Network Working Group
INTERNET-DRAFT

IESG
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IETF Working Group Guidelines and Procedures

STATUS OF THIS MEMO

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ABSTRACT

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) has the primary responsibility for developing and review of specifications intended as Internet Standards. IETF activities are organized into Working Groups (WG). This document describes the guidelines and procedures for formation and operation of an IETF Working Groups. It describes the formal relationship between a WG and the Internet Engineering and Steering Group (IESG). The basic duties of a WG chair and an IESG Area Director are defined.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document defines guidelines and procedures for Internet Engineering Task Force Working Groups. The Internet, a loosely-organized international collaboration of autonomous, interconnected networks, supports host-to-host communication through voluntary adherence to open protocols and procedures defined by Internet Standards, a collection of which are commonly known as "the TCP/IP protocol suite". The Internet Standards Process is defined in RFC 1310bis [1]. The primary responsibility for the development and review of potential Internet Standards from all sources is conducted by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). The goals, structures and procedures of the IETF can be found in it's charter [3].

The IETF is a large, open community of network designers, operators, vendors, and researchers concerned with the Internet and the technology used on it. The IETF is managed by its Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) whose membership includes an IETF Chair, responsible for oversight of general IETF operations, and Area Directors, each of whom is responsible for a set of IETF activities and working groups. At present there are 10 areas, though the number and purview of Areas changes over time:

<<ARE THESE THESE EXACT NAMES OF THE AREAS??>>

1) User Services
2) Applications
3) Service Applications
4) Transport Services
5) Internet Services
6) Routing
7) Network Management
8) Operational Requirements
9) Security
10) Standards & Processes

Most Areas have an advisory group, called the Area Directorate, to assist the Area Directors, e.g., with the review of specifications produced in the area. The Area Directorate is formed by the Area Director(s) from senior members of the community represented by the Area. A small IETF Secretariat provides staff and administrative support for the operation of the IETF.

The primary work of the IETF is performed by subcommittees known as Working Groups. There are currently more than 60 of these. Working Groups tend to have a narrow focus and a lifetime bounded by completion of a specific task, although there are exceptions.

Membership in the IETF is established simply by the fact of participation in its activities. This participation may be by on-line contribution, attendance at face-to-face sessions, or both. No formal rules govern this membership. Any member of the Internet community with the time and interest is urged to participate in IETF meetings and any of its on-line working group discussions. Participation is by individual technical contributors, rather than by formal representatives of organizations.

This document defines procedures and guidelines for formation and operation of Working Groups in the IETF. It defines the relations of Working Groups to other bodies within the IETF. The duties of Working Group Chairs and Area Directors with respect to the operation of the Working Group are also defined. The document uses words like: "shall", "will", "must" and "is required" where it describes steps in the process that are essential. Words like "suggested", "should" and "may" are used where guidelines are described that are not essential, but are strongly recommended to help smooth WG operation.

1.1. IETF Approach to Standardization

The reader is encouraged to read The IETF Charter [3] and The Internet Standards Process [1]. Familiarity with these documents is essential for a complete understanding of the philosophy,

procedures and guidelines described in this document. The goals of the process are summarized in [1]:

> In general, an Internet Standard is a specification that is stable and well-understood, is technically competent, has multiple, independent, and interoperable implementations with operational experience, enjoys significant public support, and is recognizably useful in some or all parts of the Internet.
>
> ...
>
> In outline, the process of creating an Internet Standard is straightforward: a specification undergoes a period of development and several iterations of review by the Internet community and perhaps revision based upon experience, is adopted as a Standard by the appropriate body (see below), and is published.
>
> In practice, the process is somewhat more complicated, due to (1) the number and type of possible sources for specifications; (2) the need to prepare and revise a specification in a manner that preserves the interests of all of the affected parties; (3) the importance of establishing widespread community agreement on its technical content; and (4) the difficulty of evaluating the utility of a particular specification for the Internet community.
>
> ...
>
> These procedures are explicitly aimed at developing and adopting generally-accepted practices. Thus, a candidate for Internet standardization is implemented and tested for correct operation and interoperability by multiple, independent parties, and utilized in increasingly demanding environments, before it can be adopted as an Internet Standard.

