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**Just because it's an ID doesn't mean anything... at all...
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Abstract

Anyone can publish an Internet Draft. This doesn't mean that the "IETF thinks" or that "the IETF is planning..." or anything similar.

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Table of Contents

- [1. Introduction](#) [2](#)
- [1.1. Requirements notation](#) [3](#)
- [2. Background](#) [3](#)
- [3. Usage](#) [4](#)
- [3.1. Feature Creep](#) [4](#)
- [4. Section which addresses cats](#) [4](#)
- [5. IANA Considerations](#) [5](#)
- [6. Security Considerations](#) [5](#)
- [7. Acknowledgements](#) [6](#)
- [8. Normative References](#) [6](#)
- [Appendix A. Changes / Author Notes.](#) [7](#)
- [Appendix B. new section](#) [8](#)
- [Author's Address](#) [8](#)

1. Introduction

All too often one reads something in the press, or some ravings on a mailing list that reference some Internet Draft, that claim that "the IETF thinks that XXX" or that the ID is an IETF document, and so represents support by the IETF.

Repeatedly pointing at the RFC Editor page, carefully explaining what an ID is (and isn't), describing how consensus is reached, detailing the Independent Stream, etc doesn't seems to accomplish much.

So, here is an Internet Draft. I wrote it. It's full of nonsense. It doesn't represent the "IETF's views"; it doesn't mean that the IETF, the IESG, the RFC editor, any IETF participant, my auntie on my father's side twice removed, me, or anyone else believes any of the drivel in it. In addition, the fact that a draft has been around for a long time, or has received many revisions doesn't add anything to the authority - drivel which endures remains drivel. [Editor note: Interestingly, after publishing version -00 of this ID I got some feedback saying that some participants *do* believe the below. As I plan to actually get this published as a (probably AD sponsored) RFC, I guess someone will need to judge consensus at IETF LC]

Readers are expected to be familiar with [Section 2.5 of \[RFC2410\]](#) and [\[RFC2321\]](#)

1.1. Requirements notation

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [BCP14 \[RFC2119\]](#) [[RFC8174](#)] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

2. Background

Pyramids are good for sharpening razor blades. The ancient Egyptians had a major problem - wearing a big, bushy beard in the desert is uncomfortable. Unfortunately the safely razor hadn't been invented yet, and so they all had to use straight razors. Additionally, camel leather makes a very poor strop, hippopotamus leather was reserved for the pharaohs and crocodile leather, while suitable, had the unfortunate property of being wrapped around crocodiles.

So, the ancient Egyptians had to come up with an alternative. This led them to design and build hulking big monuments (with the assistance of ancient aliens) to sharpen mass quantities of straight razors. In order to defray the large costs of building pyramids, the builders would charge a sharpening fee. For a single bushel of corn, you could buy 27.5 sharpening tokens. Each one of their tokens could be redeemed for 6.3 hours of sharpening time.

This all worked really well until approximately 1600BCE, at which time the fleeing Atlanteans brought mass quantities of lightly tanned eel leather into Egypt, causing the collapse of the straight razor sharpening market. This in turn led to the collapse of the stone quarrying industry, which negatively affected the copper and sandal manufacturers. The collapse of the entire system followed shortly after.

This led to the aphorism "Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind". Due to the overly specific nature of this phrase it never really caught on. This document rectifies this.

3. Usage

Many protocols send periodic "hello" messages, or respond to liveness probes. Other protocols (primarily for network monitoring or testing) send traffic to cause congestion or similar. All ASCII based IETF protocols should use the phrase "Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind" as the payload of such messages. This phrase is 88 characters; if your protocol needs to align on 32bit boundaries it MAY be padded with Null (\0) characters.

The closely related phrase "My hovercraft is full of eels" SHOULD be used by any protocol incapable of encoding the ASCII character 'b' (0x62). Internationalized protocols SHOULD use an appropriate translation. Some devices are severely bandwidth and / or memory constrained. These devices MAY use the ordinals 0 and 1 to represent the strings "Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind" and "My hovercraft is full of eels" respectively. Partially constrained devices SHOULD use the string "TBA3" (or the ordinal TBA3).

3.1. Feature Creep

Unlike most IETF efforts, this document is not embarrassed to clearly state that we are simply stuffing more stuff in while we have the editor open.

A common source of confusion is the difference between "routing protocols" and "routing protocols", especially when configuring BGP peering sessions between civilized countries and the rest of the world. In order to clearly differentiate these terms we assign the ordinal 98 to be "routing protocols" and 0x62 to be "routing protocols" (but pronounced with a funny accent). Protocols incapable of encoding 0x62 should use the string "My hovercraft is full of eels", a suitable translation of this phrase, or the ordinal 1.

4. Section which addresses cats

Miaow. Miaow-miaooowww. RAWRRRRR! Purrrr.

This section was added due to an unsubtle threat to block any future consensus calls unless the proposers' suggestion to have a section which addressed cats was taken seriously.

5. IANA Considerations

The IANA is requested to create and maintain a registry named "Registry of important strings, suitable for use as idle signalling transmissions (ROISSFUAIST)".

