Updated IANA Considerations for Diameter Command Code Allocations

Abstract

   The Diameter base specification, described in RFC 3588, provides a
   number of ways to extend Diameter, with new Diameter commands (i.e.,
   messages used by Diameter applications) and applications as the most
   extensive enhancements. RFC 3588 illustrates the conditions that
   lead to the need to define a new Diameter application or a new
   command code. Depending on the scope of the Diameter extension, IETF
   actions are necessary. Although defining new Diameter applications
   does not require IETF consensus, defining new Diameter commands
   requires IETF consensus per RFC 3588. This has led to questionable
   design decisions by other Standards Development Organizations, which
   chose to define new applications on existing commands -- rather than
   asking for assignment of new command codes -- for the pure purpose of
   avoiding bringing their specifications to the IETF. In some cases,
   interoperability problems were an effect of the poor design caused by
   overloading existing commands.

   This document aligns the extensibility rules of the Diameter
   application with the Diameter commands, offering ways to delegate
   work on Diameter to other SDOs to extend Diameter in a way that does
   not lead to poor design choices.

Status of This Memo

   This is an Internet Standards Track document.

   This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force
   (IETF). It represents the consensus of the IETF community. It has
   received public review and has been approved for publication by the
   Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Further information on
   Internet Standards is available in Section 2 of RFC 5741.

   Information about the current status of this document, any errata,
   and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at
   http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5719.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

   The Diameter Base specification, described in [RFC3588], provides a
   number of ways to extend Diameter, with new Diameter commands (i.e.,
   messages used by Diameter applications) and applications as the most
   extensive enhancements. [RFC3588] illustrates the conditions that
   require the definition of a new Diameter application or a new
   command. Depending on the scope of the Diameter extension, IETF
   actions are necessary. Although defining new Diameter applications
   does not require IETF consensus, defining new Diameter commands
   requires IETF consensus per RFC 3588. This has led to questionable
   design decisions by other Standards Development Organizations (SDOs),
   which chose to define new applications on existing commands -- rather
   than asking for assignment of new command codes -- for the pure
   purpose of avoiding bringing their specifications to the IETF. In
   some cases, interoperability problems were an effect of poor the
   design caused by overloading existing commands.

   This document aligns the extensibility rules for Diameter command
   codes with those defined for Diameter application identifiers and
   offers a consistent way to delegate work on Diameter to other SDOs to
   extend Diameter in a way that does not lead to poor design choices.

This is achieved by splitting the command code space into ranges and providing different allocation policies to them: the first range is reserved for RADIUS backward compatibility, allocation of a command code in the second number range requires IETF review, the third range is utilized by vendor-specific command codes, and finally the last range is for experimental commands. Section 4 provides more details about the command code number ranges, and the different allocation policies are described in [RFC5226].

A revision of RFC 3588 is currently in development in the IETF DIME WG [RFC3588bis]; when approved, it will obsolete RFC 3588 as well as this document. A goal of this document is to provide in advance the change in the command codes allocation policy, so that interoperability problems like the ones described above are avoided as soon as possible.

2. Conventions Used in This Document

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

3. Security Considerations

This document modifies the IANA allocation of Diameter command codes in relationship to RFC 3588. This process change itself does not raise security concerns, but the command code space is split into a standard command code space and a vendor-specific command code space, the latter being allocated on a First Come, First Served basis by IANA at the request of vendors or other standards organizations. Whenever work gets delegated to organizations outside the IETF, there is always the chance that security reviews will be conducted in different manner and that the criteria and style of those reviews will be different than the reviews performed in the IETF. The members of the DIME working group are aware of the risks involved in using different security and quality review processes and of the desire to offload work (e.g., to reduce the workload in the IETF) to other organizations. Other organizations are therefore made responsible for the quality of the specifications they produce.

4. IANA Considerations

This section describes changes to the IANA Considerations sections outlined in RFC 3588 regarding the allocation of command codes by IANA.

The command code namespace is used to identify Diameter commands. The values 0 - 255 (0x00 - 0xff) are reserved for RADIUS backward

compatibility and are defined as "RADIUS Packet Type Codes" in
[RADTYPE]. Values 256 - 8,388,607 (0x100 - 0x7fffff) are for
permanent, standard commands allocated by IETF Review [RFC5226].
[RFC3588] defines the command codes 257, 258, 271, 274, 275, 280, and
282; see Section 3.1 in [RFC3588] for the assignment of the namespace
in that specification.

The values 8,388,608 - 16,777,213 (0x800000 - 0xfffffd) are reserved
for vendor-specific command codes, to be allocated on a First Come,
First Served basis by IANA [RFC5226]. The request to IANA for a
vendor-specific command code SHOULD include a reference to a publicly
available specification that documents the command in sufficient
detail to aid in interoperability between independent
implementations. If the specification cannot be made publicly
available, the request for a vendor-specific command code MUST
include the contact information of persons and/or entities
responsible for authoring and maintaining the command.

The values 16,777,214 and 16,777,215 (hexadecimal values 0xfffffe -
0xffffff) are reserved for experimental commands. As these codes are
only for experimental and testing purposes, no guarantee is made for
interoperability between Diameter peers using experimental commands,
as outlined in [RFC3692].

5. Acknowledgements

The content of this document is the result of the work in the IETF
Diameter Maintenance and Extensions (DIME) working group. We would
therefore like to thank all the working group members who were
involved in that discussion. While it appears to be a fairly small
change in the allocation policy, the effect on implementations is
rather dramatic.

We would like to thank Mark Jones for his review comments.

6. References

6.1. Normative References

   [RFC2119]   Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate
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   [RFC3588]   Calhoun, P., Loughney, J., Guttman, E., Zorn, G., and
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   [RFC3692]   Narten, T., "Assigning Experimental and Testing Numbers
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   [RFC5226]   Narten, T. and H. Alvestrand, "Guidelines for Writing
                   an IANA Considerations Section in RFCs", BCP 26,
                   RFC 5226, May 2008.

6.2. Informative References

   [RADTYPE]   IANA, "Radius Types", <http://www.iana.org>.

   [RFC3588bis] Fajardo, V., Arkko, J., Loughney, J., and G. Zorn,
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Authors' Addresses

   Dan Romascanu
   Avaya
   Industrial Park Atidim, Bldg#3
   Tel Aviv   61581
   Israel

   Phone: +972-3-645-8414
   EMail: dromasca@avaya.com

   Hannes Tschofenig
   Nokia Siemens Networks
   Linnoitustie 6
   Espoo   02600
   Finland

   Phone: +358 (50) 4871445
   EMail: Hannes.Tschofenig@gmx.net
   URI: http://www.tschofenig.priv.at