Making Less Work for Area Directors
draft-rsalz-less-ad-work

Request for Dispatch

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The Problem

• IESG document processing workload is high
  – Hard to fill the positions
    • ADs are stressed
    • ADs need to devote more time to the role
    • Diversity of AD candidates is limited by time/funding
  – IETF document throughput and quality are harmed
    • Delays to publication
    • Frustration and disillusionment
    • Reputational damage
  – Other IESG tasks are neglected
    • Things get missed or left on one side
    • Not enough attention is paid to strategy and planning
    • No time spent building the leadership pipeline
• Need constructive approaches to reducing IESG workload
Some History

• This is not a new problem
• Many suggestions have been made over the years
  – The IESG has generally been left to self-organise
  – Changes in operation have been neglected by the IESG
    • Too busy to make changes
    • Reluctant to delegate or lose control
• The IESG job descriptions are written by the IESG
  – Not a lot has changed in recent years
  – The description of time commitment has changed
    • 2013 : 15-40 hours per week
    • 2017 : A few ADs who can only do 15 hours per week is OK
    • 2018 : Many ADs allocate 15 hours or more per week
  – 2018
    • 10 to 15 working groups
    • 500 pages every two weeks ~ 16 pages per hour on a 15 hour week ~ 2½ minutes per page
Rationale

• We want the best possible people on the IESG
  – Job must not be daunting
  – People need to stay in touch with the real world while being an AD
  – Employers need to be able/willing to release/fund people
    • Enough hours per week
    • For a planned four-year appointment (subject to NomCom)
• IESG must not be single point of failure or bottleneck to progress
• We want the best possible documents in a reasonable timeframe
  – Documents do need careful review and consideration
  – We do not want to break the Internet
  – The IESG should enable rather than hinder progress of work
The Approach

• No blame, no finger-pointing, just making things better

• Ideally the IESG would adopt good working practices
  – It hasn’t worked to guide the IESG

• Therefore, this draft is asking the IETF to make changes to the IESG working practices
  – We still want the IESG to self-organise and do the right thing
  – Some steps need to be taken to enforce reduced IESG load

• Solving the problem in one big change is impractical
  – It must be done in workable chunks
  – Each change makes things a bit better
  – Other changes (not in this draft) may be practical and desirable
  – Each change should be taken on its merits and in its own time
Some Point Solutions

• This document proposes some solutions for community consideration
  – Could be taken together or individually
  – These may be the wrong solutions
  – Other solutions may exist

• Solutions are not for discussion in this forum!
  1. Change the understanding of the IESG ballot
     • Only one AD per Area needs to ballot (change the ballot thresholds)
     • Better understanding of “No objection”
  2. Handle IESG transition better
     • Ballots cast before change-over should stand
     • AD terms have planned carry-over time to resolve in-flight Discusses
  3. Change the focus of the IESG to be more document-oriented
     • Remove certain time-consuming tasks from the IESG
     • Prioritise the IESG work to be “WG and documents first”
     • Rely more heavily on the professional staff for administrative tasks with only oversight from IESG
  4. Stop the focus on nittey
     • Continue to reject documents with significantly bad grammar (to the extent of being hard to comprehend)
     • Do not use IESG time to fix language issues (use other reviewers and/or professional staff)
  5. Do all ADs need to come to all physical meetings?
Dispatch?

• The problem has persisted for long enough
  – Current approaches to managing change have not delivered
• There may be more and better point solutions than we have suggested
  – See also draft-nottingham-iesg-review-workload

• Options
  1. Drive this document with its small number of solutions to completion
     • Review might add or remove solutions, but not boil the ocean
     • Could easily split this document into separate solution documents
     • Approach would be AD-sponsorship
     • Need widescale IETF debate and review
  2. Make a space to discuss the problem and document multiple solutions
     • Produce a number of small documents to introduce changes
     • Have space for debate and review
     • Need a mailing list and forum – feels like a working group