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A Publication Protocol for the Resource Public Key Infrastructure (RPKI)

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Abstract

This document defines a protocol for publishing Resource Public Key Infrastructure (RPKI) objects. Even though the RPKI will have many participants issuing certificates and creating other objects, it is operationally useful to consolidate the publication of those objects. This document provides the protocol for doing so.

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1. Introduction

This document assumes a working knowledge of the Resource Public Key Infrastructure (RPKI), which is intended to support improved routing security on the Internet. [RFC6480]

In order to make participation in the RPKI easier, it is helpful to have a few consolidated repositories for RPKI objects, thus saving every participant from the cost of maintaining a new service. Similarly, relying parties using the RPKI objects will find it faster and more reliable to retrieve the necessary set from a smaller number of repositories.

These consolidated RPKI object repositories will in many cases be outside the administrative scope of the organization issuing a given RPKI object. In some cases, outsourcing operation of the repository will be an explicit goal: some resource holders who strongly wish to

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control their own RPKI private keys may lack the resources to operate a 24x7 repository, or may simply not wish to do so.

The operator of an RPKI publication repository may well be an Internet registry which issues certificates to its customers, but it need not be; conceptually, operation of a an RPKI publication repository is separate from operation of RPKI CA.

This document defines an RPKI publication protocol which allows publication either within or across organizational boundaries, and which makes fairly minimal demands on either the CA engine or the publication service.

1.1. Terminology

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

"Publication engine" and "publication server" are used interchangeably to refer to the server providing the service described in this document.

"Business Public Key Infrastructure" ("Business PKI" or "BPKI") refers to a PKI, separate from the RPKI, used to authenticate clients to the publication engine. We use the term "Business PKI" here because an internet registry might already have a PKI for authenticating its clients and might wish to reuse that PKI for this protocol. There is, however, no requirement to reuse such a PKI.

2. Protocol Specification

The publication protocol uses XML messages wrapped in signed CMS messages, carried over HTTP transport.

The publication protocol uses a simple request/response interaction. The client passes a request to the server, and the server generates a corresponding response.

A message exchange commences with the client initiating an HTTP POST with content type of "application/rpki-publication", with the message object as the body. The server's response will similarly be the body of the response with a content type of "application/rpki-publication".

The content of the POST and the server's response will be a well-formed Cryptographic Message Syntax (CMS) [RFC5652] object with OID = 1.2.840.113549.1.7.2 as described in Section 3.1 of [RFC6492].

2.1. Common XML Message Format

The XML schema for this protocol is below in $\underline{\text{Section 2.5}}$. The basic XML message format looks like this:

```
<msq
    type="query"
    version="3"
   xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
 <!-- Zero or more PDUs -->
</msq>
<msq
    type="reply"
   version="3"
    xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
 <!-- Zero or more PDUs -->
</msq>
Common attributes:
version: The value of this attribute is the version of this
   protocol. This document describes version 3.
type: The possible values of this attribute are "reply" and "query".
A query PDU may be one of three types: <publish/>, <withdraw/>, or
st/>.
```

A reply PDU may be one of four types: <publish/>, <withdraw/>, <list/>, or <report_error/>.

Each of these PDUs may include an optional tag to facilitate bulk operation. If a tag is set in a query PDU, the corresponding reply(s) MUST have the tag attribute set to the same value.

2.2. Publication and Withdrawal

The publication protocol uses a common message format to request publication of any RPKI object. This format was chosen specifically to allow this protocol to accommodate new types of RPKI objects without needing changes to this protocol.

Both the <publish/> and <withdraw/> PDUs have a payload of an optional tag and a URI. The <publish/> query also contains the DER object to be published, encoded in Base64.

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Both the <publish/> and <withdraw/> PDUs also have a "hash" attribute, which carries a hash of an existing object at the specified repository URI. For <withdraw/> PDUs, the hash is mandatory, as this operation makes no sense if there is no existing object to withdraw. For <publish/> PDUs, the hash MUST be present if the publication operation is overwriting an existing object, and MUST be omitted if this publication operation is writing to a new URI where no prior object exists. Presence of an object when no hash attribute is specified is an error, as is absence of the hash attribute or an incorrect hash value when an object is present. Any such errors MUST be reported using the <report_error/> PDU.

The current hash algorithm is SHA-256 [SHS], to simplify comparison of publication protocol hashes with RPKI manifest hashes.