The IETF standardization process has been marked by informality. As the community of participation has grown it has become necessary to document procedures, while continuing to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy. This goals of this balancing act are summarized in [1] as:

> The procedures that are described here provide a great deal of flexibility to adapt to the wide variety of circumstances that occur in the Internet standardization process. Experience has shown this flexibility to be vital in achieving the following goals for Internet standardization:
>
> * high quality,
> * prior implementation and testing,
> * openness and fairness, and
> * timeliness.

1.2. Acknowledgments

Much of this document is due to the copy-and-paste function of a word processor. Several passages have been taken from the documents cited in the reference section. The POISED WG provided discussion and comments. Three people deserve special mention, as especially large chunks of their documents have been integrated into this one: Vint Cerf [8] from whom we

borrowed the description of the IETF. And Greg Vaudreuil and Steve Coya [9] who provided several paragraphs. All the errors you'll find are probably ours.

2. GROUP PROCESS

2.1. Working Group Purpose & Scope

IETF working groups (WGs) are the primary mechanism for development of IETF specifications and guidelines, many of which are intended as standards or recommendations. A working Group may be established at the instigation of an Area Director (AD), or its creation may be initiated by an individual or group of individuals. Anyone interested in creating an IETF working group must obtain the advise and consent of the appropriate IETF Area Director under whose direction the working group would fall.

A working group is typically created to address a specific problem or produce a specific deliverable (guideline, standard, etc.), and is expected to be short-lived in nature. Upon completion of its goals and achievement of its objectives, the working group as a unit is terminated. Alternatively, at the discretion of the Area Director and the working group chair and membership, the objectives or assignment of the working group may be extended by enhancing or modifying the working group's statement of objectives

2.2. Wg Policies And Procedures

The IETF has basic requirements for open and fair participation and for thorough consideration of technical alternatives. Within those constraints, working groups are autonomous and each determines the details of its own operation with respect to session participation, reaching closure, etc. The core rule for operation is that acceptance or agreement is achieved via working group "rough" consensus.

A number of procedural questions and issues will arise over time, and it is the function of the working group chair to manage the group process, keeping in mind that the overall purpose of the group is to make progress towards reaching "rough" consensus in realizing the working group's goals and objectives.

There are no hard and fast rules on organizing or conducting working group activities, but a set of guidelines and practices have evolved over time that have proven successful. Some of these are listed here, with actual choices typically determined by the working group members and the chair.

1. For face-to-face sessions, the chair should publish a draft WG-agenda well in advance of the actual session. The agenda needs to contain at least:

    - The items for discussion;

- The estimated time necessary per item; and

- A clear indication of what documents the participants will need to read before the session in order to be well prepared. The documents should be publicly available (preferably as Internet drafts; see next section) with information needed to access them.

2. All relevant documents for a session (including the final agenda) should be published and available at least two weeks before the session starts.

3. It is strongly suggested that the WG chair makes sure that an anonymous FTP directory be available for the upcoming session. All relevant documents (including the final WG-agenda and the minutes of the last session) should be placed in this directory. This has the advantage that all participants can ftp all files in this directory and thus make sure they have all relevant documents. Also, it will be helpful to provide electronic mail- based retrieval for those documents.

4. While open discussion and contribution is essential to working group success, the chair is responsible for ensuring forward progress. As appropriate it may be acceptable to have restricted participation (not attendance!) at IETF working group sessions for the purpose of achieving progress. The working group chair usually has the authority to refuse to grant the floor to any individual who is unprepared or otherwise covering inappropriate material.

5. The detailed specification effort within a working group may be assigned to self-selecting sub-groups, called Design Teams. They may hold closed sessions for conducting the specification effort. In some cases Design Teams are necessary to make forward progress when preparing a document. All work conducted by a Design Team must be available for review by all working group members and the DT must be responsive to the direction of the working group's "rough" consensus.

