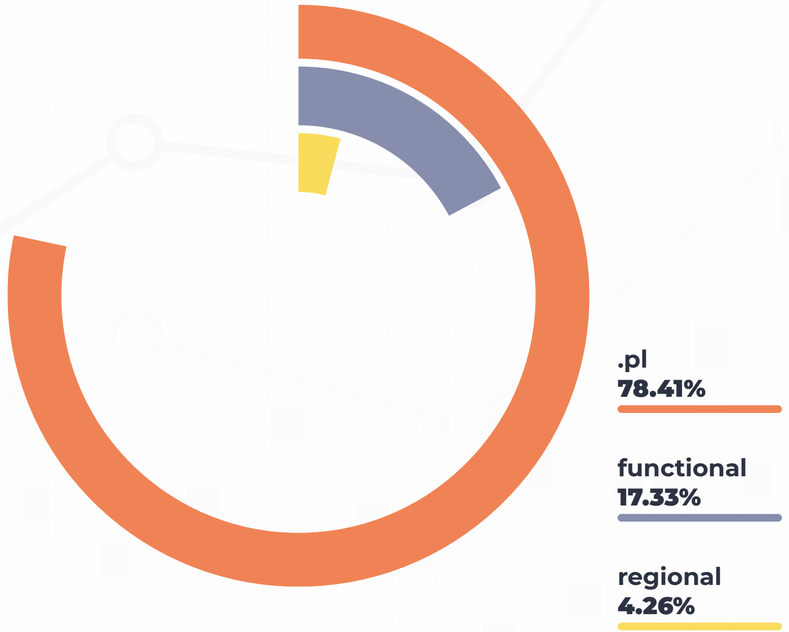
Structure of renewed .pl domain names, 2020



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Number of not renewed .pl domain names

Number of .pl domain names released due to lack of renewal

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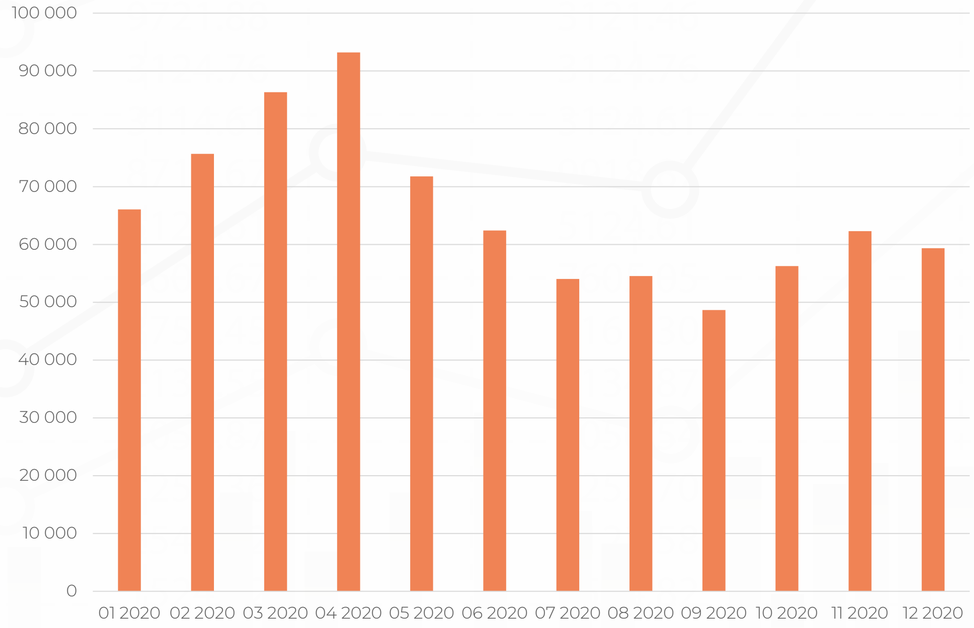
Number of .pl domain names released due to lack of renewal, 2020



