Joint survey from the IESG and IETF LLC

Threefold purpose

1. Demographics
   A current size and demographic breakdown of the IETF community.

2. Planning data
   Data on IETF community views that can be used by IETF leadership in planning how to address the major strategic challenges facing the IETF.

3. Change over time
   The first step in a time series of data that can be used to assess the natural changes affecting the IETF and the effectiveness of major programs, organisational changes and leadership actions.
Aim of broad, representative response

Key design principles

01 Wide distribution
Sent to every subscriber to an IETF lost, even if idle for years - 56,000 addresses in total.

02 Simple to respond
Careful language, “No opinion” options and only one mandatory question.

03 Actionable and direct
Questions focused on specific issues, No free text answers, no questions about perceptions of change.

04 Repeatable and relevant
Don’t ask questions that could be better answered otherwise and prioritise questions that can be repeated each year.
Conducted over May 2021

2032 valid responses
from 56,000 addresses
giving a margin of error of +/- 2.13%

WARNING! The respondents to this survey were self-selected not randomly chosen and the details of the population are not well enough known to determine if this sample is truly representative.
The IETF mostly delivers its mission and principles

Quality and relevance of RFCs good, focus of work is acceptable, consensus strong, ability to share views is acceptable

IETF processes are mostly acceptable

Processes are acceptable effective, as are ease of finding information, understanding it and its quality. The standout exception is the slowness of the entire IETF process

The IETF has an issue with mass communication

Bootstrapping problem - not enough know about ietf-announce and the content puts others off. Preferences around communication vary strongly with age.
Q22. How do you prefer to be informed of IETF activities?

Coding mean (higher is more), cross tabulated with age

Coding mean calculated using Strongly preferred = 5 ... Strongly not preferred = 1.
Key findings
People

The IETF has a sense of community, but only just and not one that people can recommend.

An acceptable number feel part of the community, feel treated the same as the rest of the community, feel that the IETF communicates with them well, and that community behaviour is acceptable, contributions are valued and that WGs are a good use of time. However, the NPS score is very low.

The IETF has a big problem with gender, a smaller problem with regionality but no problem with age.

Females make up ~10.7% of the IETF community, are disproportionately deterred by the culture of the IETF, less likely to feel treated the same as the rest of the community as males, less likely to feel their contributions are valued and that the behaviour of other participants is acceptable.
Q26. How likely are you to recommend IETF participation to a friend or colleague?

Uses standard NPS (Net Promoter Score) scoring - the question is asked on a scale of 0-10 and the result calculated as 0-6 for detractor, 7-8 for passive and 9-10 for promoter.
Q26. How true are the following statements ...?
Coding mean (higher is more), cross tabulated with gender

- My skill in English is good enough for me to participate fully
- When I need information it is easy to find
- The information provided by the IETF is easy to understand
- I understand the IETF structure and processes well enough to participate fully
- The IETF provides good opportunity for me to share my views
- The IETF communicates with me well
- I am treated the same as the rest of the IETF community
- I feel part of the IETF community

![Chart showing data]
Key findings
Participation

The principle of people participating for the benefit of the Internet is true but not the strongest factor.

Support for new modes of participation is limited and age dependent.

The foundations of people participating as individuals is very complex and only partly supported.

The two pillars of email and English have very strong support.
Q12. Why [do/did] you participate in the IETF? (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My personal interest</td>
<td>63.98% (840)</td>
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<tr>
<td>To make the Internet work better</td>
<td>62.99% (827)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>54.91% (721)</td>
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<tr>
<td>My job allows me to</td>
<td>47.52% (624)</td>
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<tr>
<td>My job requires me to</td>
<td>29.55% (388)</td>
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<tr>
<td>For the community and friendships</td>
<td>27.04% (355)</td>
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Percentage of currently/previouly participating respondents
Key findings - Wider environment

Making the Internet work better

IETF is a very important part of a well connected ecosystem

Q28. How important is the IETF for the development of the Internet?

- Detractor: 11.10%
- Passive: 30.96%
- Promoter: 57.94%

Q30. How well do you think the IETF compares to other standards settings organisations?

- Much worse: 402
- Worse: 490
- About the same: 17.69%
- Better: 210

44% of respondents participate in one or more other standards setting organisations
Next steps

• The results of this survey will be used by the IESG and IETF LLC over the next year as they plan and carry out their work. In particular, the survey will be regularly referenced in decision making to ensure a data-driven approach is taken that emphasises addressing areas that the evidence shows are high priority concerns reducing time spent on those the evidence shows are not actually concerns.

• One action that has already been taken is to add a sign-up link to ietf-announce to the mailing list welcome email.

• This survey will be repeated annually, with some adjustments, in order to build up a time series of data and to see whether the high priority concerns are being addressed. It is likely that some cleaning up of mailing lists will be undertaken before then, leading to a small total population and more accurate results.
Thank you to all those who took part in this survey.

Please raise any questions or feedback on the admin-discuss@ietf.org mailing list.