

Network Working Group
Internet-Draft
Intended status: Informational
Expires: February 01, 2014

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August 02, 2013

**Characterization of Proposed Standards
draft-kolkman-proposed-standards-clarified-00**

Abstract

This document clarifies the description of the review performed on and the maturity level of IETF Proposed Standard RFCs.

Status of this Memo

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[1. Introduction](#)

[Editor Note: ietf@ietf.org is the mailing-list for discussing this draft.]

In the two decades after publication of [RFC 2026](#) [[RFC2026](#)] the IESG has evolved its review processes of Proposed Standard RFCs and thus [RFC 2026 section 4.1.1](#) no longer accurately describes IETF Proposed Standards.

This document updates the characterization of Proposed Standards but does not speak to or alter the standard maintenance procedures from [RFC 2026](#) and [RFC 6410](#) [[RFC6410](#)].

[2. IESG Reveiw of Proposed Standards](#)

The entry-level maturity for the standards track is "Proposed Standard". A specific action by the IESG is required to move a specification onto the standards track at the "Proposed Standard" level.

Initially it was assumed that most IETF technical specifications would progress through a series of maturity stages starting with Proposed Standard, then progressing to Draft Standard then, finally, to Internet Standard (see [RFC 2026 section 6](#)). Over time, for a number of reasons, this progression became less common. In response, the IESG strengthened its review of Proposed Standards, basically operating as if the Proposed Standard was the last chance for the IESG to ensure the quality of the technology and the clarity of the standards document. The result was that IETF Proposed Standards approved over the last decade or more have had extensive review. Because of this change in review assumptions, IETF Proposed Standards should be considered to be at least as mature as final standards from other standards development organizations. In fact, the IETF review is more extensive than is done in other SDOs due to the cross-area technical review performed by the IESG.

[3. Characterization of Specification](#)

[Section 3.1](#) updates [RFC 2026 Section 4.1.1](#). [Section 3.2](#) is a verbatim copy of the characterization of Internet Standards from [RFC 2026 Section 4.1.3](#).

[3.1](#). Characterization of IETF Proposed Standard Specifications

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The entry-level maturity for the standards track is "Proposed Standard". A specific action by the IESG is required to move a specification onto the standards track at the "Proposed Standard" level.

A Proposed Standard specification is stable, has resolved known design choices, is well-understood, has received significant community review, and appears to enjoy enough community interest to be considered valuable. However, as with all technical standards, further experience might result in a change or even retraction of the specification in the future.

Usually, neither implementation nor operational experience is required for the designation of a specification as a Proposed Standard. However, such experience is highly desirable, and will usually represent a strong argument in favor of a Proposed Standard designation.

The IESG may require implementation and/or operational experience prior to granting Proposed Standard status to a specification that materially affects the core Internet protocols or that specifies behavior that may have significant operational impact on the Internet.

A Proposed Standard will have no known technical omissions with respect to the requirements placed upon it. Proposed Standards are of such quality that implementations can be deployed in the Internet. However, as with all technical specifications, Proposed Standards may be revised if problems are found or better solutions are identified, when experiences with deploying implementations of such technologies at scale is gathered.

3.2. Characteristics of Internet Standards

An Internet Standard is characterized by a high degree of technical maturity and by a generally held belief that the specified protocol or service provides significant benefit to the Internet community.

4. Security Considerations

This document does not directly affect the security of the Internet.

5. IANA Considerations

There are no actions for IANA.

6. References

[RFC2026] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision

3", [BCP 9](#), [RFC 2026](#), October 1996.

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[RFC6410] Housley, R., Crocker, D. and E. Burger, "Reducing the Standards Track to Two Maturity Levels", [BCP 9](#), [RFC 6410](#), October 2011.

[Appendix A](#). Acknowledgements

This document is inspired by a discussion at the open microphone session during the technical plenary at IETF 87. Thanks for [to be added] for motivation, input and review.

[Appendix B](#). Internet Draft Editing History

This section is to assist reviewers of this document. It will be removed at publication as RFC.

[Appendix B.1](#). Version 00

Introduction and motivation

Verbatim copy from [section 4.1.1](#) and 4.1.3 of [[RFC2026](#)] of the Proposed and ant Internet Draft characterization into [Section 3.1](#) and [Section 3.2](#)

Modification of paragraphs of the Proposed Standards characterization, namely:

OLD:

A Proposed Standard specification is generally stable, has resolved known design choices, is believed to be well-understood, has received significant community review, and appears to enjoy enough community interest to be considered valuable. However, further experience might result in a change or even retraction of the specification before it advances.

NEW:

A Proposed Standard specification is stable, has resolved known design choices, is well-understood, has received significant community review, and appears to enjoy enough community interest to be considered valuable. However, as with all technical standards, further experience might result in a change or even retraction of the specification in the future.

OLD:

A Proposed Standard should have no known technical omissions with respect to the requirements placed upon it. However, the IESG may waive this requirement in order to allow a specification to advance

to the Proposed Standard state when it is considered to be useful and necessary (and timely) even with known technical omissions.

Implementors should treat Proposed Standards as immature specifications. It is desirable to implement them in order to gain experience and to validate, test, and clarify the specification. However, since the content of Proposed Standards may be changed if problems are found or better solutions are identified, deploying implementations of such standards into a disruption-sensitive environment is not recommended.

NEW:

A Proposed Standard will have no known technical omissions with respect to the requirements placed upon it. Proposed Standards are of such quality that implementations can be deployed in the Internet. However, as with all technical specifications, Proposed Standards may be revised if problems are found or better solutions are identified, when experiences with deploying implementations of such technologies at scale is gathered.

[Appendix B.2](#). Editors versioning info

\$Id: [draft-kolkman-proposed-standards-clarified.xml](#) 4 2013-08-02
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