DMARC WG: Food For Thought

Murray Kucherawy <superuser@gmail.com>
ART Area Director
Timeline

- March 2013: DMARC first appears in IETF repositories
- July 2013: DMARC WG BoF
- April 2014: DMARC submitted to the ISE
- April 2014: Yahoo! publishes “p=reject” policy
- July 2014: DMARC WG charter review begins
- August 2014: DMARC WG chartered
- March 2015: DMARC (-13) published as RFC 7489 (Informational)
- September 2016: RFC 7960: Interoperability Issues (Informational)
- May 2019: RFC 8601: Authentication-Results (Proposed Standard)
- June 2019: RFC 8616: Authentication for I18N Email (Proposed Standard)
- July 2019: RFC 8617: ARC (Experimental)
- July 2021: RFC 9091: PSD (Experimental)
Timeline

- March 2013: DMARC first appears in IETF repositories
- **July 2013:** DMARC WG BoF
- April 2014: DMARC submitted to the ISE
- April 2014: Yahoo! publishes “p=reject” policy
- July 2014: DMARC WG charter review begins
- **August 2014:** DMARC WG chartered
- March 2015: DMARC (-13) published as RFC 7489 (Informational)
- September 2016: RFC 7960: Interoperability Issues (Informational)
- May 2019: RFC 8601: Authentication-Results (Proposed Standard)
- June 2019: RFC 8616: Authentication for I18N Email (Proposed Standard)
- July 2019: RFC 8617: ARC (Experimental)
- July 2021: RFC 9091: PSD (Experimental)
IT'S BEEN NINE YEARS ...
Food For Thought #1: Duration

- Nine years is a long time to be working on a single problem
- It’s on its fourth Area Director
- The ART area is now 36 working groups with three more chartering
  - There’s increasing pressure to terminate WGs that aren’t producing
  - The next AD may not be as tolerant as others have been
- Would this WG’s energy be better spent on other projects at the IETF that have a better chance of success?
- Do we really believe there’s a solution here someplace?
- Do we have the energy and focus to keep searching for it?
  - Distractions and regressions are frequent and expensive
Timeline

- March 2013: DMARC first appears in IETF repositories
- July 2013: DMARC WG BoF
- April 2014: DMARC submitted to the ISE
- April 2014: Yahoo! publishes “p=reject” policy
- July 2014: DMARC WG charter review begins
- August 2014: DMARC WG chartered
- March 2015: DMARC (-13) published as RFC 7489 (Informational)
- September 2016: RFC 7960: Interoperability Issues (Informational)
- May 2019: RFC 8601: Authentication-Results (Proposed Standard)
- June 2019: RFC 8616: Authentication for I18N Email (Proposed Standard)
- **July 2019: RFC 8617: ARC (Experimental)**
- **July 2021: RFC 9091: PSD (Experimental)**
Food For Thought #2: Experiments

- Are the experiments running? The answer seems to be “yes”, but …
- What are we learning from them?
  - What ARC implementations exist? Who’s using it?
  - Does ARC provide useful data? It’s been out for four years now!
    - If yes, why isn’t it folded into DMARCbis?
    - If not, should we declare it completed and look at something else?
    - Do we think we need more time? Will we learn something from more time?
  - Who’s trying PSD? Does it provide useful results? It’s been out for two years now!
    - If yes, why isn’t it folded into DMARCbis?
    - If not, should we declare it completed and look at something else?
    - Do we think we need more time? Will we learn something from more time?
During chartering:

From: john-ietf@jck.com
To: ietf@ietf.org
Subject: Re: WG Review: Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance (dmarc)
Date: Jul 17, 2014, 7:31 AM

[...]

I don't want to try to do the WG's work at charter discussion time, but I'd like to be sure that the charter and leadership of the WG aren't set up to preclude a result of "this protocol is dangerous and problematic, it is Not Recommended, and the IETF recommendation is to minimize damage by discarding (or otherwise ignoring) DMARC headers whenever they are encountered". I want to stress that I'm not recommending that approach, although it has some charm. I just want to be sure it is at least treated as a legitimate alternative and that, should someone complain on IETF Last Call that it wasn't considered seriously and/or that the reasons for not going in that direction are not adequately documented, such complaints cannot be dismissed on the basis of language in the charter.
During chartering:

From: john-ietf@jck.com
To: ietf@ietf.org
Subject: Re: WG Review: Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance (dmarc)
Date: Jul 17, 2014, 12:11 PM

[...]

I just want to be absolutely sure that the charter doesn't constrain any of those options and that the WG is on notice that it will be accountable for, and required to explain, the choices it makes.
FIX MAILING LIST DISRUPTION

OR draw 25

DMARC WG
The IETF was very unhappy about the rollout of DMARC because of the broad disruption it caused
- Find the ietf@ietf.org thread starting April 29, 2014, for instance
- It still comes up as a plenary topic periodically
- Yes, there are mitigations, but people don’t like them

Nobody doubts the claims of the value of the protection DMARC provides
- There is doubt that the value offsets the disruption

There is doubt about the scope of the protection it provides
- For example: display name attacks, cousin domain attacks, etc., remain
- This seems to be largely ignored, or unsupported by data

The deal was a Proposed Standard in exchange for an effective solution to the disruption
- By resisting the “MUST” suggestion, the WG appears to be diluting this commitment
- A DMARCbis that doesn’t deal with this problem somehow is likely to meet fierce resistance
- Is anyone talking to the list developers? Seems like they need to be involved here
I AM NOT ALTERING THE DEAL

PRAY I DON'T NOT ALTER IT ANY FURTHER
Let’s talk!