



RFC Series Document Approval Proposal

A suggestion to the RFC Series Future
Development team

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Based on the input he has seen to date



Working Group Assumptions

- There will be a working group tasked with discussing / reviewing proposals for strategic directions / concerns / issues regarding the RFC Series
- The working group will be open to anyone
 - In particular, the members of the approval board are expected to participate in the WG and to raise any issues they see in the WG in a timely and participatory fashion.
- The working group will use procedures modeled after classic IETF procedures
 - Modified suitably for the absence of IESG, clear community, and similar issues.



Approval Board Assumptions

- There will be an approval board which will review the output proposed by the WG
 - Such output will also need to be widely circulated to provide opportunity for comment from those not participating in the WG
- The Approvals board will determine the disposition of documents in a timely and efficient fashion
- Board members are expected to make the needed time to both participate in the WG and to perform the tasked review and discussion
- The Board will only consider proposals from the WG
 - Having a procedure to bypass the WG seems undesirable and counter-productive
- Board email and deliberations (whether by conference or face to face) will be open to all to observe
 - As the board does not have personnel or similar authority, there does not seem to need to be any exceptions to this public visibility requirement



Approvals Board Basic Process

- When the working group concludes work on a document and approves it for adoption it goes to the Approvals board.
- While the document is circulated to a larger community, the Board members will carefully review the document.
- After a suitable time, all the members will register a vote. This is mandatory
- The only available votes are “YES”, “Concern”, “Recuse”.
 - “Recuse” is only for those circumstances where the member has a personal conflict and therefore should not express an opinion on the document.
- If all votes are “YES” or “Recuse” the document is approved



“Concern” criteria

- There are two kinds of reasons for raising a formal “Concern”
- In all cases, a “Concern” must be accompanied by a clear and understandable explanation of the problem
 - The explanation may or may not be actionable, as that depends upon the exact circumstances
- The first kind of reason is if the proposal causes serious problems for the group which a particular member is charged to represent.
 - For example, if it would represent a serious problem for the stream a stream manager represents
- The second kind of reason is if the proposal appears to the Board member to cause serious harm to the overall series, including harm to the long term health and viability of the series
 - Note that this kind of Concern may be raised by any board member



Resolving Concerns

- The generally hoped path to resolution is that when a concern is raised, the more careful explanation of the concern will cause the working group to reconsider
 - While desirable, it is understood that this is unlikely since the concern is expected to be (and presumably was) raised during WG discussion.
- If, after an appropriate amount of time, there is only one board member with the concern, a formal vote is taken to over-ride the concern
 - Once this has occurred, the document is approved
 - This over-ride applies to both kinds of concern
- Conversely, if after discussion at least two board members (presumably the one raising the concern and at least one more) feel the concern really is a show stopper, the document is returned to the WG to do with as it pleases
 - The WG will be aware of the substance of the Concern, and that the document will not be approved unless the WG finds a way to change the situation

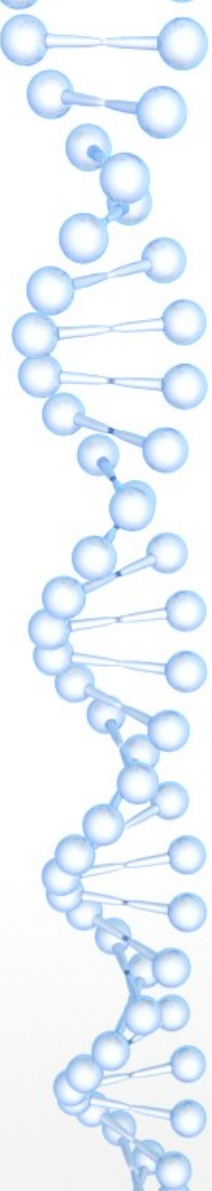


Approvals Board Membership and relationship

- This proposal envisions a small approvals board
- It will consist of the stream heads (currently 4) and the paid professional technical publishing expert
- There are no explicit term limits on these members
- There are no members appointed by other bodies
- There is no appeal process to appeal the activities of the approvals board
- The board members are responsible to their appointing authorities

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Open Issues on this topic

- There are of course many open issues
- Who will appoint the working group chairs
 - And all the details about their service, review, etc...
- Do we need to constrain additional procedures of the WG or the approval board?
- Should the paid technical expert be considered to represent any specific constituencies?
- Should the two kinds of concerns have different over-ride criteria?
- Details of board procedures are as much as possible left to the board itself, subject to the limits herein. Is that the right approach.