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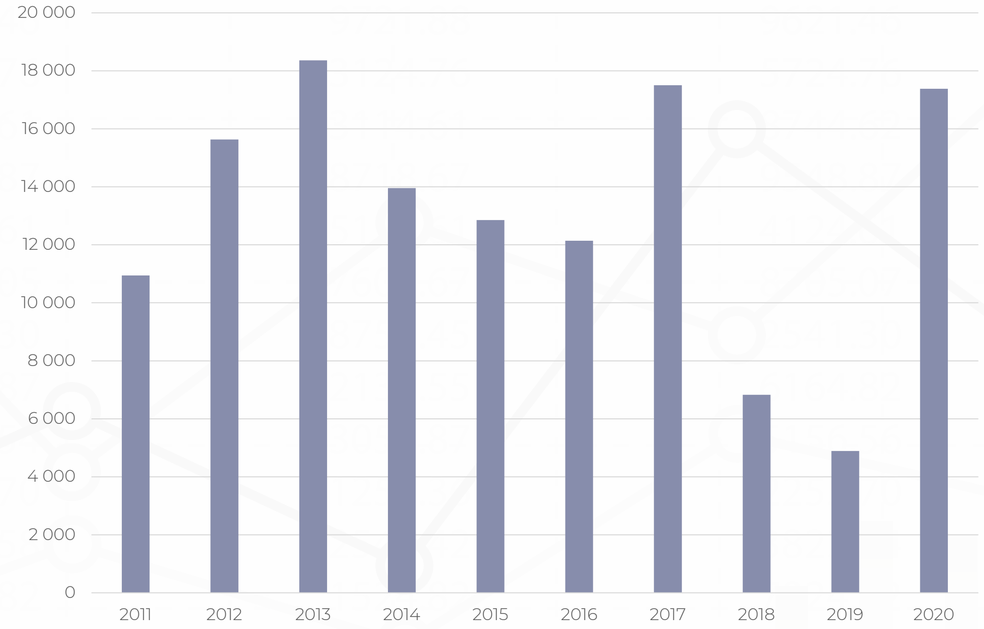
Number of deleted .pl domain names

Number of .pl domain names released after prior deletion



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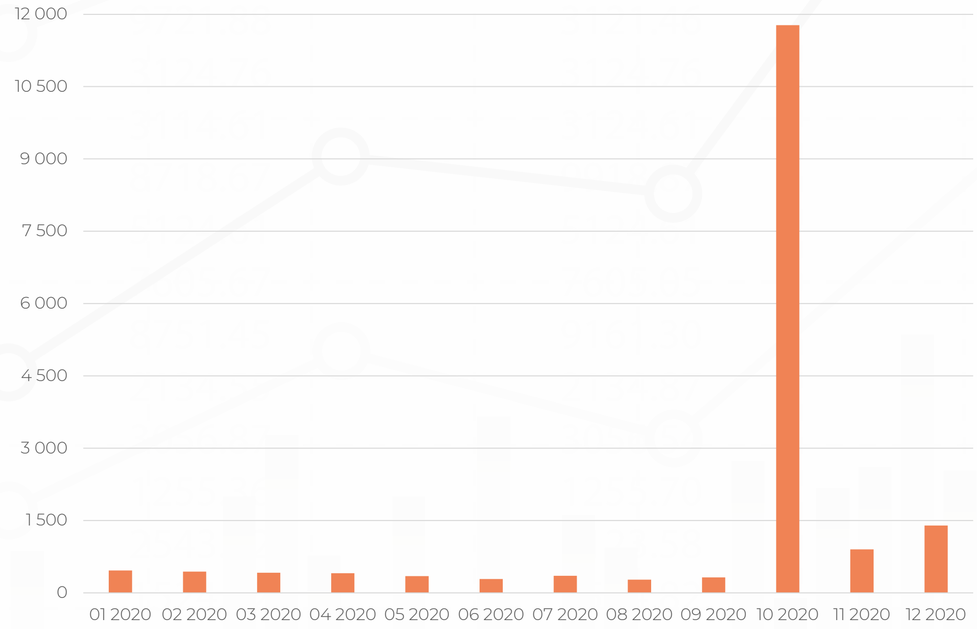
Number of .pl domain names released after prior deletion, 2020



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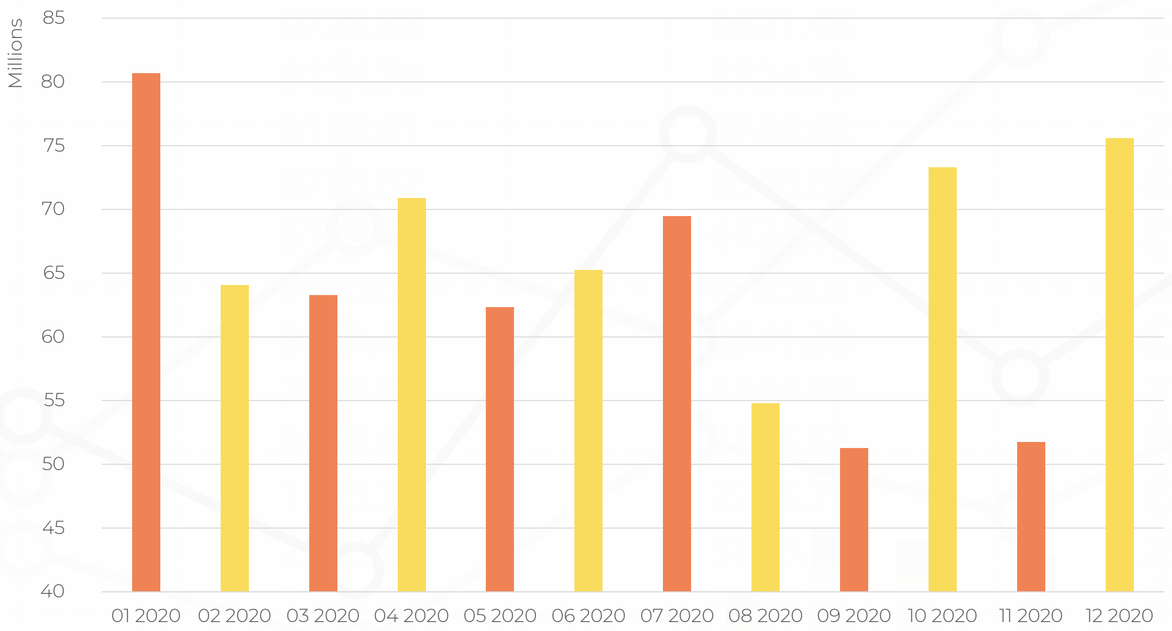
Whois query statistics