The intent behind the hash attribute is to allow the client and server to detect any disagreements about the effect that a <publish/> or <withdraw/> PDU will have on the repository.

Note that every publish and withdraw action requires a new manifest, thus every publish or withdraw action will involve at least two objects.

2.3. Listing the repository

The to ask the server for a complete listing of objects which the server believes the client has published. This is intended primarily to allow the client to recover upon detecting (probably via use of the "hash" attribute, see Section 2.2) that they have somehow lost synchronization.

The t/> query consists of a single PDU.

The reply consists of zero or more PDUs, one per object published in this repository by this client, each PDU conveying the URI and hash of one published object.

2.4. Error handling

Errors are handled at two levels.

Since all messages in this protocol are conveyed over HTTP connections, basic errors are indicated via the HTTP response code. 4xx and 5xx responses indicate that something bad happened. Errors that make it impossible to decode a query or encode a response are handled in this way.

Where possible, errors result in an XML <report_error/> PDU which takes the place of the expected protocol response PDU. Like the rest of this protocol, <report_error/> PDUs are CMS-signed XML messages and thus can be archived to provide an audit trail.

<report_error/> PDUs only appear in replies, never in queries.

Like all other PDUs in this protocol, the <report_error/> PDU includes a "tag" attribute to assist in matching the error with a particular query when using batching. It is optional to set the tag on queries but, if set on the query, it MUST be set on the reply or error.

The error itself is conveyed in the error_code attribute. The value of this attribute is a token indicating the specific error that occurred.

The body of the <report_error/> element itself is an optional text string; if present, this is debugging information.

2.5. XML Schema

The following is a RelaxNG compact form schema describing the Publication Protocol.

```
# $Id: rpki-publication.rnc 3171 2015-02-26 00:09:05Z sra $
# RelaxNG schema for RPKI publication protocol.
default namespace =
    "http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/"
# This is version 3 of the protocol.
version = "3"
# Top level PDU is either a query or a reply.
start |= element msg {
  attribute version { version },
  attribute type { "query" },
  query_elt*
}
start |= element msg {
  attribute version { version },
  attribute type { "reply" },
 reply_elt*
}
```

```
# PDUs allowed in queries and replies.
query_elt = publish_query | withdraw_query | list_query
reply_elt = publish_reply | withdraw_reply | list_reply | error_reply
# Tag attributes for bulk operations.
tag = attribute tag { xsd:token { maxLength="1024" } }
# Base64 encoded DER stuff.
base64 = xsd:base64Binary
# Publication URIs.
uri = attribute uri { xsd:anyURI { maxLength="4096" } }
# Digest of an existing object (hexadecimal).
hash = attribute hash { xsd:string { pattern = "[0-9a-fA-F]+" } }
# Error codes.
error = xsd:token { maxLength="1024" }
# <publish/> element
publish_query = element publish { tag?, uri, hash?, base64 }
publish_reply = element publish { tag?, uri }
# <withdraw/> element
withdraw_query = element withdraw { tag?, uri, hash }
withdraw_reply = element withdraw { tag?, uri }
# <list/> element
list_query = element list { tag? }
list_reply = element list { tag?, uri, hash }
# <report_error/> element
error_reply = element report_error {
 attribute error_code { error },
 xsd:string { maxLength="512000" }?
}
```

3. Examples

Following are examples of various queries and the corresponding replies for the RPKI publication protocol

3.1. <publish/> Query, No Existing Object

```
<msg
    type="query"
    version="3"
    xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
    <publish</pre>
```

