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Transitional IMAP capabilities

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A revised version of this draft document will be submitted to the RFC editor as a Proposed Standard for the Internet Community. Discussion and suggestions for improvement are requested, and should be sent to the IMAPEXT Mailing list <ietf-imapext@imc.org>. Distribution of this draft is unlimited.

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Abstract

Software releases can't always wait for some document to become an RFC. As the result some software products are released when they implement a non-final version of an IMAP [[IMAP4](#)] extension. This may cause substantial interoperability problems between clients and servers that implement different revisions of the same document, as syntax and semantics of operations may change substantially between revisions of the same IMAP extension draft.

There is also a need to have transitional IMAP capabilities for

testing purposes.

This document defines a convention for IMAP capability strings that allows to reference an IMAP extension as defined by a particular revision of a draft.

1. Conventions Used in this Document

The keywords "MUST", "MUST NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", and "MAY" in this document when typed in uppercase are to be interpreted as defined in "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels" [[KEYWORDS](#)].

2. Transitional IMAP capabilities

This document reserves a prefix for referencing an IMAP extension as defined by a draft revision. A draft defines a base capability name <EXTENSION>, which will be used when (and if) the document is approved as an RFC. For a draft revision <nn> and a ownership <o> (one of "I" - individual submission or "W" - a WG document) an implementation of the draft that also conforms to this document should advertise a capability "X-DRAFT-<o><nn>-<EXTENSION>".

For example, if <EXTENSION> is URLAUTH and the draft revision number is 09 and it is an individual submission, the advertised capability string would be "X-DRAFT-I09-URLAUTH".

Note that the defined convention MUST NOT be used with SASL capabilities.

One of the advantages of the proposed convention is that an IMAP client can support multiple revisions of the same draft by checking "X-DRAFT-" prefix and then checking the suffix (e.g. "URLAUTH").

<o> field in a transitional capability string helps to cope with a situation when a draft is initially submitted as a individual submission, which is later on accepted as a WG document. Without this field the revision number will go back to "00" when the draft is resubmitted as a WG document.

3. Security Considerations

One of the purposes of this document is to be able to distinguish two implementations that comply with different versions of the same IMAP extension. This might help to improve interoperability, and,

hopefully, security.

It is believed that this extension doesn't raise any additional security concerns not already discussed in [\[IMAP4\]](#).

4. Formal Syntax

The following syntax specification uses the Augmented Backus-Naur Form (ABNF) notation as specified in [\[ABNF\]](#). Non-terminals referenced but not defined below are as defined by [\[IMAP4\]](#).

Except as noted otherwise, all alphabetic characters are case-insensitive. The use of upper or lower case characters to define token strings is for editorial clarity only. Implementations MUST accept these strings in a case-insensitive fashion.

```
capability      =/ transit_capa
                  ; transit_capa falls under "X" prefix

transit_capa    = "X-DRAFT-" ownership revision "-" atom
                  ; MUST NOT be used with SASL capabilities
                  ; starting with "AUTH="

ownership       = "I" / "W"
                  ; "I" means that the draft is an individual
                  ; submission; "W" means a WG document

revision       = 2DIGIT
                  ; 2 digit draft revision number
```

5. Acknowledgments

<<TBD>>

6. Normative references

[KEYWORDS] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", [RFC 2119](#), March 1997.

[ABNF] Crocker, D., and Overell, P. "Augmented BNF for Syntax Specifications: ABNF", [RFC 2234](#), November 1997.

[IMAP4] Crispin, M., "Internet Message Access Protocol - Version 4rev1", [RFC 3501](#), University of Washington, March 2003.

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