

Experimental RFCs

Guidelines for Authors of IETF Stream

draft-bonica-gendispatch-exp

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Reminder – What's An Experimental RFC

- *Experimental RFCs that describe protocol experiments must not be end-runs*
 - *An experiment is an experiment, not a protocol spec by another name*
- *Experiments need to be properly scoped*
 - *What is the point of the experiment?*
 - *How is the experiment contained so as to not risk harming the Internet?*
 - *How to prevent end-runs?*
 - *What will IANA allow?*
 - *When to stop experimenting?*
 - *How to judge the success/failure of an experiment?*
- *Authors do not usually include adequate descriptions of the experiment*
 - *WGs don't give good guidance*
 - *Job of getting the docs in shape falls to the ADs very late in the process*
- *Authors would do a better job if there was some guidance*
 - *Hard rules are not needed*
 - *Advice, reasons, and expectations can help*

Reminder – What's This Draft For?

- *We are only concerned with Protocol Experiments*
 - *Process experiments are not in scope*
 - *Roughly 10 new RFCs per year*
- *We are principally guiding IETF documents*
 - *IRTF and ISE are welcome to use the work*
 - *50-75% of Protocol Experiments come from the IETF*
- *Provide **guidance** to authors*
 - *No hard rules*
 - *Help authors/WGs make better documents*
- *Point to some examples*

Reminder – Previous Dispatch Suggestions

1. *Form a targeted WG / hold a BoF*
Seems like massive over-kill for a small topic
2. *AD sponsored RFC*
3. *Make a non-WG mailing list for discussion*
4. *Independent Submissions Stream*
It would be sad to describe IETF RFC guidelines outside the IETF
5. *Wiki page or web page*
Some support for this on the Dispatch list
Uncertainty about how consensus is achieved / who owns the text
Wider discussion of how to move other process docs to this format
6. *Widen scope to all RFCs and go to RSWG*
7. *Updated IESG statement*
8. *Don't bother*

Reminder – Previous Dispatching

- *AllDisatch at IETF-120 (July 2024)*
 - *The minutes say:*
Chairs: Dispatch result: BoF, mailing list, more discussion, then perhaps AD sponsored.
- *Mailing list created experiment-guidance@ietf.org (September 2024)*
- *Dispatch-style mailing list discussions (also on gendispatch list)*
 - *No need for a BoF*
 - *Either AD-sponsor an Informational RFC*
 - *Or make an IETF-Wiki page to keep this living*
 - *Or make an IETF (“advice for authors”) web page*
- *Conversations with the GEN AD*
 - *January 2025 – I will ask the IESG to see if anyone wants to AD Sponsor*
 - *IETF-122 (March 2025) - “I did make a promise. I haven’t forgotten.”*
 - *Many unanswered emails :-)*

Current State of the Draft

- *-07 posted January 2026*
- *Revisions based on:*
 - *On-list discussions*
 - *Suggestions in private*
 - *Discussions with authors of recent Experimental I-Ds*
 - *Trawling examples of recent Experimental RFCs*
- *More work could be done?*
 - *Always happy to have more review and suggestions*
 - *May be worthwhile getting some Directorate reviews*
- *BUT (!)*
 - *Let's not waste anyone's time if this is getting Dispatched to /dev/null*

What Are We Asking For?

- *Re-decide Dispatch advice*
 - *Time and I-D have moved on*
 - *In the authors' opinion, there has been no change in the "need" for this*
- *Assist AD to make a firm decision with a timeline*
 - *It's OK to decide "no"*
 - *But it is not OK to leave the authors dangling*