Diversity and Inclusiveness in the IETF
(draft-gont-diversity-analysis)

Fernando Gont
Keith Moore

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What do we mean with inclusiveness/diversity?

- **Diversity** → showing a great deal of “variety”
- **Inclusion** → culture and environment that where everyone has equal chances to participate; i.e., fosters diversity

“variety”:
- a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds
- different genders
- different sexual orientations
- different countries and regions
- different types of organizations (companies, non-profits, etc.)

- This list is non-exhaustive, and in no particular order
Structural Issues

- Perceived Return of Investment (ROI)
- Effects of Current Participation
- Diversity in IETF Groups and Leadership Roles
- Processes
- Difficulty in Participating in the IETF
- Economic Constraints
- Educational Constraints
- Cultural Issues
Perceived Return of Investment

- For organizations/companies:
  - Benefiting from Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)
  - Benefiting from leading std. efforts, resulting in e.g. improved "time to market"

- For independent participants:
  - being able to make a difference in improving Internet technologies
  - better career opportunities

- These can only be realized by a small subset of organizations and individuals
Effects of Current Participation

- Current participation results in a bias of:
  - perception of structural issues
  - f2f meeting rotation
  - (lack thereof) diversity in IETF groups and leadership
  - how new work is considered by the IETF
Diversity in IETF groups and leadership roles

• Results in:
  • Very small number of interests judging WG consensus, community consensus, and appeals.
  • Limited number of interests participating in the NOMCOM and IAB.
  • Arbitrary decisions produced and enforces by such groups, without getting community consensus on them
 Processes

- Loosely-specified procedures
  - Can be beneficial in some scenarios
  - At others can be problematic – particularly for newcomers
Difficulty in joining the IETF

• Finding interesting groups and areas
• Authoring and submitting internet-drafts
• Discussion (mailing-lists, GitHub)
Economic constraints

- Processes favor those who can attend f2f meetings
- Meeting expenses:
  - Travel
  - Accommodation
  - Dinners, lunches, etc.
- **Meeting fees**
- draft-ietf-shmoo-remote-fee a step in the right direction!
Educational constraints

- Knowledge of a lot of technical material is required
- Improving protocols typically requires a share of:
  - critical thinking – understand pros & cons, historical artifacts, etc.
  - real-world experience
Cultural issues

- Language
- Using email effectively
- Comfort zone
Moving forward

• AD-sponsored document?
• Creation of a new wg to work on problem statement and solutions?
  e.g.:

  1. Identify problems (continue the work of the current I-D)
  2. Identify and research potential solutions (could be one or more I-Ds responding to items in the problem list I-D)
  3. Make recommendations (where we can) for changes to existing practice and also for IETF organizational support for ongoing work (again, could be one or more I-Ds)
Some Proposed Improvements
Disclaimer

- Merely publishing documents (mostly) does not fix these problems
- Fixes require effort from multiple parts of IETF and related groups
- Past efforts: examine and re-awaken
- Ongoing efforts: encourage
- New efforts also needed
- D&I require a commitment to continuous improvement
- Different problems require different time scales to fix
Diversity in IETF groups and leadership roles

Proposed rule for WG Chairs

- Three chairs per working group, with different levels of experience
- Every two years:
  - Most experienced chair leaves the role
  - The two other chairs move up one level, and a fresh chair enters the WG

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Chair 1
Chair 2
Chair 3

2 years

Chair 2
Chair 3
Fresh chair
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Diversity in IETF groups and leadership roles

- Co-chairs of a WG must be from a different organizations
- No more than, say, 10%-16% of chairs of a given area from the same organization
- Chair that leaves a role eventually becomes eligible for chairing again
Diversity in IETF groups and leadership roles

Proposed rule for IESG members

• At most one IESG member per organization
  • Initially introduced as a goal; enforceable when chair rotation is fully-enabled
  • Procedures to be established for resolving conflicts (e.g. AD changes employer)
• An AD cannot be responsible AD from WG with chair from same organization
Diversity in IETF groups and leadership roles

Proposed rule for IAB members

- At most one IAB member per organization
- 1 terms (2 years) must elapse before IESG member can become IAB member
Diversity in IETF groups and leadership roles

Proposed rules for the NOMCOM

- Consider carrying all NOMCOM activities online?
- NOMCOM members cannot participate in the discussion/evaluation of a role that has candidate from their own organization
Economic constraints

- Introduce fee waiver for f2f meetings (possibly experimental)
Next steps

- Work on stand-alone proposals for each of them?