

Well-Known URIs

Registration Policy Redux

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/.well-known/foo

RFC 8615, "Well-Known Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs)"

IANA Considerations

Well-known URIs are registered on the advice of one or more experts, with a **Specification Required** (using terminology from [[RFC8126](#)]).

The experts' primary considerations in evaluating registration requests are:

- o Conformance to the requirements in [Section 3](#)
- o **The availability and stability of the specifying document**
- o The considerations outlined in [Section 4](#)



Security
Considerations

Section 3

Registered names MUST conform to the "segment-nz" production in [\[RFC3986\]](#). This means they cannot contain the "/" character.

Registered names for a specific application SHOULD be correspondingly precise; "squatting" on generic terms is not encouraged. For example, if the Example application wants a well-known location for metadata, an appropriate registered name might be "example-metadata" or even "example.com-metadata", not "metadata".

At a minimum, **a registration will reference a specification** that defines the format and associated media type(s) to be obtained by dereferencing the well-known URI, along with the URI scheme(s) that the well-known URI can be used with.

Problem Statement

- **This name space is human-readable**
 - Some names are more attractive than other
e.g., "ai" vs. "foo-bar-thing-abcd"
- **Guidance to expert was purposefully restricted in latest revision**
 - Goal was to get closer to FCFS
- **Increasing number of requests for desirable names**
 - From proposers with little evidence of community discussion, much less buy-in
 - Using references that have questionable value
(e.g., personal GitHub repos with bare sketch of protocol)
 - *Consumes names and arguably gives them misleading legitimacy*

Examples (1)

from recent registration requests

- Registrant A: request for **agents.txt**, **agents.json**, **agent.txt**, **agent.json**, and **ai.txt**
 - Specs are in a personal GitHub repo
 - Single contributor (has made other requests)
 - At least one (ai.txt) can be seen as a conflict with an active WG
 - No signs of greater community engagement
- Registrant B: request for **agent.json**
 - Spec is in an organisation's GitHub repo
 - ... but that org may only have one contributor
 - Also has a Website
 - ... apparently hosted on GitHub Pages
 - No signs of greater community engagement

Examples (2)

from recent registration requests

- Registrant C: request for **ai**
 - Spec is in a two-person GitHub repo
 - Those two people share a last name
 - No signs of greater community engagement
- ... except that they've started talking to registrant A in their request

Underlying Issue

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- Common thread seems to be a confusion between registration and standardisation
 - "If it's registered, they will come."
 - GitHub + Markdown + AI = very low barrier to entry
 - Incentive to register first and then figure things out
- The squatting concerns in the current RFC hint at this, but don't directly address

Proposals

so far...

- Allow the Expert to reject requests for 'attractive' / 'generic' names unless they've had some level of community review (see RFC 8288, community formats in RFC 6838bis)
- Prepend a random number - **/.well-known/2462356-foo ?**
- Create a less-restricted subspace - **/.well-known/adhoc/foo ?**
- Use provisional registration

DISPATCH Questions

- **Should intuitive / attractive names be reserved** for greater community buy-in?
- **Is an update necessary?**
... or can the expert work within the current guidance "creatively"?
- If so, **what's the appropriate venue?** AD-Sponsored? A WG?
8615 was AD-sponsored.
- Note that there are some aspects which might be interesting for IANAbis to consider...