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Suggestions to Streamline the IETF Process
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Abstract

The intent is to document problems in the IETF process and to suggest simple solutions that can be easily implemented and do not require major changes in the IETF organisation, following the value of "running code".

1. Use of keyword

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 [RFC 2119](#).

2. Document Structure

This first version of this document was written during the presentations of the Atlanta ietf plenary on the subject of evolutionizing the IETF. It started with the author personal views of problems and solutions and then was revised based on feedback.

The document is structured in the following way: for each problem, a problem statement is written and one or many solutions is listed. Problem statements are labeled and numbered with P## and suggested solutions with S## in order to identify them when discussing. P## and S## numbering are independant each other and are not ordered in any specific way.

3. Problem Statements and Suggested Solutions

- o P1: WG chairs that do not understand the process cannot use the tools available to them most effectively, and may bias or delay the outcome of the process.

S1: WG chairs MUST be formed and know the details of the process. New wg chairs MUST attend to wg chair "course" on their first IETF meeting as chairs

- o P2: Groups work very slowly if the chair is not paying attention, fore example when WG chairs are busy with their own life/work.

S2: a wg SHOULD have 2 wg chairs

- o P3: WG charters and requirements are not clear at the beginning

S3: before wg is started, the charter AND the requirement document SHOULD HAVE reached consensus.

- o P4: Waiting for IETF meetings to identify/reach consensus sometimes delays too much the advancement of the working group. Judging consensus based on mailing list comments does not usually show the silent majority opinion.

S4: A fair consensus tool between IETF meetings is required. An online voting tool to help sense consensus in the wg between ietf should be available for all wg. (This topic seems contentious in problem-statement mailing list. it could be withdrawn in next version.)

- o P5: The problems in a design that need expertise from other areas to catch are caught late in the process, if at all.

S5: have area experts (i.e. for each area) pre-assigned to each wg. They report to the chairs and AD of the wg, not theirs

- o P6: Lack of transparency: design teams are perceived as a way to bypass the wg, to push forward the opinions of the members of these design teams. Design team member selection is often done behind the scenes.

S6: Instead of using design teams, chairs ask many individuals to write a document on the subject matter, and use the wg procedures for that document.

- o P7: Interim meeting are often called with not enough notice in advance with the important information needed to schedule: agenda, location, dates. This results in important scheduling problems for people who want to attend the meeting. The final result is the absence of people that could give good input.

- * S7: interim meetings should be called with sufficient advance notice (6 weeks min.) which MUST include the proposed agenda, the location (nearest airport at least) and the dates.

- o P8: Some comments are lost without being addressed by document authors. It is hard for others to see what outstanding comments there are.

- * S8: have a formal tracking system to track document comments.

- o P9: Room consensus request are often unclear and do not give good results.

- * S9: any room consensus MUST use hands NOT humms. Questions and choices to vote MUST be written on the screen and the meaning being verified and agreed before proceeding to the consensus pool.

- o P10: Non-English speakers find it easier to read questions from a screen than to be sure they understand a spoken question.

S10: Chairs and proposers MUST write questions/proposals/... on the screen before any discussion

- o P11: The chairs and ADs might be seen to use their status for pushing their own documents or proposals.

- * S11: If a wg chair or AD is an author of a wg doc, he should find a co-author and have his co-author make presentations.

4. Security Considerations

If we don't streamline the IETF process, we might end up either: doing too late standards to secure the Internet or pushing bad unsecure protocols.

5. Acknowledgements

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The new revision of the document was based on suggestions from: Harald Alvestrand.

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