6. Many working group participants hold that mailing list discussion is the best place to consider and resolve issues and make decisions, while others maintain that such work should be accomplished primarily at IETF meetings. Choice of operational style is made by the working group itself. It is important to note, however, that Internet email discussion is possible for a much wide base of interested persons than is attendance at IETF meetings, due to the time and expense required to attend.

7. It can be quite useful to conduct email exchanges in the same manner as a face to face session, with published schedule and agenda, as well as on-going summarization and consensus polling.

8. Consensus can be determined by balloting, humming, or any other means the WG agrees on (by rough consensus, of course). IETF consensus does not require that all members agree, although this is of course preferred. In general the "dominant" view of the working group shall prevail. (However it must be noted that "dominance" is not to be determined on the basis of volume or persistence, but rather a more general sense of agreement.)

9. It is occasionally appropriate to re-visit a topic, to re-evaluate alternatives or to improve the group's understanding of a relevant decision. However, unnecessary

repeated discussions on issues can be avoided if the chair makes sure that the main arguments in the discussion (and the outcome) are summarized and archived, after a discussion has come to conclusion. It is also good practice to note important decisions/consensus reached by E-mail in the minutes of the next 'live' session, and to briefly summarise decision making history in the final documents the WG produces.

10. To facilitate making forward progress, a working group chair may wish to direct a discussion to reject the input from a member, based upon the following criteria:

    (old) The input pertains to a topic that already has been resolved and is redundant with information previously available;

    (minor) The input is new and pertains to a topic that has already been resolved, but it is felt to be of minor import to the existing decision; or

    (not yet) The input pertains to a topic that the working group has not yet opened for discussion.

2.3. Birds Of A Feather (Bof)

For an individual, or small group of individuals, it is often not clear if the issue(s) at hand merit the formation of a WG. To alleviate this problem the IETF offers the possibility of a Birds of a Feather (BOF) session, as well as the early formation of an email list for preliminary discussion.

A BOF is a session at an IETF meeting which permits "market research" and technical "brainstorming". Any individual may request permission to hold a BOF on a subject. The request has to be filed with the relevant Area Director. The person who requests the BOF is usually appointed as chair of the BOF. The chair of the BOF is also responsible for providing a report on the outcome of the BOF.

Usually the outcome of a BOF will be one of the following:

- There was enough interest and focus in the subject to warrant the formation of a WG;

- The discussion came to a fruitful conclusion, with results to be written down and published; however there is no need to establish a WG;

- There was not enough interest in the subject to warrant the formation of a WG.

There is an increasing demand for BOF sessions at IETF meetings. Therefore the following rules apply for BOFs:

1. All BOFs wishing to meet during an IETF meeting must have the approval of the appropriate Area Director. The Secretariat will NOT schedule or allocate time slots without the explicit approval of the Area Director.

2. The purpose of a BOF is to conduct a single, brief discussion or to ascertain interest and establish goals for a working group. All BOF organizers are required to submit a brief written report of what transpired during the BOF session together with a roster of attendees to the IETF Secretariat for inclusion in the proceedings.

3. A BOF may be held only once (ONE slot at one IETF Plenary meeting).

4. Under unusual circumstances an Area Director can, at his/her discretion, allow a BOF to meet for a second time. Typically (though not a requirement) this is to develop a charter to be submitted to the IESG.

5. BOFs are not permitted to meet three times.

6. Non-IETF groups wishing to participate in IETF meetings may hold a BOF for single-event discussion, or may pursue creation of normal IETF working groups for on-going interactions and discussions. The rules governing such BOFs are the same as for all other IETF BOFs and working groups.

7. When necessary, IETF WGs will be given priority for meeting space over IETF BOFs.

2.4. WG Formation

Criteria for Formation

When determining if creating a working group is appropriate, the Area Director will consider several issues:

- Are the issues that the working group plans to address clear and relevant for the Internet community?

- Are the goals specific and reasonably achievable, and achievable within the time frame specified by the milestones?

