

Network Working Group
Internet-Draft
Updates: [3967](#) (if approved)
Intended status: Best Current Practice
Expires: February 08, 2017

B. Leiba
Huawei Technologies
August 09, 2016

**Updating when Standards Track Documents may Refer Normatively to
Documents at a Lower Level
draft-leiba-3967upd-downref-00**

Abstract

[RFC 3967](#) specifies a process for allowing normative references to documents at lower maturity levels ("downrefs"), which involves calling out the downref explicitly in the last call notice. That requirement has proven to be unnecessarily strict, and this document updates [RFC 3967](#), allowing the IESG more flexibility in accepting downrefs in Standards Track documents.

Status of this Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of [BCP 78](#) and [BCP 79](#).

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-Drafts is at <http://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/>.

Internet-Drafts are draft documents valid for a maximum of six months and may be updated, replaced, or obsoleted by other documents at any time. It is inappropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference material or to cite them other than as "work in progress."

This Internet-Draft will expire on February 08, 2017.

Copyright Notice

Copyright (c) 2016 IETF Trust and the persons identified as the document authors. All rights reserved.

This document is subject to [BCP 78](#) and the IETF Trust's Legal Provisions Relating to IETF Documents (<http://trustee.ietf.org/license-info>) in effect on the date of publication of this document. Please review these documents carefully, as they describe your rights and restrictions with respect to this document. Code Components extracted from this document must include Simplified BSD License text as described in Section 4.e of the [Trust Legal Provisions](#) and are provided without warranty as described in the Simplified BSD License.

1. Introduction

[RFC3967] notes the importance of assuring that normative references from Standards Track and Best Current Practice (BCP) documents are appropriately mature, and specifies a process for allowing normative references to documents at lower maturity levels ("downrefs"). That process starts at Last Call (see [Section 3 of \[RFC3967\]](#)):

For Standards Track or BCP documents requiring normative reference to documents of lower maturity, the normal IETF Last Call procedure will be issued, with the need for the downward reference explicitly documented in the Last Call itself. Any community comments on the appropriateness of downward references will be considered by the IESG as part of its deliberations.

[Section 2 of \[RFC3967\]](#) lists some conditions under which downrefs may make sense. In addition to those, it has become common for working groups to produce foundational documents at Informational status, which contain important information such as terminology definitions and architectural design and considerations, and those documents are often needed as normative references in the Standards Track protocol documents that follow.

The requirement to explicitly mention the downrefs and the need for them in the Last Call message has proven to be unnecessarily restrictive, and has often resulted in unnecessary repetitions of Last Call, with the corresponding delay and with no real benefit.

[2.](#) The IESG's Responsibility with Respect to Downrefs

The process in [RFC 3967](#) is hereby updated to specify that explicitly documenting the downward references in the Last Call message is strongly recommended, but not required. The responsible AD should still check for downrefs before sending out the last call notice, but any need to repeat a last call if this has not been done is at the discretion of the IESG.

This gives the IESG the responsibility to determine the actual maturity level of the downward reference with respect to the document at hand, and to decide whether or not it is necessary to explicitly ask the IETF community for comments on the downref on a case by case basis. In making that decision, the IESG should take into account the general discussion in [RFC 3967](#).

[3.](#) IANA Considerations

There are no IANA considerations for this document.

[4.](#) Security Considerations

This document is purely procedural, and there are no related security

considerations.

5. Normative References

Leiba

Expires February 08, 2017

[Page 2]

[RFC3967] Bush, R. and T. Narten, "Clarifying when Standards Track Documents may Refer Normatively to Documents at a Lower Level", [BCP 97](#), [RFC 3967](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3967, December 2004, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3967>>.

Author's Address

Barry Leiba
Huawei Technologies

Phone: +1 646 827 0648

Email: barryleiba@computer.org

URI: <http://internetmessagingtechnology.org/>

