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**IEEE802.15.4 Informational Element encapsulation of 6tisch Join and  
Enrollment Information  
draft-ietf-6tisch-enrollment-enhanced-beacon-04**

**Abstract**

In TSCH mode of IEEE802.15.4 opportunities for broadcasts are limited to specific times and specific channels. Nodes in a TSCH network typically frequently send Enhanced Beacon (EB) frames to announce the presence of the network. This document provides a mechanism by which small details critical for new nodes (pledges) and long sleeping nodes may be carried within the Enhanced Beacon.

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## [1.](#) Introduction

[RFC7554] describes the use of the time-slotted channel hopping (TSCH) mode of [[ieee802154](#)]. As further details in [[RFC8180](#)], an Enhanced Beacon is transmitted during a slot designated a broadcast slot.

### [1.1.](#) Use of [BCP 14](#) Terminology

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [[BCP14](#)] [[RFC2119](#)] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

Other terminology can be found in [[I-D.ietf-6tisch-architecture](#)] in [section 2.1](#).

### [1.2.](#) Layer-2 Synchronization

As explained in [section 6 of \[RFC8180\]](#), the Enhanced Beacon has a number of purposes: synchronization of ASN and Join Metric, timeslot template identifier, the channel hopping sequence identifier, TSCH SlotFrame and Link IE.

The Enhanced Beacon (EB) is used by nodes already part of a TSCH network to announce its existence. Receiving an EB allows a Joining



Node (pledge) to learn about the network and synchronize to it. The EB may also be used as a means for a node already part of the network to re-synchronize [[RFC7554](#)].

There are a limited number of timeslots designated as a broadcast slot by each router. These slots are rare, and with 10ms slots, with a slot-frame length of 100, there may be only 1 slot/s for the beacon.

### **1.3. Layer-3 synchronization IPv6 Router solicitations and advertisements**

At layer 3, [[RFC4861](#)] defines a mechanism by which nodes learn about routers by listening for multicasted Router Advertisements (RA). If no RA is heard within a set time, then a Router Solicitation (RS) may be multicast, to which an RA will be received, usually unicast.

Although [[RFC6775](#)] reduces the amount of multicast necessary to do address resolution via Neighbor Solicitation messages, it still requires multicast of either RAs or RS. This is an expensive operation for two reasons: there are few multicast timeslots for unsolicited RAs; if a pledge node does not hear an RA, and decides to send a RS (consuming a broadcast aloha slot with unencrypted traffic), unicast RS may be sent in response.

This is a particularly acute issue for the join process for the following reasons:

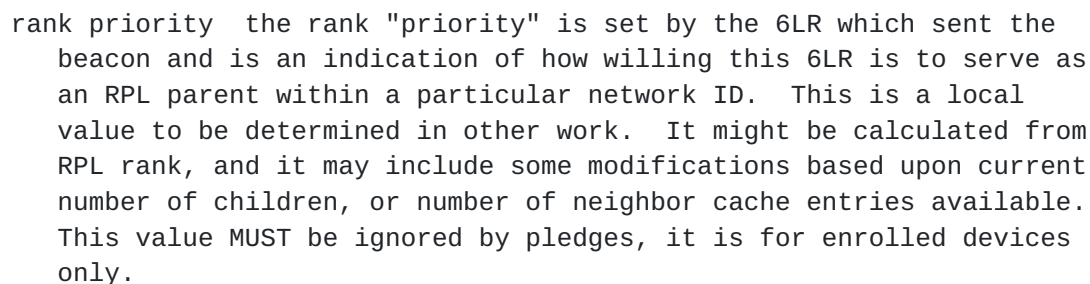
1. use of a multicast slot by even a non-malicious unauthenticated node for a Router Solicitation may overwhelm that time slot.
2. it may require many seconds of on-time before a new pledge hears a Router Solicitation that it can use.
3. a new pledge may listen to many Enhanced Beacons before it can pick an appropriate network and/or closest Join Assistant to attach to. If it must listen for a RS as well as find the Enhanced Beacon, then the process may take a very long time.

## **2. Protocol Definition**

[RFC8137] creates a registry for new IETF IE subtypes. This document allocates a new subtype.

The new IE subtype structure is as follows. As explained in [[RFC8137](#)] the length of the Sub-Type Content can be calculated from the container, so no length information is necessary.







- R the Router Advertisement R-flag is set if the sending node will act as a Router for host-only nodes that need addressing via unicast Router Solicitation messages.
- P if the Proxy Address P-flag is set, then the lower 64-bits of the Join Proxy's Link Layer address follows the network ID. If the Proxy Address bit is not set, then the Link Layer address of the Join Proxy is identical to the Layer-2 8-byte address used to originate this enhanced beacon. In either case, the layer-2 address of any IPv6 traffic to the originator of this beacon may use the layer-2 address which was used to originate the beacon.

join-proxy interface ID if the P bit is set, then 64 bits (8 bytes) of address are present. This field provides the suffix of the Link-Local address of the Join Proxy. The associated prefix is well-known as fe80::/64.

network ID this is an variable length field, up to 16-bytes in size that uniquely identifies this network, potentially among many networks that are operating in the same frequencies in overlapping physical space. The length of this field can be calculated as being whatever is left in the Information Element.

In a 6tisch network, where RPL [[RFC6550](#)] is used as the mesh routing protocol, the network ID can be constructed from a SHA256 hash of the prefix (/64) of the network. That is just a suggestion for a default value. In some LLNs where multiple PANIDs may lead to the same management device (the JRC), then a common value that is the same across all PANs MUST be configured.

### **3. Security Considerations**

All of the contents of this Information Element are sent in the clear. The containing Enhanced Beacon is not encrypted.

The Enhanced Beacon is authenticated at the layer-2 level using 802.15.4 mechanisms using the network-wide keying material. Nodes which are enrolled will have the network-wide keying material and can validate the beacon.

Pledges which have not yet enrolled are unable to authenticate the beacons.

### **4. Privacy Considerations**

The use of a network ID may reveal information about the network. The use of a SHA256 hash of the DODAGID, rather than using the DODAGID directly provides some cover the addresses used within the





network. The DODAGID is usually the IPv6 address of the root of the RPL mesh.

An interloper with a radio sniffer would be able to use the network ID to map out the extend of the mesh network.

## 5. IANA Considerations

Allocate a new number TBD-XXX from Registry IETF IE Sub-type ID. This entry should be called 6tisch-Join-Info, and should refer to this document.

## 6. Acknowledgements

Thomas Watteyne provided extensive editorial comments on the document.

## 7. References

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