Observations on the experience and nature of Large Interim Meetings
draft-jaeggli-interim-observations-01

Abstract

   Planning, particpipation and conclusions from the experience of
   participating in the IETF LIM activity on september 29th 2012.

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1. Introduction

   The genesis of this draft was the experience of planning and
   participating in the so called IETF LIM (Large Interim Meeting) held
   adjacent to the fall RIPE meeting on the 29th of September 2012.
   Three working groups met, OPSEC, V6OPS and SIDR. It is intended that
   the draft cover plannning, at the meeting, and an attempt at some
   conclusions based on the experience.

   The fact that the draft represents the vantage point of a single
   person at this time necessarily limits the scope of the draft and
   undoubtedly as result some key elements of the planning and
   motivation will be missed. The Large Interim Meeting is the product
   of efforts over a number of years by multiple parties including the
   ISOC Board, IETF management (Chair, IESG, IAB, IAOC, IAD) working
   group chairs and probably others. To the extent that this draft can
   be made better through the input of others I would invite
   contributions and criticism.

   The LIM was the attempt that I am aware of an interim meeting
   scheduled by IETF management for the purposes of accumulating interim
   meetings in a common location rather that scheduled by working-group
   participants, chairs nad coordinating ADs. It is not the first
   attempt at such a meeting. It's status therefore an experiment is
   worth bearing mind in understanding the rest of the text.

1.1. date and location

   The LIM was scheduled to coencide with the end of RIPE 65 and Occured
   on Saturday Sept 29th 2012. Ripe 65 was at the Hotel Okura
   Amseterdam from September 24th-28th. It is my understanding that
   coordination with the RIPE program committee occured only After IETF
   84 (an IAB member meber also happens toserve on the RIPE program
   committee)

2. Planning

   It is, my understanding that discussion of the possbility of a LIM
   style meeting occured early2011 if not before. The v6ops chairs were
   asked at various times to consider particpation in such a meeting in
   other potential locations. The discsussion related to this interim
   meeting commenced in June. The stated rational for targeting v6ops
   involvement in a large interim was the volume of work that we process
   during and between meetings.

2.1. Discussion leading up to LIM

   Some questions existed in the planning phase as to the nature of the
   logisitical support provided by the secretatit for the meeting as
   well as, remote participation, and the actual timinng of the meeting.
   Unlike a traditional interim the responsibility for satisfying these
   details was for better or worse in the hands of the secretariat,
   which meant a reduced workload for the chairs but it also left some
   details undecided until they could be announced, a hotel contract for
   the meeting rooms wasn't completed until after the 4 week window for
   announcing and interim meeting had passed

2.2. Plannning for meeting and announcement

   A show of hands and subsequent mailing list followup were done to
   gauge v6ops interest in participation in an interim meeting. Roughly
   50 participants, mostly active ones indicated significant interest in
   an interim collocated with RIPE 65 which we deemed sufficient to
   proceed. Superficially only a fraction of the v6ops attendees are
   represented by the interested segment however when the numbers are
   mapped against active participants and draft authors, interested
   participants in the interim represent a bigger purportion of that
   group

   Two of the three scheduled meetings were given 4 hour windows, the
   third SIDR (which routinely has interim meetings) had effectivetly
   the entire day.

2.3. Draft Deadlines

   Immediately after IETF 84 the working group chairs of v6ops proposed
   an interim draft deadline 2 weeks out from the interim meeting
   (Saturday the 15th). This was to be the basis for the acceptance of
   revised or new drafts onto the agenda.

3. Meeting

   Two OPS area working groups met, OPSEC and V6OPS, Effectively one
   after the other albiet seperated by lunch.