- Do the working group's activities overlap with those of another working group? If so, it may still be appropriate to create another working group, but this question must be considered carefully by the Area Directors as subdividing efforts often dilutes the available technical expertise.

- Are there several people clearly interested in the working group's topic and willing to expend the effort to produce the desired result (e.g., a protocol specification)? Working groups require considerable effort: a chair is needed to run sessions, an editor to maintain the working document(s), and contributors to write the text. IETF experience suggests that these roles typically cannot all be handled by one person; four or five active members are typically required. If the necessary staffing is lacking, the person interested in creating the working group might consider

actually writing the specification alone and submitting it for review, rather than attempting to create a working group.

- Does a base of interested consumers appear to exist for the planned work? Consumer interest can be measured by participation of end-users within the IETF process, as well as less direct indications.

Considering the above criteria, the Area Director will decide whether to pursue the formation of the group through the chartering process.

Charter

The formation of a working group requires a charter which is negotiated between a prospective working group chair and the relevant Area Director and which:

1) Lists relevant administrative aspects of the working group, such as identifying the WG Chair or co-Chairs, the WG secretary (who may also be the WG chair), and the addresses of the mailing list and any archive.

2) Specifies the direction or objectives of the working group and describes the approach that will be taken to achieve the goals; and

3) Enumerates a set of goals and milestones together with time frames for their completion.

3) Lists the milestones and dates for intermediate goals, and

When both the prospective chair and the Area Director are satisfied with the charter text, it becomes the basis for forming a working group. The charter document may be similarly renegotiated or modified at any time during the course of the working group's effort to reflect the changing goals of the group.

Charters are reviewed and approved by the IESG. They may be renegotiated periodically to reflect the current status, organization or goals of the working group. Hence, a working group charter is a contract between the IETF and the working group which is committing to meeting explicit milestones and delivering concrete "products".

Specifically, each charter consists of five sections:

1. Working Group Name:

   A working group name should be reasonably descriptive or identifiable. Additionally, the group shall define an acronym (maximum 8 printable ASCII characters) to reference the group in the IETF directories, mailing lists, and general documents.

2. Working Group Chair(s):

   The working group may have one or two chair(s) to perform the administrative functions of the group. The chair(s) shall be reachable by Email.

3. Area and Area Director(s)

   The name of the IETF area with which the working group is affiliated and the name and electronic mail address of the associated Area Director.

4. Working Group Description:

   In one to two paragraphs, the focus and intent of the group shall be set forth. By reading this section alone, an individual should be able to decide whether this group is relevant to their own work. The first paragraph must give a brief summary of the basis, goal(s) and approach(es) planned for the working group. This paragraph will frequently be used as an overview of the working group's effort.

   Recognizing the importance of security and network management in the Internet Architecture, this description of the work of the group must specifically address the impact of the work on these two issues.

5. Goals and Milestones:

   The working group charter must establish a timetable for work. While this may be re-negotiated over time, the list of milestones and dates facilitates the Area Director's tracking of working group progress and status, and it is indispensable to potential participants identifying the critical moments for input. Milestones shall consist of deliverables that can be qualified as such; e.g. 'Internet-draft finished' is fine, but 'discuss via E-mail' is not. This milestone list is expected to be updated periodically. Updated milestones are re-negotiated with the Area Director and the IESG, as needed and then are submitted to the IETF Secretariat

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   ietfadm@cnri.reston.va.us
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6. Mailing Lists:

   Most of the work of an IETF working group is conducted on Internet mailing lists. It is required that an IETF working group have a general discussion list. An individual needs to be designated as the list service postmaster, usually through a list-request alias mechanism. A message archive should be maintained in a public place which can be accessed via FTP. The address

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   IETF-archive@cnri.reston.va.us
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   shall be included on the mailing list. Retrieval from the archive via electronic mail requests also is recommended.

NOTE: It is strongly suggested that the mailing list be on a host directly connected to the IP Internet to facilitate use of the SMTP expansion command (EXPN) and to allow access via FTP to the mail archives. If this is not possible, the message archive and membership of the list must be made available to those who request it by sending a message to the list-request alias. The list maintainer or archiver need not be the working group chair or secretary, but may be a member of the working group itself.

