GoDaddy and HOL (Hashgraph Online) Propose Open Standards for Verifiable AI Agent Identity on DNS

AI agents are now prevalent across the internet. GoDaddy and HOL published two draft specifications aimed at making AI agent identity easier.

GoDaddy ANS Now verifiable via HCS in partnership with HOL

MAJURO, MAJURO, MARSHALL ISLANDS, May 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- AI agents are now prevalent across the internet. Businesses and developers need better ways to discover them, verify who is behind them, and build trust in how they operate. GoDaddy and HOL (Hashgraph Online) today published two draft specifications aimed at making AI agent identity easier to verify across the open web and decentralized environments.

> These drafts let any resolver discover and verify ANS-registered agents through a standard interface, and let anyone audit the registry's history without trusting a single operator."
>
> *Scott Courtney*

Together, the proposals use familiar internet infrastructure, including DNS, along with public cryptographic records to create a more transparent and independently verifiable foundation for AI agent identity. The goal is to give developers, platforms, and security teams a more consistent way to identify AI agents, confirm who they represent, and verify their history over time.

The draft makes it easier for systems to find and verify ANS registered agents using Universal Agent IDs, without changing how ANS works on top of DNS.

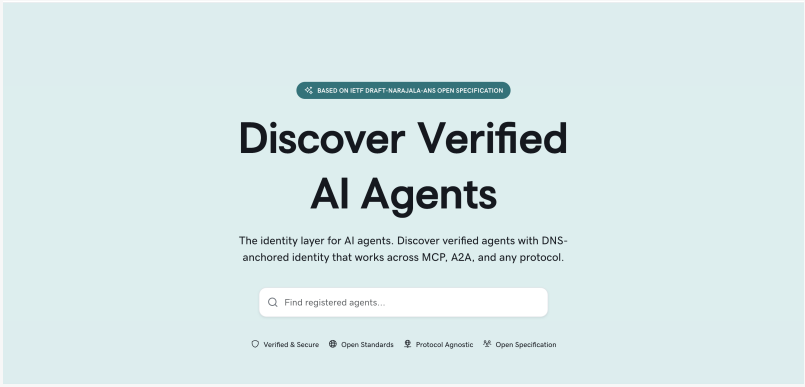
Universal Agent IDs (HCS-14) and ANS

Universal Agent ID (UAID), defined by HCS-14, provides a consistent identifier format for AI

agents across web and decentralized environments. The new ANS profile proposal standardizes how ANS-registered agents are discovered and interpreted using familiar internet infrastructure.

Under the draft profile:
- The DNS record exposes a pointer and minimal metadata; full Agent Card details are retrieved directly from the agent's published endpoint.
- The Agent Card provides protocol endpoints in a consistent structure
- Endpoints are deterministically bound to the expected domain
- Verification signals are surfaced in a consistent way for resolvers and brokers

HOL Logo



GoDaddy ANS Registry

This enables ANS agents to be discovered and used alongside agents from other ecosystems through shared resolution rules, while preserving ANS as a DNS-native identity system.

Merkle tree checkpoint specification (HCS-27)

ANS supports transparency logs that record identity lifecycle events such as registration, updates, and revocations. Each point-in-time state of a transparency log can be summarized as a Merkle tree root, a compact cryptographic commitment to all entries in the log.

The second draft (HCS-27) defines how to publish periodic Merkle root checkpoints to a public consensus network using typed consensus messages. The approach is minimal:
- Only cryptographic commitments are published publicly
- Log entries, metadata, and proof bundles remain off-ledger
- Anyone can verify inclusion and ordering using standard Merkle proofs
- Consensus timestamps provide a public, immutable checkpoint history

This creates a verifiable audit trail for AI agent identity that is anchored to DNS, with transparent history that can be independently checked by marketplaces, security teams, and downstream integrators, without reliance on the registry operator.

Why this matters

AI agents are moving from experiments to production. As they begin to act on behalf of users and businesses, the ecosystem needs shared foundations for identity and provenance that work across registries, tools, and platforms.
These draft standards aim to provide:
- Cross-registry discovery of ANS agents through Universal Agent IDs
- A consistent way for resolvers to interpret and verify ANS identity artifacts
- A public checkpoint stream that supports auditability without exposing sensitive data
- A stronger foundation for reputation signals tied to real businesses and domains
- Less integration overhead for developers building multi-agent systems and marketplaces

By combining DNS-based identity with Merkle tree transparency and public consensus ordering, the drafts define a scalable approach to agent identity that can be implemented without changing how agents are deployed today.

"ANS has been running in production since November 2025," said Scott Courtney, VP Engineering at GoDaddy. "These drafts let any resolver discover and verify ANS-registered agents through a standard interface, and let anyone audit the registry's history without trusting a single operator.

“Universal Agent IDs provide a shared discovery layer that makes agents easier to find and connect across environments,” said Michael Kantor, President at HOL. “By adding an ANS profile to UAID and defining a standard for publishing Merkle checkpoints, we are making it easier for the ecosystem to verify agent identity and provenance using widely understood cryptographic methods.”

Designed for interoperability
The proposals are aligned with existing standards work and common internet primitives:
- UAID (HCS-14) defines the identifier format and a profile mechanism for discovery and verification rules
- The checkpoint specification defines a standard Merkle commitment format for transparency logs
- The ANS transparency log follows the IETF SCITT model for supply chain integrity; HCS-27 adds a public verification channel that SCITT does not define
- ANS continues to use DNS and web-based discovery, with optional verification signals
- Transparency log data remains off-ledger, with only cryptographic commitments published publicly

This architecture supports interoperable identity while keeping public data minimal and verification straightforward.

Availability and participation

The ANS UAID (HCS-14) profile and the Merkle checkpoint specification are being shared as

drafts for review and feedback. GoDaddy and HOL invite developers, registry operators, security teams, and ecosystem contributors to participate in refining the standards and supporting early implementations.

About GoDaddy
GoDaddy, the world's largest domain name registrar, helps millions of entrepreneurs globally start, grow, and scale their businesses. People come to GoDaddy to name their idea, build a website and logo, sell their products and services and accept payments. GoDaddy Airo®, the company's AI-powered experience, makes growing a small business faster and easier by helping them to get their idea online in minutes, drive traffic and boost sales. GoDaddy's expert guides are available 24/7 to provide assistance. To learn more about the company, visit www.GoDaddy.com

About HOL
Hashgraph Online (HOL) is an open-source standards and developer tooling ecosystem focused on interoperable AI agents. HOL develops specifications, SDKs, registry tooling, and coordination infrastructure that help developers and organizations identify, discover, verify, and connect agents across web and decentralized environments. Its work includes Universal Agent IDs, registry and discovery standards, and related open-source infrastructure for verifiable agent systems. Through the HOL Partner Program, HOL coordinates with organizations contributing to open standards and infrastructure for the agent ecosystem.

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