EDU and Mentoring Program Merger and Expansion
draft-kuehne-gen-edu-mentor-00

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Abstract

Education and newcomer orientation activities have existed in the
IETF in various forms from the early 1990s (if not earlier). As the
IETF and the world around us evolves, we are now rethinking what
types of activities are best suited for the future. A mentoring
program also exists at IETF that matches newcomers with experienced
IETF participants. Mentoring is confined to on-site attendees. This
draft proposes a merger of the mentoring and EDU functions as well as
potential new activities such as videos, webcasts, and remote
participation.

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1 Background

Many individuals have graciously contributed their time to talk about
the IETF generally, about the tools that we use in our work, trained
working group chairs, and introduced various technical topics. A key
activity has the Sunday orientation sessions before our meetings
begin, but there's also a wealth of material at the team's web site.
Many presentations have been held in different languages, and
information about the IETF (such as the Tao) also exist in many
languages. In the last couple of years, we have also launched the
mentoring program, pairing new participants with more experienced
ones. There are also related activities, such as the ISOC Fellow and
Policy programs, drawing in additional people to IETF meetings. All
this has made a big impact, but of course we must also continuously
evaluate what methods work best. At the same time we are looking for
new blood for the team.

Our crystal ball for the future says that we will see more and more:

- mixing of product prototyping, open source, and standards efforts
- collaboration and information being over the Internet
- participants that employ remote participation
- working methods that follow general Internet usage

A newcomer's orientation at the meeting is still very useful; we
often get several hundred new participants in our meetings. However,
perhaps the focus of our efforts should be elsewhere. How do we cater
for the open source developer who has not been to the IETF before,
but wants to publish a YANG data model as an RFC. She is on a mission
to implement a feature, and waiting for the next meeting may be a
burden. Can we do something to enable people to join IETF efforts
with a lower level of effort, or with more targeted help for their
specific circumstances? And can we provide our educational efforts in
a modern Internet fashion? And can we employ economies of scale, so
that we would only have to do things once and then they can be
replicated many times?

2 EDU Team

2.1 EDU Team History

The IETF Education (EDU) Team, a project organized within the General
Area, manages the internal education efforts of the IETF. Its efforts
are focused primarily on education for IETF participants and leaders.
Historically, each Sunday before the week of IETF meetings, an
introductory class for newcomers would be held. In 2004, a decision
was made to widen the curriculum offered by the EDU team, and today

typically four different tutorials are held. The EDU team also holds a lunchtime session for current Working Group chairs on selected topics.

2.2 EDU Mission, Scope, Current Activities

The mission of the IETF education activities are defined as follows:

The EDU team manages the internal educational activities of the IETF with the goal of improving the effectiveness of IETF operations. We strive to improve the effectiveness of IETF leaders and participants by offering training sessions and educational materials that clarify their roles and responsibilities and prepare them to be more effective in their roles.

Following this mission, two types of tutorials are offered:

- Process-oriented tutorials, like the newcomers tutorial or tutorials on how to use the IETF tools or how to write an RFC.- Technical tutorials that cover certain technical topics widely relevant for IETF participants such as privacy, security, routing and wireless. In particular, the EDU Team aims for topics where specialist knowledge might affect the work of multiple different working groups.

Some time ago, the EDU Team started a series of high-level overviews of the IETF areas. Tutorials can be suggested by anyone.

A list of all tutorials, including slides and meetecho recordings, can be found on the EDU Team's web site: http://www.ietf.org/edu/. The EDU Team also maintains a wiki: http://wiki.tools.ietf.org/group/edu/wiki

3 Mentoring Program

3.1 Mentoring Program History

The mentoring program was started by Alissa Cooper and Brian Haberman in 2013.

3.2 Mentoring Program Mission, Scope, Current Activities

The goal of the IETF Mentoring Program is to match experienced IETF participants with newcomers in order to aid their integration into the IETF community through advice, help, and collected wisdom. The guidance provided by the mentors should speed up the time it takes for newcomers to become active, contributing members of the IETF.