An example of a WG charter is in appendix A.

Charter Review & Approval

Once the Area Director has approved the Working Group charter, the charter is submitted to the Internet Engineering and Steering Group and Internet Architecture Board for review and approval. The IESG will primarily consider whether :

- There is sufficient expertise in the IETF to produce the desired results of the WG;
- There is a good indication that the intended user population wants this work;
- The risks and urgency of the work are specified, to determine the level of attention required, and
- The extent to which the work will affect an installed base of users is taken into account.
- The WG has overlap with WGs in other areas;
- Related work by other groups will be affected or will be sufficiently coordinated with the work of this group

The Internet Architecture Board (IAB) will review the charter of the proposed WG to determine the relationship of the proposed work to the overall architecture of the Internet Protocol Suite.

The approved charter is submitted to the IESG Secretary who records and enters the information into the IETF tracking database and returns the charter in a form formatted by the database. The working group is announced by the IESG Secretary to the IETF mailing list, by the IESG secretary.

2.5. Working Group Sessions

All working group actions shall be public, and wide participation encouraged. A working group will conduct much of its business via electronic mail distribution lists, but may meet periodically to discuss and review task status and progress, and to direct future activities. It is common, but not required that a working group will meet at the trimester IETF plenary meetings. Additionally, interim sessions may be scheduled for telephone conference, video teleconference, or by actual face to face sessions.

As noted in the earlier section on Working Group Policies and Procedures, each working group will determine the balance of email and face-to-face sessions that is appropriate for achieving its milestones. Electronic mail permits the widest participation; face-to-face meetings often permit better focus and therefore can be more efficient for reaching consensus and ensuring consensus among a core of the working group members.

Sessions must be publicized widely and well in advance and must take place at a convenient location. The time and location of a session must be announced on the working group mailing list, through any other mechanisms that are appropriate, and must include the IETF mailing list:

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ietf@cnri.reston.va.us
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All working group sessions (including those held outside of the IETF meetings) shall be reported by making minutes available. These minutes should include the agenda for the session, an account of the discussion including any decisions made, and a list of attendees. The working group chair is responsible for insuring that session minutes are written and distributed, though the actual task may be performed by the working group secretary or someone designated by the working group chair. The minutes shall be submitted in printable ASCII text for publication in the IETF Proceedings, and for posting in the IETF Directories.

If a WG needs a session at an IETF meeting, the chair must apply for one or more time-slots as soon as the first announcement of that IETF meeting is made by the IETF secretariat to the wg-chairs list. Session time is a scarce resource at IETF meetings, so placing requests early will facilitate schedule coordination for WGs requiring the same set of experts.

The application for a WG session at an IETF meeting shall be made to the IETF secretariat. Alternatively some Area Directors may want to coordinate WG sessions in their area and request that time slots be coordinated through them. After receiving all requests for time slots by WGs in the area, the Area Director(s) form a draft session-agenda for their area, which is then sent to the WG chairs of the area. After approval it will be sent to the IETF secretariat.

An application must contain:

- The amount of time requested;
- The rough outline of the WG-agenda that is expected to be covered;
- The estimated number of people that will attend the WG session;
- Related wgs that must not be scheduled for the same time slot(s).

The Secretariat allots time slots on the basis of the session-agenda made by the Area director(s). If the proposed session-agenda for an area does not fit into the IETF meeting-agenda, the IETF secretariat will adjust it to fit, after consulting the Area director(s) and the relevant chairs. The Secretariat will then form a draft session-agenda and distribute it among the wg-chairs for final approval.

2.6. Termination Of A WG

Working groups are typically chartered to accomplish a specific task. After that task is complete, the group will be disbanded. However, if the work of a WG results in a Proposed Standard, the WG will go dormant rather than disband (i.e., the WG will no longer conduct formal activities, but the mailing list and the membership will remain available to review the work as it moves to Draft Standard and Standard status).

