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The "about" URI Scheme
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Abstract

This document specifies the "about" URI scheme, which is widely used by web browsers and some other applications to designate access to their internal resources, such as settings, application information, hidden built-in functionality, and so on.

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INTERNET DRAFT

The "about" URI Scheme

May 23, 2012

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	URI Scheme Specification	2
2.1.	URI Scheme Syntax	2
2.2.	URI Scheme Semantics	2
2.2.1.	Well-known "about" URIs	3
2.3.	Encoding Considerations	3
3.	"about:blank"	3
4.	Security Considerations	3
5.	IANA Considerations	4
5.1.	URI Scheme Registration	4
5.2.	A Registry for Well-known Tokens	4
5.2.1.	Registration procedure	5
6.	References	5
6.1.	Normative References	5
6.2.	Informative References	6
Appendix A.	Acknowledgments	6
	Authors' Addresses	6

[1.](#) Introduction

This document specifies the "about" Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) scheme. The "about" URI scheme is currently widely used by Web browsers to designate access to their internal resources such as settings, application information, so called "Easter eggs" (i.e. hidden feature or joke in an application).

[2.](#) URI Scheme Specification

[2.1.](#) URI Scheme Syntax

The "about" URI syntactically conforms to the <about-uri> rule below, expressed using Augmented Backus-Naur Form (ABNF) [[RFC5234](#)]:

```

about-uri   = "about:" about-token [ about-query ]
about-token = *pchar
about-query = "?" query
pchar      = <as specified in RFC 3986, Appendix A>
query      = <as specified in RFC 3986, Appendix A>

```

In terms of [RFC 3986](#), <about-token> part corresponds to <hier-part>, and <about-query> to the query component of URI.

[2.2.](#) URI Scheme Semantics

Moonesamy

Expires November 24, 2012

[Page 2]

INTERNET DRAFT

The "about" URI Scheme

May 23, 2012

The resource which a particular "about" URI references is denoted by <about-token> part of the URI. The <about-query> specifies additional information about its handling and/or the information that should be returned by the resource which the URI references.

It is impossible to specify a binding between all the possible tokens and the semantics of "about" URIs that would contain such tokens. Therefore the resource referenced by the URI is generally considered as specific to a Web browser implementation.

[2.2.1.](#) Well-known "about" URIs

Some <about-token>s have been reserved as the behavior when the resource is referenced is well-known. (Well-known tokens).

A well-known "about" URI is a URI that has a well-known token as its <about-token> part. It is recommended that such URIs be handled in accordance with the specification referenced in the Well-known token registry (see [Section 5.2](#)).

Well-known "about" URIs are intended to be registered when there is a need to codify the behavior of particular <about-token>.

[2.3.](#) Encoding Considerations

"about" URIs are subject to encoding rules defined in [RFC 3986](#) [[RFC3986](#)]. For the sake of simplicity, "about" IRIs [[RFC3987](#)] are not permitted.

[3.](#) "about:blank"

This document defines one well-known token: "blank". The URI "about:blank" refers to a resource represented in the browser by a blank page.

4. Security Considerations

Security considerations for URIs are discussed in Section 7 of [RFC 3986](#) [[RFC3986](#)]. However, most of those provisions do not apply to the "about" URI scheme as they are mainly scoped to schemes used in the Internet.

"about" URIs can sometimes refer to sensitive information, such as user passwords stored in a cache, or parameters that, if changed, could affect user's data. The application therefore needs to ensure that the user's data is secured and no threats are imposed by "about"

URIs.

5. IANA Considerations

5.1. URI Scheme Registration

The registration of the "about" URI scheme in the "URI Schemes" registry is requested. The information below is provided according to the guidelines from [RFC 4395](#) [[RFC4395](#)]:

URI scheme name: about

Status: Permanent

URI scheme syntax: see [Section 2.1](#) of RFC xxxx

URI scheme semantics: see [Section 2.2](#) of RFC xxxx

URI scheme encoding considerations: see [Section 2.3](#) of RFC xxxx

Applications that use the scheme: "about" URIs are predominantly Web browsers.

Security considerations: see [Section 4](#) of RFC xxxx

Contact: IETF Applications Area Directors <app-ads@tools.ietf.org>

Author/Change controller: IESG <iesg@ietf.org> (on behalf of the IETF)

References: see [Section 5](#) of RFC xxxx

[RFC Editor: Please replace xxxx with assigned RFC number]

[5.2.](#) A Registry for Well-known Tokens

This document creates the '"about" URI Well-known Tokens' registry.

The registry entries consist of three fields: Well-known Token, Description and Reference. The Well-known Token field has to conform to <about-token> production defined in [Section 2.1](#). The initial set of assignments is as follows:

Special-Purpose Token	Description	Reference
blank	Used in "about" URIs to refer to	RFC xxxx

	blank page.	
--	-------------	--

[5.2.1.](#) Registration procedure

The registration policy for this registry is "First Come First Served" as described in [RFC 5226](#) [[RFC5226](#)]. The registrant of the token should provide the information mentioned in the following registration template:

- o Registered Token: The desired special-purpose token to be used in "about" URIs.
- o Intended usage: A short description of how "about" URIs with the registered token is handled including information about the referenced resource.
- o Contact/Change controller: Person (including contact information) authorized to change this registration.
- o Specification: A stable reference to a document which specifies the registered "about" URI. The question of interoperability does

not arise. The key motivation is to have a reference to a specification documenting well-known behavior of the "about" URI in Web browsers. As a rule of thumb if the behavior is common to two or more Web browser implementations it can be considered as well-known.

The following is a template for "blank" token:

- o Registered Token: blank
- o Intended usage: The <about:blank> URI references a blank page.
- o Contact/Change controller: IESG <iesg@ietf.org> (on behalf of IETF).
- o Specification: RFC xxxx. [RFC Editor: Please replace xxxx with assigned RFC number]

[6.](#) References

[6.1.](#) Normative References

- [RFC3986] Berners-Lee, T., Fielding, R., and L. Masinter, "Uniform Resource Identifier (URI): Generic Syntax", STD 66, [RFC 3986](#), January 2005.
- [RFC5226] Narten, T. and H. Alvestrand, "Guidelines for Writing an IANA Considerations Section in RFCs", [BCP 26](#), [RFC 5226](#), May 2008.

Moonesamy

Expires November 24, 2012

[Page 5]

INTERNET DRAFT

The "about" URI Scheme

May 23, 2012

- [RFC5234] Crocker, D., Ed., and P. Overell, "Augmented BNF for Syntax Specifications: ABNF", STD 68, [RFC 5234](#), January 2008.

[6.2.](#) Informative References

- [RFC3987] Duerst, M. and M. Suignard, "Internationalized Resource Identifiers (IRIs)", [RFC 3987](#), January 2005.
- [RFC4395] Hansen, T., Hardie, T., and L. Masinter, "Guidelines and Registration Procedures for New URI Schemes", [BCP 35](#), [RFC 4395](#), February 2006.

[Appendix A.](#) Acknowledgments

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