

Guidelines for Assignment of RFC Authorship

draft-carpenter-rswg-authoring-ethics-05

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Problem statement

- Questions come up regularly about who should be listed as the author(s) of an RFC, who should be listed as editor(s) or contributors, and what acknowledgements are appropriate.
- Questions have been asked recently about AI content.
- Readers would expect consistent principles (and most readers don't care about RFC streams).
- Here are 10 draft principles...

Draft principle on consistency

1. Apply a consistent approach across all streams to the ethical issues surrounding authorship.

- *Because that is what readers would expect.*

- *Is there any reason the streams should apply different basic publishing ethics?*

(Answer that after seeing principles 2–10.)

Draft principles concerning streams

2. Each stream determines its own process for drafting RFCs; the guidelines here apply only to the approved copy sent to the RPC.

3. Guidelines are subject to human judgement within each stream and are not rigid rules.
(Procedures to resolve disagreement with the RPC are already in RFC 9920.)

- The 10 principles do not interfere with the processes of any stream.

Draft principles concerning authors and editors

4. Listed authors made a substantial creative contribution to the document.

5. Listed editors made a substantial contribution to preparing the document for publication.

6. Listed authors and editors are collectively responsible for the content of the document.

- These are the normal expectations of any reader.

Draft principles concerning credit

7. Other people who made a significant contribution are listed as contributors or otherwise acknowledged.

- *Basic publishing ethics.*

8. Determination of the people credited as authors, editors, contributors, or simply acknowledged is made by the stream.

- *The streams are independent.*

Draft principles concerning copying

9. Material copied from other sources must be acknowledged.

- Such sources include RFCs, other drafts, other publications, and any material generated by AI.

10. Material from other sources must not be copied without the right to do so.

- *Basic publishing ethics. There's nothing special about AI.*

Discussion

- Do we want to do this?
- Are the principles the right ones?