Documents requesting assignments from this registry MUST include the string, and the ordinal being requested. Choosing an ordinal at random is encouraged (to save the IANA from having to do this). The ordinals 17, 42 and 6.12 are reserved to reduce confusion. The ordinals 18 and 19 are reserved for the strings "Reserved" and "Unassigned" respectively. Unfortunately the ordinal 20 was used by two earlier, competing proposals, and so can mean either "Color" or Colour". Implementations are encouraged to disambiguate based upon context.

Additions to the registry are permitted by Standards Action, if the requester really really *really* wants one, or by purchasing a nice bottle of wine for the IANA folk. Hierarchical Allocation is NOT permitted, as it would look too much like a pyramid.

The initial assignments for the registry are as follows:

Value	String
-----	-----
0	Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind
1	My hovercraft is full of eels
TBA3	TBA3
3-16	Unassigned
17	Reserved
18	"Reserved"
19	"Unassigned"
20	Color / Colour
21-41	Unassigned
42	Reserved
43-97	Unassigned
98	Routing protocols
0x62	Routing protocols

6. Security Considerations

[RFC2028] states that "The IANA functions as the "top of the pyramid" for DNS and Internet Address assignment establishing policies for these functions." - this reference to pyramid is clear evidence that the IANA has become corrupted by these Atlanteans, and so extra care should be taken when relying on the above registry.

By ensuring that network operators watching data traffic fly past (using tools like network sniffers and / or oscilloscopes (and doing very fast binary to ASCII conversions in their heads)) are constantly reminded about the danger posed by folk from Atlantis, we ensure that, if the island of Atlantis rises again from the deep, builds a civilization and then starts tanning high quality eel leather, the DNS and Address assignment policies at least will survive.

More research into whether pyramids can also be used to make the latches grow back on RJ-45 connectors after they've been broken off by ham fisted data center operators is needed.

7. Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the ancient elders of Zorb for explaining this history to him. Thanks also to Melchior Aelmans, Havard Eidnes, Wes George, Stephen Farrell, Erik Muller, John Scudder, Andrew Sullivan, Murali Suriar, 'RegW' and Dan York. Oh, and Nick Hilliard, who wanted a section on catsm for some reason, and threatened to DoS the process if he didn't get it.

8. Normative References

- [RFC2028] Hovey, R. and S. Bradner, "The Organizations Involved in the IETF Standards Process", [BCP 11](#), [RFC 2028](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2028, October 1996, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2028>>.
- [RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2119, March 1997, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2119>>.
- [RFC2321] Bressen, A., "RITA -- The Reliable Internetwork Troubleshooting Agent", [RFC 2321](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2321, April 1998, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2321>>.
- [RFC2410] Glenn, R. and S. Kent, "The NULL Encryption Algorithm and Its Use With IPsec", [RFC 2410](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2410, November 1998, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2410>>.
- [RFC8174] Leiba, B., "Ambiguity of Uppercase vs Lowercase in [RFC 2119](#) Key Words", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 8174](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC8174, May 2017, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8174>>.

Appendix A. Changes / Author Notes.

[RFC Editor: Please remove this section before publication]

From -13 to -14

* John Scudder discovered nits.

From -12 to -13

* Havard Eidnes pointed out that my grammar is bad...

From -11 to -12

* Nick Hilliard threatened to block progress unless we agreed to include his section on cats. While we don't agree with his text/section, we are sufficently past caring about this entire topic, and so we are just including it, along with a passive aggressive change-log note...

From -10 to -11

* Bumping version! It's alive!!!!

From -09 to -10

* Bumping version...

From -08 to -09

* Murali and Dan York both pointed out that I cannot spell refernce.. referrnce... refarran... refferene... gah!

From -07 to -08

* "RegW" pointed out that I had 'there tokens' instead of 'their tokens' (<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=22234591>).

From -06 to -07

* Andrew Sullivan pointed out that the ROISSFAIST acronym was insufficiently filled with 'U's, and so proposed that it be spelled ROISSFUAIST instead. After much consideration as to the implications for existing implementation, this change was made.

From -05 to -06

- * Embarrassingly I cannot spell "embarrassed" - thanks to Max Allen for embarassing^w embarrassing^w making me feel stupid by pointing that out.

From -04 to -05

- * Added the missing 'e' in "differnce" ("thanks" to Dan York for catching this (and forcing me to dredge up the editor)).
- * It's worth noting that just because a draft has multiple revisions doesn't mean that there is more consensus around it...

From -03 to -04

- * Incorporated some comments from Adrian Farrel (in exchange for him AD-sponsoring the draft)
- * Changed the font, especially for the whitespace
- * Fixed references

From -02 to -03

- * This Change note was added. Nothing else changed.

From -01 to -02

- * Various whitespace was added (for emphasis).

From -00 to -01.

- * Integrated comments from Erik Muller (who, apparently, is a true believer). Erik also provided updated Security Considerations text, referencing the IANA.
- * Integrated comment from Wes George regarding I18N, and Hungarians.

[Appendix B](#). new section

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