

Considering availability of free software when evaluating Draft Standards

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IETF 70

Background

- General desire for IETF standards to be friendly towards free software and open source.
 - But no rigorous definition of "free".
- Many IETF participants (still) desire ability to use patents for (at least) defensive purposes.
 - Thus, no apparent consensus for changing to an *a priori* RF IPR regime.
- Our only proof point, even if little used, is the PS to DS transition.
 - In particular this requires interoperability reports.

Proposal

- Simply change the RFC 2026 rule for PS→DS to read

A specification from which at least two independent and interoperable implementations from different code bases have been developed, of which at least one is preferably available as free software, and for which sufficient successful operational experience has been obtained, may be elevated to the "Draft Standard" level.

Commentary

- This change leaves the judgement of "free" and "preferably" to the IESG, as the existing rule does for "successful".

- Scott Brim's alternative formulation

Issues with general deployability should be taken into consideration, including issues of licensing terms associated with those implementations.

seems very non-specific and leaves great latitude to the IESG (appeal fodder?).