

Hosting & Registrar Layers: Scalpel, sledgehammer, or no tool at all

INHOPE Summit 2026



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Hello!

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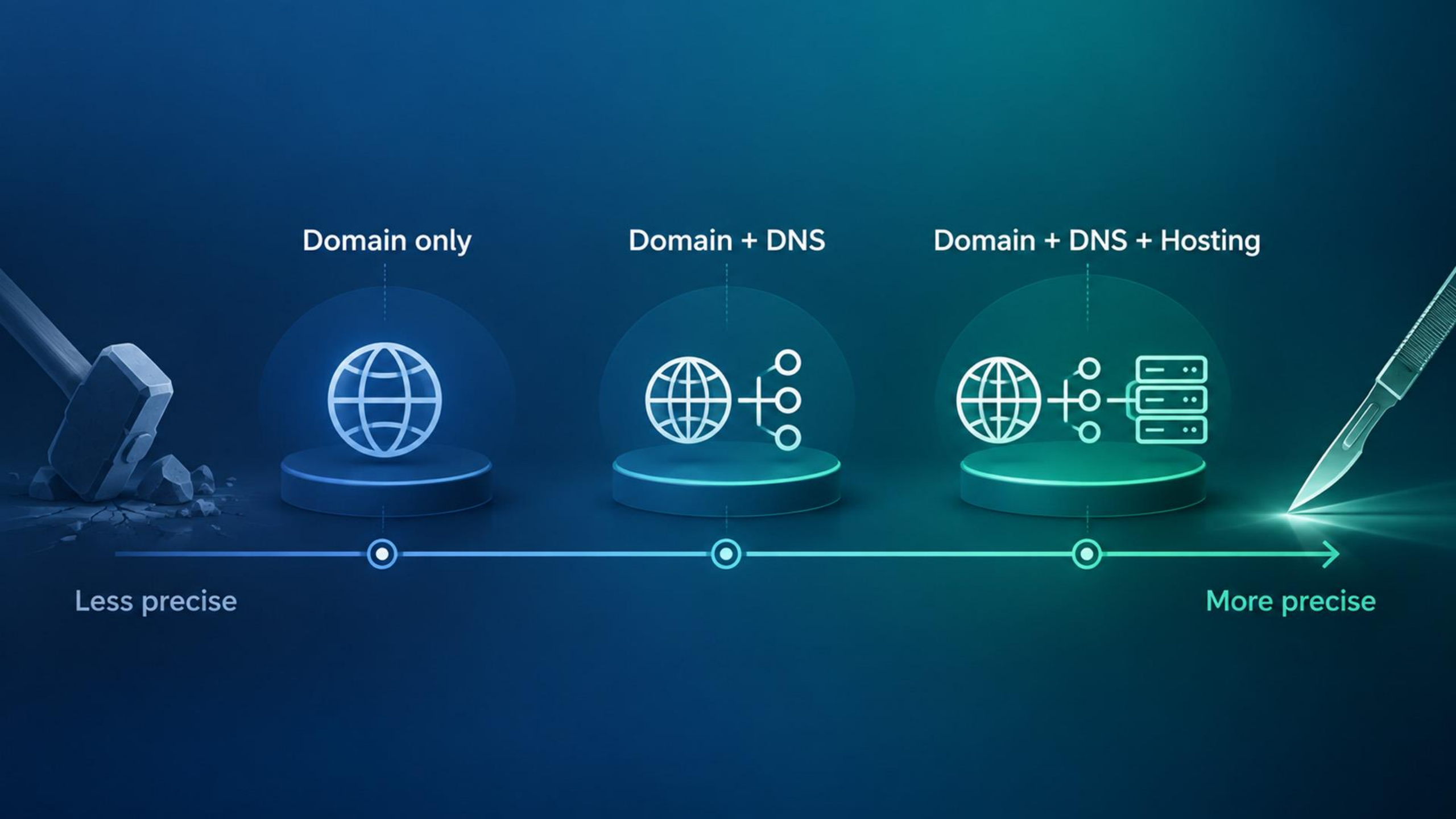


1

What layer are we actually operating at?

Action depends on whether we are the registrar, DNS provider, host or all three.





Domain only

Domain + DNS

Domain + DNS + Hosting

Less precise

More precise

Who can act depends on the layer.

A lot of confusion comes from assuming that any company in the chain can act in the same way. They can't.



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- ◎ **If we are only the registrar:**
We do not control the hosted content. We can only kill the domain.
- ◎ **If we provide domain + DNS:**
We may affect resolution, but still may not control the file or service in question.
- ◎ **If we provide domain + DNS + hosting:**
We may be much closer to the content and able to take more targeted action.
- ◎ **The same abuse report** can land with organisations that have very different powers.