Currently, the mentoring program operates only at IETF meetings.

If a mentee signs up with enough advance notice (3 weeks or so before the conference), then the IETF Secretariat will arrange for a web-based conference call between the mentor and mentee.

Currently, the matching of mentor and mentees is done by volunteer coordinators assisted by the IETF Secretariat. The tracking and assignments are based on a relatively crude system (i.e. XCel spreadsheet). Work is being done to create a set of web pages to assist in this area.

4 Plans and Ideas for the Future

4.1 Merge Mentoring and EDU Teams

Since both activities have a similar mission and are meant to prepare attendees for an effective participation in the IETF processes, we consider to merge the EDU Team and the Mentoring Programme and to organize the Mentoring Programme as an activity of the EDU team.

4.2 Videos / Webinars

We propose to organize online webinars and/or short videos as an introduction to an area, Internet draft or a working group (WG). These sessions would provide an overview of the topic, position the area or the WG in the overall context of the IETF and highlight any specific hot topics or drafts currently being worked on.

Once recorded in high quality fashion, anything that we do will build up a library of material that can be used over and over again. And viewed by anyone, including those busy people who may not have time to attend a session on Sundays. Delivered on a modern Internet platform, these videos can be easily distributed, shared and pointed to, without much effort from the IETF's side. Having more (easily digestible) information available online and providing more context, would help new participants to get familiar with the IETF. It would make it easier to find their way into the IETF workings and identify the areas and WGs they are interested in. These videos or webinars could be used as a stepping stone from which people can then dive deeper into certain drafts and documents. It could also spark interest in other communities that are not necessarily involved in the IETF at the moment, for instance the open source community or the network operators operator's community.

Videos can also be beneficial to more experienced IETF participants.

The webinars could act as preparation for face-to-face meetings. It could help meeting participants to be more prepared and active at the meetings themselves.

This, in turn, could be useful for WG chairs as well if those attending the meetings (or being active on the mailing list) have specific a certain background knowledge. It could potentially increase the quality of WG meetings and drafts and provide more fruitful discussions. It could also help to attract more participants and encourage them to get involved. Having videos that explain "how we got here" for a particular group or draft will be very helpful to encourage participation in a WG by people who may not know all the history. So hopefully, this will particularly help younger people, women, and the non-western world.

[4.3](#) Topic Videos

The second idea is focused on more targeted topics. Previously, we've used most of our resources on fairly generic, broad topics. Such as the overall IETF orientation. Could we have 5-10 minute videos on how to submit a data model to the IETF, TCP buffer bloat or what the UTA working group is doing?

[4.4](#) Remote Participation

Many groups have a regional presence. It may be possible to have locations (perhaps at Universities) at various places in the world where people could go physically and participate in IETF meetings remotely -- but together. It is not as good as being at IETF itself but there is still face-to-face contact. In fact, maybe the regional group might decide to focus on one WG or set of drafts and all watch the appropriate videos together the day before and then think about how to comment.

[4.5](#) Topic Focused Mentoring

Mentors who could guide use of the videos to help someone learn a topic.

[4.6](#) Future of Sunday tutorials

In this context we would also like to discuss the future of the Sunday tutorials. Do we want to keep them as they are? Do we only want to keep the Newcomers tutorial? Some people suggested that this is actually not the best time for newcomers to learn about the IETF structure (it's either too late or too early).

Do we want to keep the face-to-face tutorials or maybe use the time

for some sort of advice and consultation sessions? Or maybe do some
sort of webinars with people in the room?

5 Organizational Structure

With all these additional activities, the EDU team needs to be broken
into four functions:

1. Current EDU activities
2. Current Mentoring Activities
3. Video Team
4. Remote Participation

Each will need to have the functions defined and people to staff it.

6 IANA Considerations

There are no IANA considerations.

7 Security Considerations

There are no security considerations.

8 References

8.1 Informative References

http://www.internetsociety.org/articles/news-ietf-edu-team

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