uri="rsync://wombat.example/Alice/blCrcCp9ltyPDNzYKPfxc.cer"> MIIE+jCCA+KgAwIBAgIBDTANBgkqhkiG9w0BAQsFADAzMTEwLwYDVQQDEyhE RjRBODAxNOU2NkE5RTkxNzJFNDYxMkQ4Q0Y0QzgzRjIz0ERFMkEzMB4XDTA4 MDUyMjE4MDUxMloXDTA4MDUyNDE3NTQ1M1owMzExMC8GA1UEAxMo0EZCODIx OEYwNkU1MEFCNzAyQTdEOTZEQzhGMENEQ0Q4MjhGN0YxNzCCASIwDQYJKoZI hvcNAOEBBOADggEPADCCAOoCggEBAMeziKp0k5nP7v6SZoNsXIMOYRqNtC6F r/9Xm/1yQHomiPqHUk47rHhGojYiK5AhkrwoYhkH4UjJl2iwklDYczXuaBU3 F5qrKlZ4aZnjIxdlP7+hktVpeApL6yuJTUAYeC3UIxnLDVdD6phydZ/F0Qlu ffiNDjzteCCvoyOUatqt8WB+oND6LToHp028q1YUYLHG6mur0dPdcHOVXLSm UDuZ1HDz1nDuYvIVKjB/MpH9aW9XeaQ6ZFIlZVPwuuvI2brR+ThH7Gv27GL/ o8qFdC300VQfoTZ+rKPGDE8K1cI906BL4kiwx9z0oiDcE96QCz+B0vsjc9mG aA1jgAxlXWsCAwEAAaOCAhcwggITMB0GA1UdDgQWBBSPuCGPBuUKtwKn2W3I 8M3Ngo9/FzAfBgNVHSMEGDAWgBTfSoAX5mqekXLkYS2M9Mg/I43iozBVBgNV HR8ETjBMMEqgSKBGhkRyc3luYzovL2xvY2FsaG9zdDo0NDAwL3Rlc3RiZWQv UklSLzEvMzBxQUYtWnFucEZ5NUdFdGpQVElQeU90NHFNLmNybDBFBqqrBqEF BQcBAQQ5MDcwNQYIKwYBBQUHMAKGKXJzeW5j0i8vbG9jYWxob3N00jQ0MDAv dGVzdGJlZC9XT01C0V0uY2VvMBqGA1UdIAEB/wQOMAwwCqYIKwYBBQUHDqIw DwYDVR0TAQH/BAUwAwEB/zA0BgNVHQ8BAf8EBAMCAQYwgZsGCCsGAQUFBwEL BIGOMIGLMDQGCCsGAQUFBzAFhihyc3luYzovL2xvY2FsaG9zdDo0NDAwL3Rl c3RiZWQvUk1SL1IwLzEvMFMGCCsGAQUFBzAKhkdyc31uYzovL2xvY2FsaG9z dDo0NDAwL3Rlc3RiZWQvUklSL1IwLzEvajdnaGp3YmxDcmNDcDlsdHlQRE56 WUtOZnhjLm1uZjAaBqqrBqEFBOcBCAEB/wOLMAmqBzAFAqMA/BUwPqYIKwYB BQUHAQcBAf8ELzAtMCsEAgABMCUDAwAKAzAOAwUAwAACAQMFAcAAAiAwDgMF AsAAAiwDB0DAAAJkMA0GCSqGSIb3D0EBCwUAA4IBA0CEhuH7jtI2PJY6+zwv 306vmCuXhtu9Lr2mmRw2ZErB8EMcb5xypMrNqMoKeu14K2x4a4RPJkK4yATh M81FPNRsU5mM0acIRnAPtxjHvPME7PHN2w2nGLASRsZmaa+b8A7SS0xVcFUR azENztppsolHeTpm0cpLItK7mNpudUq1JGuFo94VLf1MnE2EqARG1vTsNhel / SM/UvOArCCOBvf0Gz7kSuupDSZ7qx+ LiDmtEsLdbGNQBiYPbLrDk41PHrxdx28qIj7ejZkRzNFw/3pi8/XK281h8zeHoFVu6ghRPy5db0A4akX/KG6b8XIx 0iwPYdLiDbdWFbtTdPcXBauY