2

Shared hosting: the scalpel

If we control the hosting environment,
we can often act precisely and
proportionately.

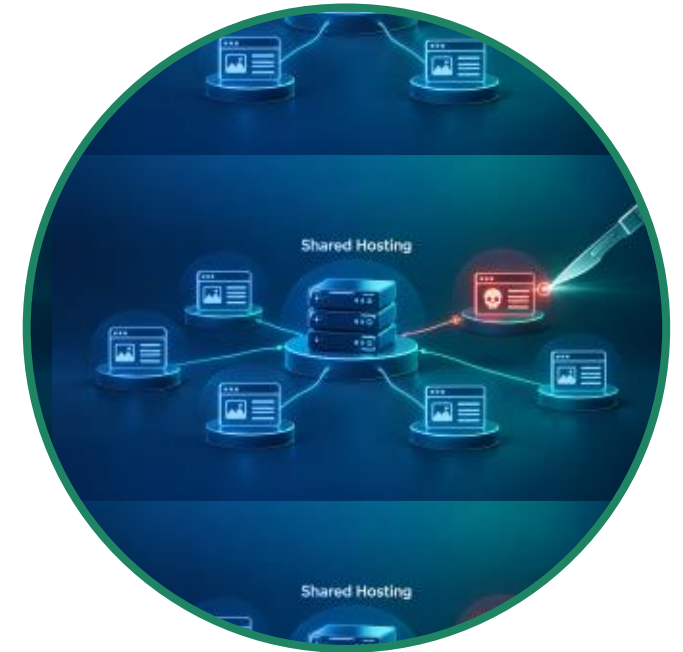


Shared Hosting



Shared hosting gives the most precise options.

If the content is on shared hosting on our infrastructure, we've got a scalpel. We can often act narrowly and proportionately.



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If a report relates to a specific site, file, or hosting account, action can often be targeted. That might mean:

- ⦿ Suspending a site.
- ⦿ Disabling an account.
- ⦿ Removing or isolating specific hosted content.

This is the closest thing to a scalpel: precise action, limited collateral damage.



3

VPS, dedicated & colocation: the tools get blunter

As customer control increases, our
ability to take precise action decreases.



VPS, Dedicated & Colocation

Cloud VPS



Dedicated Server



Colocation



Different hosting types mean different limits.

If the complaint is about one file on a colo box, I can't surgically remove the file. My tool at that point is basically the power switch.



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Cloud VPS

- ⦿ We provide the infrastructure.
- ⦿ The customer controls the server, operating system and files.
- ⦿ We generally cannot log in and remove a specific file ourselves.
- ⦿ Action may affect the entire VPS, not just the offending content.



Dedicated Server

- ⦿ The customer controls the whole server.
- ⦿ If the issue is one file or one URL, our options are still broad rather than precise.
- ⦿ Action may mean suspending or disconnecting the entire machine or service.



Colocation

- ⦿ The customer owns and controls the hardware and software stack.
- ⦿ We cannot remove a file from their server.
- ⦿ If urgent action is needed, the option at our layer may simply be to pull the plug on the entire thing.



4

Sometimes the only option is the sledgehammer

If we only control the domain, or if the service itself is the problem, the available action may be broad and disruptive.





Broad problem, broad response.

If all we've got is a sledgehammer, the result may be technically effective, but it may also be far from precise.



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Registrar only

- ⦿ If we are just the registrar, we cannot remove the hosted content.
- ⦿ The available action may only be at domain level.
- ⦿ That is a sledgehammer, not a scalpel.



Service abuse

- If a URL shortener or other service is being used to promote abuse, the available response may be against the entire service, not one individual item.
- Likewise, with colocation or customer-controlled infrastructure, the available technical response may be the nuclear option:
 - Suspend the whole service.
 - Disconnect the whole server.
 - Affect more than the offending material alone.



The challenge is not just whether to act, it is whether the layer receiving the report has the right tool to act proportionately.



5

Route the report to the layer with the right tool

Better routing means faster, more proportionate action and clearer accountability.



- ⦿ Shared hosting = scalpel.
- ⦿ Domain only = sledgehammer.
- ⦿ VPS / dedicated / colo = progressively broader options.
- ⦿ The closer the provider is to the content, the more precise the intervention can be.

Not every organisation in the chain is unable or unwilling, sometimes they are simply not the right layer.



Thank you, Any questions?



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