

# Picking a direction for standards track reform

**[http://www.ietf.org/internet-drafts/  
draft-carpenter-newtrk-questions-  
00.txt](http://www.ietf.org/internet-drafts/draft-carpenter-newtrk-questions-00.txt)**

Brian Carpenter  
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# Reason for plenary discussion

- There seem to be three possible directions for further work on the evolution of the IETF standards track.
- We're not making progress.
- The community as a whole needs to make the choice between these three directions (or decide to simply stop).

# Perceived problem (2003/2004)

- RFC 3774 said:

"In practice, the IETF currently has a one-step standards process that subverts the IETF's preference for demonstrating effectiveness through running code in multiple interoperable implementations... Relatively few specifications are now progressed beyond Proposed Standard (PS)..."
- So the newtrk WG was chartered in 2004

# WG efforts stalled

- Discussions in newtrk have not yet led to a set of proposals which have both solid WG support and seem likely to rapidly reach IETF consensus and IESG approval.
- There are undoubtedly differences of opinion about how this situation arose and who is to blame. Let's not have that discussion.
- Now follow three distinct ways forward. Let's discuss which is the best choice for the future.

# First option: Just clarify RFC 2026

- We agree that, apart from day to day efforts to improve efficiency, the problems with the existing standards track are not serious enough to justify the effort needed to make substantial changes.
- We conclude that RFC 3774 exaggerated the problem, and we only need to make a relatively minor set of clarifications to RFC 2026.

## Second option:

### Focus on document relationships

- We should focus on the issue of document relationships, or as the newtrk charter currently says "the creation of a new series of short IESG-approved IETF documents to describe and define IETF technology standards."
  - Likely proposals: add normative Internet Standards Descriptions, or non-normative Descriptors of RFC Sets
- More details- section 2 of the draft.

# Third option:

## Focus on maturity levels

- Focus on the three-stage standards track, or as the newtrk charter currently says "agree on a revised IETF Standards Track... to replace the standards track described in RFC 2026."
  - Likely proposals: trim the standards track to two or one stages.
- More details- section 3 of the draft.

# Discussion



# Preference questions

- Do you prefer doing nothing over 1?

If no,

- Do you prefer 1 over (2 or 3)?

If no, and assuming 1 will follow anyway,

- Do you prefer 2 over 3?
- Do you prefer 3 over 2?

1: Clarify 2026; 2: Focus on document relationships  
3: Focus on maturity levels.

# Effort questions

Assuming that we just picked a direction,

- Are you personally willing to contribute to the drafting effort needed?
- Are you personally willing to participate actively in document review and improvement?