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

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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**

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Slide #: 2

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

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Slide #: 3

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**

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Slide #: 4

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

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Slide #: 5

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

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Slide #: 6

Processes

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

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Difficulty in joining the IETF

- Finding interesting groups and areas

- Authoring and submitting internet-drafts

- Discussion (mailing-lists, GitHub)

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Slide #: 8

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!

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Slide #: 9

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

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Slide #: 10

Cultural issues

- Language

- Using email effectively

- Comfort zone

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Slide #: 11

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)

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Slide #: 12

Some Proposed Improvements

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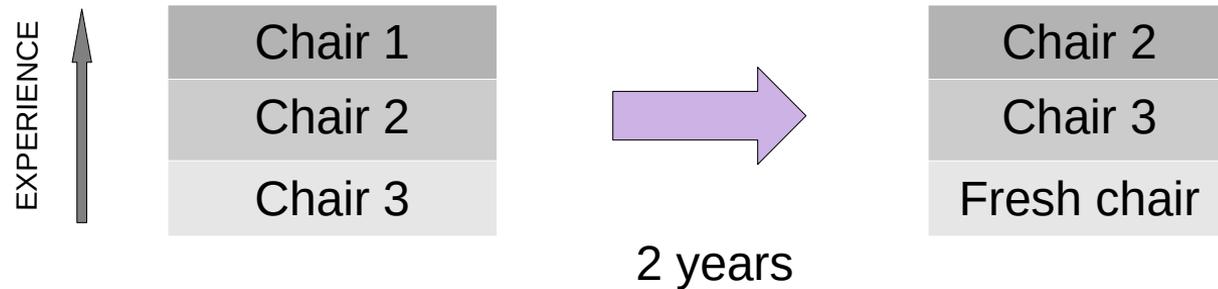March 8th-12nd, 2021

Slide #: 13

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

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Slide #: 14

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

EXPERIENCE

| Chair 1 |
| Chair 2 |
| Chair 3 |

→

| Chair 2 |
| Chair 3 |
| Fresh chair |

2 years

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Slide #: 15

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

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Slide #: 16

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

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Slide #: 17

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

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Slide #: 18

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

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Slide #: 19

Economic constraints

- Introduce fee waiver for f2f meetings (possibly experimental)

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Slide #: 20

Next steps

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

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Slide #: 21