If, at some point, it becomes evident that a Working Group is unable to complete the work outlined in the charter, the group, in consultation with its Area Director can either:

1) Recharter to refocus on a smaller task,

2) Choose new chair(s), or

3) Disband.

When the working group chairperson and the Area Director disagree about the steps required to refocus the group or the need to disband the group, the IESG will make a determination with input from the Area Director and the working group chair(s).

3. MANAGEMENT

3.1. WG Chair Duties

The Working Group chair(s) have wide discretion in the conduct of business. The WG chair has to make sure that the WG operates in a reasonably efficient and effective way towards reaching the goals and results described in the WG charter. This very general description encompasses at the very least the following detailed tasks:

- Moderate the WG distribution list

  The chair should attempt to ensure that the discussions on this list are relevant and that they converge. The chair should make sure that discussions on the list are summarized and that the outcome is well documented (to avoid repetition). The chair also may choose to schedule organized on-line "session" with agenda and deliverables.

- Organize, prepare and chair face-to-face sessions

  The chair should plan and announce sessions well in advance. (See section on WG Sessions for exact procedures.) The chair should make sure that relevant documents and the final WG-agenda are ready at least 2 weeks in advance of the session. It is strongly suggested that the WG chair creates an anonymous FTP directory for the working group's documents. All relevant documents should be placed in this directory.

- Communicate results of session

  The chair must ensure that minutes of the session are taken and that an attendance list is circulated. After screening the minutes the final version will be sent to the Area Director(s) and the IETF secretariat, in time for publication in the IETF proceedings. The WG chair should provide the Area Directors with a very short report (via E-mail) on the session directly after it takes place. These reports will be used for the Area Report as presented in the proceedings of each IETF meeting.

- Distribute the work

  Of course each WG will have members who may not be able to (or want to) do any work at all. Most of the time the bulk of the work is done by a few dedicated members. It is the task of the chair to motivate enough experts to allow for a fair distribution of the workload.

- Progress documents

  The chair will make sure that authors of WG documents incorporate changes as discussed by the WG. Once a document is approved by the WG the chair reports to the Area Director(s) and the IESG secretary. The chair indicates (per E-mail) which document has been approved, and asks the IESG to review it for publication (specify Experimental, Proposed STD, etc.). The Area Director will acknowledge receipt of the E-mail, and from then on action is the responsibility of the IESG. See the section on Review of Documents for possible further involvement of the chair in progressing documents.

3.2. Area Director Duties

The Area Directors are responsible for ensuring that working groups in their area produce coherent, coordinated and architecturally consistent output from the Working Groups in their area as a contribution to the overall results of the IETF. This very general description encompasses at the very least the detailed tasks related to the Working Groups:

- Coordination of WGs

  The Area director(s) coordinate the work done by the various WGs within (and sometimes even outside) the relevant Area. The Director(s) try to coordinate sessions in such a way that experts can attend the relevant sessions with a minimum of overlap and gaps between sessions. (See section on WG sessions for details)

- Reporting

  The Area Director(s) report to the IETF on progress in the Area.

- Reviewing

  The Area Directors may appoint independent reviewers prior to document approval. The Area Director(s) track the progress of documents from the Area through the IESG review process, and report back on this to the WG Chair(s).

- Progress tracking

  The Area Directors track and manage the progress of the various WGs with the aid of a regular status report generated by the IESG secretary. The Area directors forward this regular status reports on documents and milestones made by the IESG Secretary to the WG chairs. This in turn helps the chairs to manage their WGs.

- Area Directorate

  The Area Director(s) chairs the Area Directorate. They are responsible for regular sessions of the directorate.

3.3. Contention And Appeals Overview

Formal procedures for requesting review and conducting appeals are documented in The Internet Standards Process [1]. A brief summary is provided, here.

In fact, the IETF approach to reviews and appeals is quite simple: When an IETF member feels that matters have not been conducted properly, they should state their concern to a member of IETF management. In other words, the process relies upon those who have concerns raising them. If the result is not satisfactory, there are several levels of appeal available, to ensure that review is possible by a number of people uninvolved in the matter in question.

