

# Extra Contact Methods in the RIPE Database

One of the purposes of the RIPE Database is "facilitating coordination between network operators." ripe-049 from 1992 lists four ways to achieve this:

1. Postal mail
2. Telephone
3. Fax
4. E-mail

These are also the only available methods today.

The Universal Postal Union's statistics for letter post items show a sharp decline over the last five years.

[Business Research Insights reports](#) that the market for fax machines is shrinking.

There is also a [numbered work item 18](#) with recommendation to phase out postal addresses in RIPE database. Quote:

«The task force did not recognise the full postal address of resource holders as a baseline requirement for registration information of Internet number resources. Therefore, the task force recommends that information about the postal address be made optional and not compulsory. In the long term, the task force recommends taking this information out of the database.»

Other communications services are now widely deployed. The EU has regulated Number-Independent Interpersonal Communication Service through the Digital Markets Act and has [designated two providers as Gatekeepers](#). This means they have significant market impact and so are widely deployed.

The RIPE Database should add support for services like this as a contact type. This will help facilitate coordination between network operators by making it easier for them to contact each other using tools that are widely deployed today.

The proposal is to allow the variety of contact methods which can be, for example, messenger app (think of EU designated ones first but it can be more) and then an additional-contact field which has a "method, data" content. For example, for the co-authors it could be:

Additional-Contact: skype kohmanyuk  
Additional-Contact: signal +380503814604  
Additional-Contact: Twitter dk379

Additional-Contact: skype leovegoda

Existing contact methods should be kept as is; conversion to similar syntax is possible. for example,

Additional-Contact: email dk@kohmanyuk.me

There are multiple issues to be handled. Data privacy comes to mind, then data accuracy, and maintenance of method registry, as well as data format validation:

Can be treated just as a string without spaces.

Contact methods may change names (X vs Twitter).

There can be a better way to delimit a method and it's value. But a space works for WHOIS. RDAP has structure allowing for separation of fields.

We can also consider putting URLs for contact forms.