</publish>

</msg>

3.2. <publish/> Query, Overwriting Existing Object

```
<msq
    type="query"
   version="3"
    xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
  <publish
     hash="deadf00d"
     uri="rsync://wombat.example/Alice/blCrcCp9ltyPDNzYKPfxc.cer">
     MIIE+jCCA+KqAwIBAqIBDTANBqkqhkiG9w0BAQsFADAzMTEwLwYDVQQDEyhE
     RjRBODAxNOU2NkE5RTkxNzJFNDYxMkQ4Q0Y0QzgzRjIz0ERFMkEzMB4XDTA4
     MDUyMjE4MDUxMloXDTA4MDUyNDE3NTQ1M1owMzExMC8GA1UEAxMo0EZC0DIx
     OEYWNkU1MEFCNzAyQTdEOTZEQzhGMENEQ0Q4MjhGN0YxNzCCASIwDQYJKoZI
     hvcNAOEBBOADqqEPADCCAOoCqqEBAMeziKp0k5nP7v6SZoNsXIMOYRqNtC6F
     r/9Xm/1yOHomiPqHUk47rHhGojYiK5AhkrwoYhkH4UjJl2iwklDYczXuaBU3
     F5qrKlZ4aZnjIxdlP7+hktVpeApL6yuJTUAYeC3UIxnLDVdD6phydZ/F0Qlu
     ffiNDjzteCCvoyOUatqt8WB+oND6LToHp028q1YUYLHG6mur0dPdcHOVXLSm
     UDuZ1HDz1nDuYvIVKjB/MpH9aW9XeaQ6ZFIlZVPwuuvI2brR+ThH7Gv27GL/
     o8gFdC300V0foTZ+rKPGDE8K1cI906BL4kiwx9z0oiDcE960Cz+B0vsjc9mG
     aA1jgAxlXWsCAwEAAa0CAhcwggITMB0GA1UdDgQWBBSPuCGPBuUKtwKn2W3I
     8M3Nqo9/FzAfBqNVHSMEGDAWqBTfSoAX5mqekXLkYS2M9Mq/I43iozBVBqNV
     HR8ETjBMMEqqSKBGhkRyc3luYzovL2xvY2FsaG9zdDo0NDAwL3Rlc3RiZWQv
     UklSLzEvMzBxQUYtWnFucEZ5NUdFdGpQVElQeU90NHFNLmNybDBFBqqrBqEF
     BQCBAQQ5MDcwNQYIKwYBBQUHMAKGKXJzeW5j0i8vbG9jYWxob3N00jQ0MDAv
     dGVzdGJlZC9XT01CQVQuY2VyMBgGA1UdIAEB/wQ0MAwwCgYIKwYBBQUHDgIw
     DwYDVR0TAQH/BAUwAwEB/zA0BgNVHQ8BAf8EBAMCAQYwgZsGCCsGAQUFBwEL
     BIGOMIGLMDQGCCsGAQUFBzAFhihyc3luYzovL2xvY2FsaG9zdDo0NDAwL3Rl
     c3RiZWQvUk1SL1IwLzEvMFMGCCsGAQUFBzAKhkdyc31uYzovL2xvY2FsaG9z
     dDo0NDAwL3Rlc3RiZWQvUklSL1IwLzEvajdnaGp3YmxDcmNDcDlsdHlQRE56
     WUtQZnhjLm1uZjAaBqqrBqEFBQcBCAEB/wQLMAmqBzAFAqMA/BUwPqYIKwYB
     BQUHAQcBAf8ELzAtMCsEAgABMCUDAwAKAzAOAwUAwAACAQMFAcAAAiAwDgMF
     AsAAAiwDBQDAAAJkMAOGCSqGSIb3DQEBCwUAA4IBAQCEhuH7jtI2PJY6+zwv
     306vmCuXhtu9Lr2mmRw2ZErB8EMcb5xypMrNqMoKeu14K2x4a4RPJkK4yATh
     M81FPNRsU5mM0acIRnAPtxjHvPME7PHN2w2nGLASRsZmaa+b8A7SS0xVcFUR
     azENztppsolHeTpm0cpLItK7mNpudUq1JGuFo94VLf1MnE2EqARG1vTsNhel
     /SM/UvOArCCOBvf0Gz7kSuupDSZ7qx+LiDmtEsLdbGNQBiYPbLrDk41PHrxd
     x28qIj7ejZkRzNFw/3pi8/XK281h8zeHoFVu6ghRPy5db0A4akX/KG6b8XIx
     0iwPYdLiDbdWFbtTdPcXBauY
    </publish>
</msq>
```

3.3. <publish/> Reply

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<msg

```
type="reply"
       version="3"
       xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
     <publish
         uri="rsync://wombat.example/Alice/blCrcCp9ltyPDNzYKPfxc.cer"/>
   </msg>
3.4. <withdraw/> Query
   <msq
       type="query"
       version="3"
       xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
    <withdraw
         hash="deadf00d"
         uri="rsync://wombat.example/Alice/blCrcCp9ltyPDNzYKPfxc.cer"/>
   </msg>
3.5. <withdraw/> Reply
   <msg
       type="reply"
       version="3"
       xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
     <withdraw
         uri="rsync://wombat.example/Alice/blCrcCp9ltyPDNzYKPfxc.cer"/>
   </msq>
3.6. <report_error/> With Text
   <msg
       type="reply"
       version="3"
       xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
     <report_error
         error_code="your_hair_is_on_fire">
       Shampooing with sterno again, are we?
     </report_error>
   </msq>
3.7. <report_error/> Without Text
```

