



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 “WGs and documents first”
 - Rely more heavily on the professional staff for administrative tasks with only oversight from IESG
 4. Stop the focus on nittery
 - 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