

The wais URI Scheme

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Abstract

This document specifies the wais Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) scheme that was originally specified in RFC 1738. The purpose of this document is to allow RFC 1738 to be made obsolete while keeping the information about the scheme on standards track.

1. Introduction

URIs were previously defined in RFC 2396 [RFC2396], which was updated by RFC 3986 [RFC3986]. Those documents also specify how to define schemes for URIs.

The first definitions for many URI schemes appeared in RFC 1738 [RFC1738]. Because that document has been made obsolete, this document copies the wais URI scheme from it to allow that material to remain on standards track.

2. Scheme Definition

The WAIS URL scheme is used to designate WAIS databases, searches, or individual documents available from a WAIS database. The WAIS protocol is described in RFC 1625 [RFC1625]. Although the WAIS protocol is based on Z39.50-1988, the WAIS URL scheme is not intended for use with arbitrary Z39.50 services.

Historical note: The WAIS protocol was not widely implemented and almost no WAIS servers are in use today.

A WAIS URL takes one of the following forms:

```
wais://<host>:<port>/<database>  
wais://<host>:<port>/<database>?<search>  
wais://<host>:<port>/<database>/<wtype>/<wpath>
```

If `<port>` is omitted, the port defaults to 210. The first form designates a WAIS database that is available for searching. The second form designates a particular search. `<database>` is the name of the WAIS database being queried.

The third form designates a particular document, within a WAIS database, to be retrieved. In this form `<wtype>` is the WAIS designation of the type of the object. Many WAIS implementations require that a client know the "type" of an object prior to retrieval; the type is returned along with the internal object identifier in the search response. The `<wtype>` is included in the URL in order to give the client interpreting the URL adequate information to actually retrieve the document.

The `<wpath>` of a WAIS URL consists of the WAIS document-id. The WAIS document-id should be treated opaquely; it may only be decomposed by the server that issued it.

3. Security Considerations

Many security considerations for URI schemes are discussed in [RFC3986]. There are no security considerations listed in [RFC1625], but it should be noted that there is no privacy nor authentication specified in the WAIS protocol.

4. Informative References

- [RFC1738] Berners-Lee, T., Masinter, L., and M. McCahill, "Uniform Resource Locators (URL)", RFC 1738, December 1994.
- [RFC2396] Berners-Lee, T., Fielding, R., and L. Masinter, "Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI): Generic Syntax", RFC 2396, August 1998.
- [RFC3986] Berners-Lee, T., Fielding, R., and L. Masinter, "Uniform Resource Identifier (URI): Generic Syntax", STD 66, RFC 3986, January 2005.
- [RFC1625] St. Pierre, M., Fullton, J., Gamiel, K., Goldman, J., Kahle, B., Kunze, J., Morris, H., and F. Schiettecatte, "WAIS over Z39.50-1988", RFC 1625, June 1994.

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