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```
<msg
    type="reply"
    version="3"
    xmlns="http://www.hactrn.net/uris/rpki/publication-spec/">
    <report_error
        error_code="your_hair_is_on_fire"/>
</msg>
```

4. Operational Considerations

There are two basic options open to the repository operator as to how the publication tree is laid out. The first option is simple: each publication client is given its own directory one level below the top of the rsync module, and there is no overlap between the publication spaces used by different clients. For example:

```
rsync://example.org/rpki/Alice/
rsync://example.org/rpki/Bob/
rsync://example.org/rpki/Carol/
```

This has the advantage of being very easy for the publication operator to manage, but has the drawback of making it difficult for relying parties to fetch published objects both safely and as efficiently as possible.

Given that the mandatory-to-implement retrieval protocol for relying parties is rsync, a more efficient repository structure would be one which minimized the number of rsync fetches required. One such structure would be one in which the publication directories for subjects were placed underneath the publication directories of their issuers: since the normal synchronization tree walk is top-down, this can significantly reduce the total number of rsync connections required to synchronize. For example:

```
rsync://example.org/rpki/Alice/
rsync://example.org/rpki/Alice/Bob/
rsync://example.org/rpki/Alice/Bob/Carol/
```

Preliminary measurement suggests that, in the case of large numbers of small publication directories, the time needed to set up and tear down individual rsync connections becomes significant, and that a properly optimized tree structure can reduce synchronization time by an order of magnitude.

The more complex tree structure does require careful attention to the base_uri attribute values when setting up clients. In the example above, assuming that Alice issues to Bob who in turn issues to Carol, Alice has ceded control of a portion of her publication space to Bob,

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who has in turn ceded a portion of that to Carol, and the base_uri attributes in the <cli>ent/> setup messages should reflect this.

The details of how the repository operator determines that Alice has given Bob permission to nest Bob's publication directory under Alice's is outside the scope of this protocol.

5. IANA Considerations

IANA is asked to register the application/rpki-publication MIME media type as follows:

MIME media type name: application
MIME subtype name: rpki-publication

Required parameters: None Optional parameters: None

Encoding considerations: binary

Security considerations: Carries an RPKI Publication Protocol

Message, as defined in this document. Interoperability considerations: None Published specification: This document

Applications which use this media type: HTTP

Additional information:
Magic number(s): None
File extension(s):

Macintosh File Type Code(s):

Person & email address to contact for further information:

Rob Austein <sra@hactrn.net>

Intended usage: COMMON

Author/Change controller: Rob Austein <sra@hactrn.net>

Security Considerations

The RPKI publication protocol and the data it publishes use entirely separate PKIs for authentication. The published data is authenticated within the RPKI, and this protocol has nothing to do with that authentication, nor does it require that the published objects be valid in the RPKI. The publication protocol uses a separate Business PKI (BPKI) to authenticate its messages.

Each RPKI publication protocol message is CMS-signed. Because of that protection at the application layer, this protocol does not require the use of HTTPS or other transport security mechanisms.

Although the hashes used in the <publish/> and <withdraw/> PDUs are cryptographic strength, the digest algorithm was selected for convenience in comparing these hashes with the hashes that appear in RPKI manifests. The hashes used in the <publish/> and <withdraw/>

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PDUs are not particularly security-sensitive, because these PDUs are protected by the CMS signatures.

Compromise of a publication server, perhaps through mismanagement of BPKI keys, could lead to a denial-of-service attack on the RPKI. An attacker gaining access to BPKI keys could use this protocol delete (withdraw) RPKI objects, leading to routing changes or failures. Accordingly, as in most PKIs, good key management practices are important.

7. References

7.1. Normative References

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- [RFC5652] Housley, R., "Cryptographic Message Syntax (CMS)", RFC 5652, STD 70, September 2009.
- [RFC6492] Huston, G., Loomans, R., Ellacott, B., and R. Austein, "A Protocol for Provisioning Resource Certificates", RFC 6492, February 2012.
- [SHS] National Institute of Standards and Technology, "Secure Hash Standard", FIPS PUB 180-4, March 2012, http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/fips/fips180-4/fips-180-4.pdf.

7.2. Informative References

[RFC6480] Lepinski, M. and S. Kent, "An Infrastructure to Support Secure Internet Routing", <u>RFC 6480</u>, February 2012.

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