3.1. Running

   Both meetings that I participated in came in substantially below
   their alloted time. V6OPS was allocated 4 hours and completed in
   two. SIDR broke for lunch, returned, and finished early however it
   used a substantially higher percentage of the allocated time.
   Possibly because it was a Saturday remote participation was

effectively non-existant

[3.2]. Remote Participation

Remote participation was supported by volunteers from meetecho using
their own application. Hotel okura wireless infrastrucuture was used
to support the meeting. An outage of the hotel network was observed
during the opsec meeting with the result that remote participation
would have been interupted for about 10 minutes had there been any to
speak of.

[3.3]. Participants

Interim Meeting registration ended up being about 40 participants, 2
days prior to the meeting that number was 23, provisions had been
made for around 100 attendees.

[4]. Observations and Conclusions

Despite my personal misgivings with V6OPS as patient zero for the
large interim meeting concept, Once committed we endeavored to make
the meeting work for the participants that took the time out of their
weekend to attend, or as was my case, traveled specifically for the
Interim meeting. As an experiment I think a lot of things are worth
doing once and I hope that some lessons can be derived from the
experience that have value for future interims.

[4.1]. Incentives for participation

One osbervation that I would make about the interim submission
deadline (and it's relative failure) is that it appears that authors
who are not planning to attend a meeting are less inclined to revise
a document in support a meeting they are not attending. The
corollary is a that authors planning on a attending a meeting will
rev their documents, or possibly that a revised document is
justification to attend.

[4.2]. Organization in conjunction with other events

This particular conjunction was proposed several months prior to
coordination with the RIPE program committee, given that the RIPE
meeting traditionally ends on Friday with Lunch it is possible that
tighter coordination with the RIPE organization could have coupled
the event more directly. RIPE is long like an IETF meeting and if
the goal of a conjoint interim is evangelism cross pollination or
outreach (is it?) then fitting more directly into the program would
probably have better results. As it is the bulk of the attendees in

   OPSEC and v6ops were there to attend RIPE as well or attended RIPE
   and stayed for the interim.

[4.3](). Implications for working groups/design teams of varying sizes

   V6ops attendance at an IETF meeting is typically in excess of 200
   attendees. An interim meeting that attracts 25 of those and
   minuscule remote participation is necessarily exclusionary by default
   if not deliberately. If useful work that advances drafts, gets done,
   is that exclusivity a bad thing? It's not useful for measuring
   meaningful consensus.

   The history of interim meetings has illustrative examples of working
   groups or design teams, with numerus interim meetings (IP storage/
   NFSv4, Lemonade, 6lowpan, Behave SIDR etc) that demonstrate the
   utility of frequent physical or virtual interims. It is possible
   that there are properties that make some working groups more
   effective at utilizing interims than others.

[4.4](). Mobilizing ADs

   Area director's were rather well represent at the LIM, While the
   attendance of both of our Directors was appreciated I'm not sure that
   it's a good use of their time. In particular if the frequency of
   these events were fixed as some rate in the future, this represents
   an additional workload for which huge benfits due not appear liekly
   to ensue

[4.5](). Outreach

   Some entities related to the IETF clearly have outreach and advocacy
   as part of the mission, Internet Society, IETF chair, Liaisons edu
   team and so forth. It is not clear to me that beyond the scope of
   chartered working group doucments that end up as part of the RFC
   series that working group activities including meetings are well
   suited for use as an outreach mechanism. The IETF meeting as a
   whole, which certainly an opportunity for advancing the work of the
   respective working groups is also an opportunity for cross
   pollination, for the collegial building of consensus that advances
   joint efforts, and to the extent that mini-IETF's do not support
   those activities relative to the three annual meetings their utility
   as outreach tools lacks some degree of legitimacy.

[4.6](). Conclusions

   TBD

[5](). Acknowledgements

   The author would like to thank Ron Bonica, Fred Baker and Jari Arko
   for offering input prior to work on the draft commencing.

[6](). IANA Considerations

   This memo Makes no request of IANA.

[7](). Security Considerations

   No security consequences are envisioned as a proeduct of this draft.

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