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A URN Namespace for IETF Documents
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Abstract

A system for Uniform Resource Names (URNs) must be capable of supporting new naming systems. As an example of how a new namespace may be proposed, this document presents a naming system based on the RFC family of documents (RFCs, STDs, and FYIs) developed by the IETF and published by the RFC editor and the minutes of working groups (WG) and birds of a feather (BOF) meetings that occur during IETF conferences. This namespace can be supported within the URN framework and the currently proposed syntax for URNs.

[1](#). Namespace Syntax

Consistent with the URN syntax specification [[1](#)], each namespace must specify syntax related information that is specific to that namespace. This section covers these specifications.

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[1.1.](#) Namespace Identifier (NID)

The namespace identifier for this namespace is "ietf".

[1.2.](#) Namespace Specific String (NSS)

The Namespace Specific String has the following ABNF [\[2\]](#) specification:

NSS = (family ":" number) / ("mtg-" number "-" wgbofname)

family = "rfc" / "std" / "fyi"

number = 1*DIGIT

wgbofname = 1*LETDIGIT

LETDIGIT = DIGIT / %x41..%x5a / %x61..%x7a

DIGIT = %x30..%x39

The ABNF specification for "family" is based on the current documents in the RFC family. As new document series are added to the IETF family by the IESG (or its successor), this ABNF specification will need to be updated. Any system intended to resolve names for this namespace should be written with the awareness that a new document series may be introduced at any time.

The ABNF specification for "wgbofname" is based on the current and past abbreviations for working groups and BOFs in the IETF. If a working group or BOF is created that used characters outside the range of this ABNF specification, this specification will need to be updated. Any system intended to resolve names for this namespace should be written with the awareness that this could occur at any time.

[1.3.](#) Assignment of URNs in this Namespace

URNs are assigned in the namespace in two ways. The first is when a new RFC, FYI or STD is passed by the IESG and published by the RFC Editor. This new document will have a new series number and will therefore define a new URN. The document mappings maintained by the RFC Editor (the index files "rfc-index.txt", "fyi-index.txt", "std-index.txt") are defined to be the definitive statement of the

assignment of RFC Family URNs in this namespace.

The second way a URN is assigned is when a working group or birds of a feather files meeting minutes as part of an IETF conference. The list of minutes maintained by the IETF for each working group and

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conference in the subtree pointed at by the URL <ftp://ietf.org/ietf/is> is considered the definitive assignment of URNs for working group or birds of a feather minutes.

[1.4.](#) Additional Reserved Characters

No characters in addition to those specified in [\[1\]](#) are reserved by this namespace.

[1.5.](#) Additional Lexical Equivalence Relations

Note that the entire URN is case-insensitive, because of the definition of the NSS.

[1.6.](#) Functional Equivalence Relations

Rules for equivalence in this namespace are embedded in the document mappings maintained by the RFC Editor (the index files "rfc-index.txt", "fyi-index.txt", "std-index.txt"). A resource is equivalent to the set of resources implied by the "(Also...)" construct in these mappings. As an example, the URN "urn:ietf:rfc:1661" is equivalent to the URN "urn:ietf:std:51" because the "rfc-index.txt" map shows that [RFC 1661](#) is also STD 51. However, the URN "urn:ietf:std:51" is equivalent to the SET of URNs "urn:ietf:rfc:1661" and "urn:ietf:rfc:1662" since the "std-index.txt" shows that STD 51 is also [RFC 1661](#) and [RFC 1662](#). Therefore, a resolver receiving a N2R request for "urn:ietf:std:51" MUST return either STD 51 or BOTH [RFC 1661](#) and [RFC 1662](#).

[2.](#) Comments

Readers will notice that this namespace does not include internet drafts. While these documents are published by the internet drafts editor, they were excluded because they do not provide persistent resources to refer to (all internet drafts expire after six months). This is as opposed to the RFC family of documents which never expire

(an RFC may be obsoleted or superseded but the actual RFC document itself does not expire).

[3.](#) Security Considerations

Because this namespace defines no additional reserved characters, it does not add any security considerations beyond those inherent from the existence of the reserved characters from [\[1\]](#). Further, the definition of the NSS above does not use any of the reserved characters from [\[1\]](#), which means that resolvers for this namespace may be considered "secure" in the sense that any escaping of characters in the NSS MUST result in the resolver indicating that the

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URN has incorrect syntax.

[4.](#) Acknowledgments

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[4.](#) References

Request For Comments (RFC) and Internet Draft documents are available from <URL:ftp://ftp.internic.net> and numerous mirror sites.

[1] R. Moats, "URN Syntax," [RFC 2141](#), May 5, 1997.

[2] D. Crocker, P. Overell, "Augmented BNF for Syntax Specifications: ABNF," Internet Draft (work in progress), January 1997.

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