Reviews and appeals step through three levels:

- Area

  This includes the Working Group review and Area Director review. No appeal should come to the IESG before the Area Director has reviewed the point of contention.

- IESG

  If the offended party is not happy with the Area-level review, then they may bring them to the IESG chair and the Area Director for Standards Management. The IESG chair has to be in this loop on this. The IESG chair and the Standards Area Director will bring the issue before the IESG for discussion and take the resolution back to the parties.

- IAB

  If the offended party is still not happy with the outcome at the IESG level, then they may take their concern to the IAB.

Concerns entail either a disagreement with technical decisions by the working group or with the process by which working group business has been conducted. Technical disagreements may be about specific details or about basic approach. When an issue pertains to preference, it should be resolved within the working group. When a matter pertains to the technical adequacy of a decision, review is encouraged whenever the perceived deficiency is noted. For matters having to do with preference, working group rough consensus will dominate.

When a matter pertains to working group process, it is important that those with a concern be clear about the manner in which the process was not open or fair and that they be willing to discuss the issue openly and directly. In turn, the IETF management will make every effort to understand how the process was conducted, what deficiencies were present (if any) and how the matter should be corrected. The IETF functions on the good will and mutual respect of its members; continued success requires continued attention to working group process.

4. DOCUMENT PROCEDURES

4.1. Internet Drafts

The Internet Drafts directory is provided to working groups as a resource for posting and disseminating early copies of working group documents. This repository is replicated at various locations around the Internet. It is encouraged that draft documents be posted as soon as they become reasonably stable.

It is stressed here that Internet Drafts are working documents and have no official status whatsoever. They may, eventually, turn into a standards-track document or they may sink from sight.

4.2. Request For Comments (RFC)

The work of an IETF working group usually results in publication of one or more documents, published as a Request For Comments (RFCs) [4]. This series is the journal of record for the Internet community. A document can be written by an individual in a working group, by a group as a whole with a designated editor, or by others not involved with the IETF. The designated author need not be the group chair(s).

Note: The RFC series is a publication mechanism only and publication does not determine the IETF status of a document. Status is determined through separate, explicit status labels assigned by the IETF. In other words, the reader is reminded that all Internet Standards are published as RFCs, but NOT all RFCs specify standards!

For a description on the various subseries of RFCs the reader is referred to [1,5,6,7].

4.3. Submission Of Documents

When a WG decides that a working document is ready for publication, the following must be done:

- The relevant document as approved by the WG must be in the Internet-Drafts directory;
- The relevant document must be formatted according to RFC-rules (see RFC-1111 [4]).
- The WG chair sends email to the relevant Area Director(s), with a copy to the IESG Secretary. The mail should contain the reference to the document, and the request that it be progressed as an Informational, Experimental, Prototype or standards-track (Proposed, Draft or Full -- STD) RFC.

The Area Director(s) will acknowledge receipt of the E-mail. From then onwards the progressing of the document is the responsibility of the IESG.

4.4. Review Of Documents

In case the submission is intended as an Informational RFC only no review is necessary. However if the WG or the RFC editor thinks that a review is appropriate, the AD may be asked to provide one. In case of submission as an Experimental RFC, the document will always be reviewed by the IESG. This review can either be done by the AD and other IESG members or the IESG may ask for an independent reviewer (i.e., by someone not part of the WG in question) from the Area Directorate or elsewhere.

A review will lead to one of three possible conclusions:

1. The document is accepted as is.

   This fact will be announced by the IESG to the IETF mailing list and to the RFC Editor. Publication is then further handled between the RFC editor and the author(s).

2. Changes regarding content are suggested to the author(s)/WG.

   Suggestions must be clear and direct, so as to facilitate working group and author correction of the specification. Once the author(s)/WG have made these changes or have explained to the satisfaction of the reviewers why the changes are not necessary, the document will be accepted for publication as under point 1, above.

3. The document is rejected.

   This will need strong and thorough arguments from the reviewers. The whole IETF and working group process is structured such that this alternative is not likely to arise for documents coming from a Working Group. After all, the intentions of the document will already have been described in the WG charter, and reviewed at the start of the WG.

