Dogfooding the IETF meeting

Ted Lemon <mellon@fugue.com>

The IETF is a commons

- A commons requires a constituency to defend it
- c.f. British Rail
- If the constituency changes, the organization changes
- We reject kings, presidents and voting. We believe in rough consensus and running code
- "We" here is the constituency.

Our work is not secure

- If the IETF's constituency changes, the work we have done can be recontextualized by the new constituency.
- The constituency is already changing
  - We are aging
  - We are not attracting new participants in sufficient numbers

Why is this happening

- We meet three times a year, in person
- If you don't attend three out of five meetings, you have no say in selecting IETF leadership
- We have a huge carbon footprint
- The pre-college generation is not going to be okay with that
- Participation is quite expensive
- Jobs that send you to IETF are harder to get
- Younger people and people working for small companies are less able to come than historically
- We are selecting for older participants from bigger companies

What to do?

- IETF leadership has been aware of this for a long time
- Manycouches
- IETF participants (not leadership) haven't participated
- This is an existential threat to our legacy as IETF contributors
- We need to decide, soon, that some future IETF meeting will be done online, not in person
- We need to solve the disenfranchisement problem
- We need to have a BoF where we discuss this as a group and come to a consensus that's sufficient to motivate IETF leadership to take action: to schedule an online IETF