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Nominating Committee Tools Requirements
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Abstract

With the change in the rules for disclosure of nominees, the tools that support the Nominating Committee need to change. Also, given that some of these tools are critical to the Nominating Committee's work, and have critical constraints, it is important to have a clear description of the requirements.

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1. Introduction

With the change in the rules for disclosure of nominees, the tools that support the Nominating Committee (nomcom) need to change. Also, given that some of these tools are critical to the nomcom's work, and have critical constraints, it is important to have a clear description of the requirements.

The document begins with a brief description of the general flow of the processing by the nominating committee. This is included to give context to the following discussions. It is by no means a complete description of all the sequences of events which can occur. Following that, there are three sections describing tool support. The first of these describes the tool components that appear to be necessary for the nominating committee to complete its job in the current environment. The second describes tools which while not strictly necessary, are highly desirable. The third section captures some of the items that nominating committees would like to have available.

It should be noted that there are existing tools, provided by highly effective and valued volunteer labor, which provide many of these needed functions. While the tools need not provide exactly the current user interface, and may well operate differently under the covers, the existing tools are a useful model for understanding how some of these needs can be met.

2. Event Sequence

The sequence of events and actions, and the rules of operation of the IETF Nominating committee (nomcom) are defined in [[RFC3777](#)] and [[RFC5680](#)]. The following is a general description, to provide context for the tools descriptions below.

The process starts with the naming of the Nominating Committee chair

by the ISoc President. The chair then lays out a time line, and issues a call for volunteers for the nominating committee.

The chair collects volunteers, frequently issuing multiple solicitations, as the larger the pool of qualified and willing volunteers, the better. Upon completion, the list of volunteers is published. The community is given a chance to challenge entries on the list, and then a random selection of 10 volunteers is performed. The community is given a chance to object, and then the nomcom is constituted.

The committee begins by working out procedures, getting the list of

openings, the job descriptions, the list of liaisons and adviser, and performing initial organizational work.

Once the openings to be filled are known, the committee, via the chair, issues a call for nominations. Anyone may nominate individuals for positions. Nominations are for specific positions (although the entire IAB is considered one "position", for which multiple people will be selected. There is a list of IESG slots to be filled, a number of IAB slots to be filled, and usually one IAOC slot to be filled. The announcement usually includes the list of incumbents. When nominations are received, the Nomcom chair is responsible for contacting the nominee and determining if they are willing to be considered for the position for which they have been nominated. The list of nominees who have accepted nomination, and the post or posts for which they have accepted nomination, are public information.

In current practice, in parallel with the call for nominations the nominating committee develops a questionnaire for the nominees. Currently, there are three questionnaires, one for IAB nominations, one for IAOC nominations, and one for an IESG nominations. Future committees could create different questionnaires for each IESG slot, or could use one questionnaire for all slots. Nominees are asked to fill out their questionnaire by a given date. While committees will generally be forgiving if asked for a little extra time, failure to respond is usually considered grounds to disregard a nominee. The questionnaire responses are confidential to the nominating committee. Portions of them may be shared with the confirming body, depending upon the procedures worked out between the Nomcom Chair and the

confirming bodies.

All email exchanged among or received by the committee needs to be archived for review under certain circumstances. This archive, like the questionnaire response, feedback, and other information received by the committee must be handled with extreme care to ensure its confidentiality. This is a personnel process.

At some point, the Nominating committee calls for feedback on nominees. The exact time when this is done, and where these messages are be sent, will need to be determined by the Nominating committee. Traditionally, this has not happened until after the nominations were closed, and was sent to a managed list of people in an effort to meet the confidentiality requirements that used to exist relative to the list of nominees. With the procedure change, described in [[RFC5680](#)], it is probably practical to start collecting feedback as soon as the first set of nominee names are made public.

The nominating committee will then undertake various processes

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(interviews, email questions of more people, arm-twisting to get nominees, extensive discussion of substance and form among the volunteers and chair, ... to come to a selection of candidates. It is very common, along the way, for the committee to craft short-lists for various positions.

At various points in this process, the Nomcom Chair will need to confirm the willingness and availability to serve of nominees. Depending upon the stage of the process this may vary from "are you still interested and willing?" to "please confirm that you have management support for the time commitment you have stated for this job." This is mentioned here in case someone sees a way for tools to be helpful to this part.

Once the candidates are selected, the Nomcom Chair writes up the information about the selections, and sends the information to the confirming body. There may be exchanges of email or other discussions. There may be modifications of the list of candidates. Eventually, a set of candidates is confirmed by the confirming body.

[3.](#) Necessary Tools

There must be an email list for the nominating committee work. Anyone in the community must be able to send to this list. There must be a confidential archive for this list. In addition to the archive, the Chair, advisers, liaisons, and volunteer members of the committee must receive email from this list.

