

Definition of new tags
for relations between RFCs
draft-kuehlewind-update-tag-02

Mirja Kühlewind and Suresh Krishnan
Gendispatch - March 25, 2020 - Virtual IETF-107

Background and Problem

- Drafts/RFCs can include a tag called "**Updates**" to link a new RFC to an existing RFC
- On publication the existing RFC is augmented with an additional metadata tag called "Updated by" that provides a link to the new RFC.

Problem

*The "Updates/Updated by" tag pair is **not well-defined***

and therefore it is currently used for multiple different purposes,

*which leads to **confusion** about the actual meaning of this tag and **inconsistency** in its use.*

Current State and Motivation for Changes

- Some working groups apply the “Updates” tag when new implementers are also required to implement the new RFC
- Other groups use the “Updates” tag to define optional extensions or use of extension points in the current protocol
- It is useful to separate the mandatory to implement case from the optional to implement case.

New Tag Definitions

Amends/Amended by: The amending RFC specifies *mandatory* changes the amended RFC.

e.g. bug fixes, behavior changes

- Signals to anyone planning to implement the amended RFC that they **MUST** also implement the amending RFC

Extends/Extended by: The extending RFC defines an *optional* addition to the extended RFC.

e.g. use existing extension points or clarifications that do not change existing protocol behavior

- Signals to implementers/protocol designers that there are changes to the extended RFC that they need to consider but not necessarily implement

See Also/See Also: Intended as a *catch-all* tag where two documents are related loosely but do not fit either of the above categories.

- Provides a forward reference from an existing RFC to RFCs that may be of interest to read.

Usage of New Tags

- Tags **MUST** only be used for the defined meanings
 - However, use of these tags is **not mandatory**
- As is the case today with the "Updates" tag, none of the new tags makes the extended/amended RFC invalid
- Tags can only be used to reference other RFCs (and not as a reference to external sources)
- No restrictions on the status/maturity level of the RFC that uses these new tags in relation the RFC that gets amended/extended
- No requirements on the form of the amendment (e.g. OLD/NEW vs. text) specified
- The RFC that is being Amended/Extended should be indicated in the abstract AND introduction as is the case today for Updated RFCs
 - Further recommended to provide additional information about the amendment/extension in the abstract OR introduction

Open Questions for Discussion

- Is this work useful?
- Should we allow the continued use of Updates/Updated tag pair in the future?
- Use of new tags for other streams
 - Use of tags cross-stream is out of scope as seen as a separate topic
- Updates to RFC Style Guide [[RFC7322](#)] and "xml2rfc" Version 3 Vocabulary [[RFC7991](#)] are necessary if this goes forward
- Should we use these new tags for process documents?