If any individual or group of individuals feels that the review treatment has been unfair, there is the opportunity to make a procedural complaint. The mechanism for procedural complaints is described in the section on Contention and Appeal.

Before making a final decision on a standards-track document, the IESG will issue a "Last Call" to the IETF mailing list. This Last Call will announce the intention of the IESG to consider the document, and it will solicit final comments from the IETF within a period of two weeks. It is important to note that a Last Call is intended as a brief, final check with the Internet community, to make sure that no important concerns have missed or misunderstood. Last Call cannot serve as a more general, in-depth review.

5. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

Security issues are not addressed in this memo.

6. REFERENCES

[1] RFC1310bis, The Internet Standards Process

[2] Charter Internet Society

[3] New charter IETF

[4] RFC 1111 Request for Comments on Request for Comments, J. Postel, August 1990.

[5] RFC 1150 F.Y.I. on F.Y.I., G. Malkin and J. Reynolds, March 1990

[6] RFC 1311 Introduction to the Standards Notes, ed. J. Postel, March 1992.

[7] RFC 1360 IAB Official Protocol Standards, ed. J. Postel, Sept. 1992.

[8] RFC 1160, The Internet Activities Board, V.Cerf, may 1990

(This should be OBE by [3] by the time this gets published)

[9] Guidelines to Working Group Chair(s), S. Coya, IESG distribution only.

7. AUTHORS ADDRESS

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APPENDIX: Sample Working Group charter

Integrated Directory Services (ids)

Charter

Chair(s):

Chris Weider <clw@merit.edu>
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General Discussion:ids@merit.edu

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Description of Working Group:

The Integrated Directory Services Working Group (IDS) is chartered to facilitate the integration and interoperability of current and future directory services into a unified directory service. This work will unite directory services based on a heterogeneous set of directory services protocols (X.500, WHOIS++, etc.). In addition to specifying technical requirements for the integration, the IDS Group will also contribute to the administrative and maintenance issues of directory service offerings by publishing guidelines on directory data integrity, maintenance, security, and privacy and legal issues for users and administrators of directories. IDS will also assume responsibility for the completion of the outstanding Directory Information Services Infrastructure (DISI) Internet-Drafts, which are all specific to the X.500 protocol, and for the maintenance of FYI 11, ``A catalog of available X.500 implementations''. IDS will need to liase with the groups working on development and deployment of the various directory service protocols.

The IDS Working Group is a combined effort of the Applications Area and the User Services Area of the IETF.

Goals and Milestones:

Ongoing	Track emerging directory service protocols to specify standards for interoperation with existing protocols.
Ongoing	Liase with groups working on deployment and development of directory services to locate and fix interoperability problems.
Ongoing	Identify unfilled needs of directory service offerers, administrators, and users.
Mar 93	Submit to the IESG the DISI ``Advanced Usages of X.500'' paper as an informational document.
Mar 93	Submit to the IESG the DISI ``X.500 Pilot Project Catalog'' paper as an informational document.
Mar 93	Submit to the IESG the 1993 revision of FYI 11, ``A catalog of available X.500 implementations'' as an informational document.
Mar 93	Submit as an Internet-Draft a ``Specifications for interoperability between WHOIS++ and X.500''.
Jul 93	Submit as an Internet-Draft a ``Guide to administering a directory service'', which covers data integrity, maintenance, privacy and legal issues, and security.
Jul 93	Submit as an Internet-Draft a ``Catalog of available WHOIS++ implementations''.
Nov 93	Submit to the IESG the ``Specifications for interoperability between WHOIS++ and X.500'' as a standards document.
Nov 93	Submit as an Internet-Draft a ``User's guide to directory services on the Internet''.
Mar 94	Submit to the IESG the ``Guide to administering a directory service'' as an informational document.
Mar 94	Submit to the IESG the 1994 revision of FYI 11.
Mar 94	Submit to the IESG the ``Catalog of available WHOIS++ implementations'' as an informational document.