Any feedback received by the nominating committee must be stored by the tool with the same confidentiality as the email list itself.

There must be a tool for making the list of nominees who have accepted nomination, and the position(s) for which they are willing to be considered, visible to the IETF community.

There must be provision for repairing errors. Mistakes get made. Certain repairs may require administrative privileges, but there has to be some way to fix things.

Any and all changes to the data should be logged. Even repairs should be logged, so that in the event of dispute there are ways to determine exactly what happened. This log itself needs to be confidential.

[4.](#) Highly Desired Tools

It is extremely useful for the tools to provide explicit support allowing any community member to provide feedback on any listed nominee. This information should be recorded by the system and tied to the person it is about, so as to make it easy for the nominating committee to review all of the feedback about a given person.

If Feedback collection is provided by the tool, it needs to include provision for attributed feedback that identifies the feedback author (the normal case) and anonymous feedback. It is unclear at this time whether the tool should itself anonymize the feedback, whether it should send the feedback to the Chair for handling, or whether it should be marked as anonymous, with provision for the chair to determine who provided the information. In addition, the Chair and

the Adviser must be able to enter feedback either with or without attribution to members of the community.

If there is tool support for collecting feedback, committee members need to also be able to use that to create feedback (as well as, of course, being able to review the feedback that is received.) In case other members are asked to enter anonymous feedback, it would be helpful if they could indicate that when entering feedback.

It can be helpful if the tools can assist the Nomcom Chair with the processing of collecting nominees for positions. This includes keeping track of who has been nominated, for what positions. For each nominee/position pair, it should help send a confirmation, and should track whether a confirmation or turn down has been received. For those nominees who accept, if the committee chooses to use questionnaires it would be helpful if the tool can track whether a questionnaire response has been received.

As a general rule, it would be extremely helpful if information only needed to be entered once. For example, If feedback is received as email, and the system has recorded it as miscellany, it should be possible to tell the system who this feedback is about, and have it properly marked so that it is found when looking for feedback about that person. Similarly, the list of nominees should be handled such that there is no need to reenter people when they accept nomination, and the committees view of nominees should be just a view into that list. Similarly, if the tool assist with pruning lists during the selection processes, these prunings should be marked (in ways that affect what is seen by the nomcom but have no effect on what is seen by the general community) so as to indicate those choices.

Having a suitably confidential Wiki has proven to be extremely helpful to the nominating committee.

[5.](#) Useful Tools

A method to easily collect the volunteers for the nominating committee could be helpful to the Nomcom chair. This could be the base for a simpler mechanism by which names are submitted to the Secretariat for verification, and the verification (or lack there of) is returned. This needs to allow for several corner cases if it is done. The Chair and Secretariat may determine that an initially

invalid volunteer was actually valid. Or the reverse. Also, a volunteer may withdraw for other reasons. If the system is to help with this phase, it needs to allow for flexible updating of the data.

If the chair chooses to use [[RFC3797](#)], the tool could provide the programmatic support for that. (Usage of such support should not be mandatory, as some chairs will want to have stricter verification of the random process. If tools support is provided for the volunteer selection process, it must allow for the chair determining (either by himself, or because of a protest) that certain individuals are disqualified, for example if there are too many volunteers with the same affiliation.

It would be helpful if the feedback collection tool allowed for and encouraged feedback on areas and bodies (the IAB, the IETF as a whole, ...) as well as on specific individuals.

Given that nomcom members can no longer be expected to recognize every person in the community who gets nominated, it would be helpful if the tool had provisions for additional information about the person, such as a photograph, a web page link, or other such fields. This could also be used to provide easy links to the original nomination, the acceptance, and the questionnaire response provided by the nominee.

If the tool is storing and presenting feedback to nomcom members, it is helpful if the tool can present the information in multiple ways. The current tool easily presents the feedback about each person, in time sorted order. It could also be helpful to be able to look at the most recent set of feedback received, across all the nominees. (Currently, one has to open each and every nominee to find any new feedback.)

During its deliberations, the nominating committee will frequently craft lists of people of interest (short-lists) for particular slots. It would be helpful if the tool could easily show the committee those lists. Any such support would need to be confidential.

[6.](#) References

[6.1.](#) Normative References

- [RFC3777] Galvin, J., "IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", [BCP 10](#), [RFC 3777](#), June 2004.
- [RFC5680] Dawkins, S., "The Nominating Committee Process: Open Disclosure of Willing Nominees", [BCP 10](#), [RFC 5680](#), October 2009.

[6.2](#). Informative References

- [RFC3797] Eastlake, D., "Publicly Verifiable Nominations Committee (NomCom) Random Selection", [RFC 3797](#), June 2004.

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