Requirements for Tracking Drafts in the IETF Datatracker

Paul Hoffman, VPN Consortium

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Overview

- Introduce the topic as a whole
- Introduce major parts of draft-ietf-genarea-datatracker-community-01
- Get feedback
  - In fact, feedback is welcome during the presentation as long as it looks like we will finish in two hours

High-level goal: let people keep track of changes in Internet Drafts

- You want to know when a particular draft has a new version
- You probably want to know when it changes state (goes into WG last call, is sent to the IESG, is sent to the RFC Editor, ...)
- You follow a lot of drafts
- How do you keep track of everything?

Requirements for proposed additions to the Datatracker

- The IAOC wants to explore extending the IETF Datatracker to help users track documents
- It needs to get a set of requirements from the community
- If the requirements look good, the IAOC will put the proposal out for bid to contractors who already work on the Datatracker
- The requirements-collecting work was put out as an RFP about a month ago, and the bid awarded recently

Preliminaries

- The goal is a list of requirements, not a fully-fleshed out UI
- This work is at a very early stage
- The eventual tool will need to appeal to a wide audience: ADs, WG chairs, experts, novices, folks who barely understand the IETF
- This is more adventurous than most other Datatracker revisions

Statement of work (1)

- Ability to create one or more (possibly large) lists of I-Ds that they want to follow

- Ability to get notifications when individual drafts from a list changes state

- Ability to see all of the state changes that have occurred on all the drafts in a list over a specified range of dates

Statement of work (2)

- Ability to set the granularity of the changes (such as "every change", "just approvals and publication", and so on)
- Ability to organize the views of a list in many fashions that would be useful to different types of community members
- Ability to share and merge lists with other community members

Should we be doing this work at all?

- One proposal to skip most of the project and focus only on making granular Atom feeds for draft changes

- Leaves display and sorting and updating to the users RSS reader

High-level operation

- A user (anyone, really) creates a new empty list of drafts
- They populate the list with individual drafts or groups of drafts by attribute
- They view the list in the Datatracker at any time
- They get updates
  - by looking at the Datatracker
  - by viewing their optional Atom feed
  - by reading the optional mail stream

List creation

- Anyone can create one or more lists
  - Would be normal for someone to have multiple lists for different needs
- Once a list is created, adding to it and changing the contents should be easy
- Lists can dynamically contain other lists

List maintenance

- Lists with attribute-fed groups (such as "all drafts in the Xyz WG") need to be updated often, such as every hour

- If someone stops using the list, it takes up some space on the IETF server, but not much

- Need a method for deleting long-unused lists, also maybe need a method for letting a user delete a list

Adding drafts to a list needs to be simple

- Easy to add an individual draft (from a list, by typing full name, etc.)
- Adding groups of drafts
  - All drafts in a WG, all WGs in an Area
  - All drafts with a particular responsible AD, author, document shepherd
  - All drafts that have a reference to a particular RFC, a particular draft
  - All drafts that are referenced by a particular RFC, a particular draft
  - All drafts that contain a particular text string

Lists should be able to be private

- Lots of reasons why someone would not want someone else to know which drafts they are following
- These aren't secret, but the IETF should make a reasonable effort for privacy
- However: some lists need to be public
  - For example, a WG chair might create one that everyone in the group would want to follow

Ideas for making private lists

- Password-protected
  - Similar to things most people are familiar with
  - Susceptible to password-guessing
- Allocate URLs from a large (2^128) namespace
  - Relies on copy-and-paste
  - If someone forgets their list name, they can just create a new one
  - Maybe send reminders (if email addresses are even kept)

Some lists should be public

- It would be nice to be able to let others get the benefit out of an interesting list you created ("all drafts on v6 transition strategies", etc.)
- Maybe have mirrors of private lists
- You don't want to just expose the private list because then others can modify its contents

Once you have a list: tracking changes to your drafts

- Three options defined:
  - Look in the Datatracker (with some options for sorting and columns shown)
  - Get the Atom feed, follow it in your favorite RSS reader
  - Get the mail stream
- Are there others that should be offered?

Automatic notifications

- Atom feeds and mail streams
- Each change for every draft in a list
- Type of change is marked so that the user can filter
- Two levels of granularity: every change (new versions and all states) and "significant changes" (not drafts, but major state changes)

Atom feed

- We can structure the XML messages however we want

- The IETF still has a lot of Atom experts who follow other drafts, so getting their help should not be difficult

Mail stream

- We can structure the subject and body however we want
- Maybe interesting MIME
- Maybe XML / JSON / tab-separated body text
- Maybe them all

Display in the Datatracker

- Need to be able to see "changes since nnn days", "changes since dd/mm/yy", and so on
- Can sort the rows in many ways (alphabetical or date)
- Can display only particular columns

File output

- When visiting a list page in the Datatracker, the user can download a file that has all the data in it
- Format to be determined
- Maybe offer in multiple formats, but maybe just one with pointers to code samples for parsers

Open issues

- Add your own!
- Here are some that have appeared so far, but there are probably others
- Bringing new ones up early will help spark other ideas

Known open issues (1)

- A way to say "tell me if this draft does not change state in the next nnn days". This gives a "dashboard" style capability.

- Better coverage of the states of non-IETF streams (IRTF, IAB, ISE). Also, need definitions of "significant change in status" for the three non-IETF streams.

- Difficult interplay between privacy and sharing lists. If someone shares a list, that person doesn't want anyone modifying the contents of the list. So, there might need to be "sharing a shadow list" or something similar.

Known open issues (2)

- There may be legal issues with keeping user data private if we use login accounts.
- Is there a formal definition for "drafts associated with a particular WG"?
- When an AD agrees to sponsor an individual submission, does the Datatracker consider that draft associated with the AD?
- Thought: add a button in the normal Datatracker output to add a particular draft to a particular list.

Known open issues (3)

- Should the file output be in all the interesting formats (XML and JSON and tab-separated text) or just one?
- How prescriptive do we want to be? Should this say things like "JavaScript pop-up" and "CSS" and such?
- Should paging be supported for long lists in the HTML display?
- Does the user need to be able to specify a date range, or just a range that ends in now?

And now...

- You!