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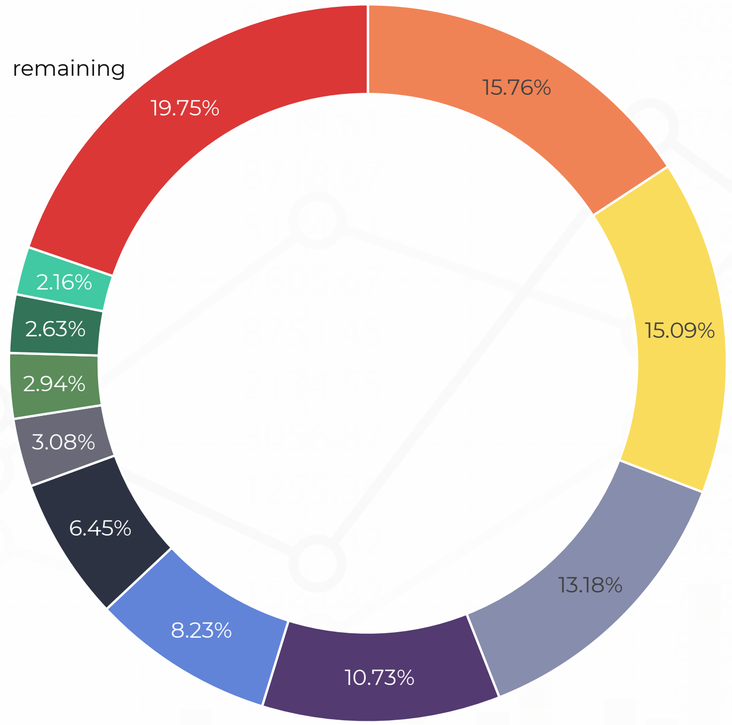
The WHOIS database of the .pl Domain Registry contains information on names registered in the .pl and .gov.pl domains.

The WHOIS database includes such information as: domain name status, date of creation, contact details of the registrant of a given domain name, date of a billing period and information on the registrar.

In accordance with the provisions of the personal data protection law, the data of registrants, who are natural persons, are not published.

.pl domain name market share

The graph presents ten NASK Partners handling the highest number of .pl domain names, 2020



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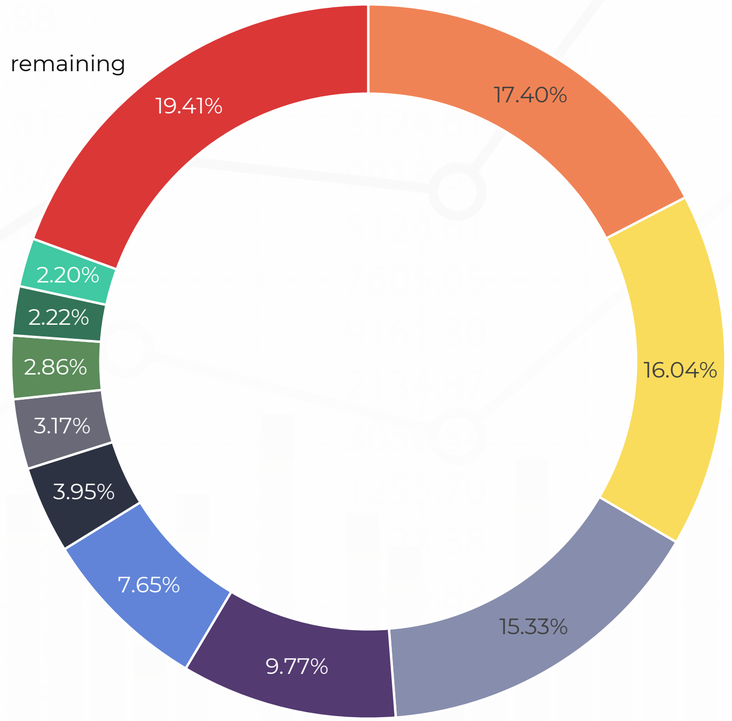
The graph presents ten NASK Partners handling the highest number of .pl domain name registrants, 2020



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