

The Independent Stream – an Introduction

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All about the Independent Stream (InSt)

- History
- The InSt and its Editor (ISE)
- Relevant RFCs: 4846 and 6548
- What does the InSt actually publish?
- ISE process
 - Submission, Reviews, Revisions
 - IESG's Conflict Review
 - Publishing

Early History (RFC Editor version 1)

- Earliest RFCs documented the work of the ARPANET project
 - RFC 1, Steve Crocker, April 1969
- IETF started in 1986, as a Task Force reporting to IAB
 - Changed to present structure in 1992
- RFC Editor was a separate entity, to edit/publish RFCs
 - Edited from early on and until 1998 by Jon Postel, assisted by Joyce Reynolds from 1980
 - Strong editorial control during most of that period
 - Until after the IETF began in 1986, all RFCs other than those generated internally were Independent Submissions

More Recent History (version 2)

- In 2009 the 'RFC Editor' was split into three parts
 - RFC Series Editor
 - RFC Production Centre
 - Document “Streams”
 - Each stream considers documents, and may request the RFC Production Centre to publish them as RFCs
 - There are four Streams:
 - IETF
 - IAB
 - IRTF
 - Independent

Some Background

- From “RFC Editor in Transition: Past, Present, and Future” (Internet Protocol Journal, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 2010):
 - Bob Hinden: *The RFC Series is what enables people to build products, networks, and the Internet*
 - Sandy Ginoza: *The value of the Independent Stream is that "it offers an alternate view than what happens in the IETF and what working groups have decided to take on as part of their chartered activities. It's good to document that work was done, results were generated, lessons learned, etc. 'We tried it; don't do it this way'"*
- (More explanation in RFC 4846)

ISE Job Description

- Defined in RFC 6548,
“Independent Submission Editor Model”
 - Responsible for the Independent Stream
 - Appointed by the IAB, “not under the authority or direction of the RSE or the RFC Series Oversight Committee (RSOC)”
 - Part-time, volunteer position
 - May choose to select individuals to participate in an Advisory Board for assistance as the ISE deems appropriate
 - This is the *Independent Submissions Editorial Board*

Independent Stream (InSt) process

- Defined in RFC 4846
- Abstract
 - There is a long-standing tradition in the Internet community, predating the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) by many years, of use of the RFC Series to publish materials that are not rooted in the IETF standards process and its review and approval mechanisms. These documents, known as "Independent Submissions," serve a number of important functions for the Internet community, both inside and outside of the community of active IETF participants. This document discusses the Independent Submission model and some reasons why it is important

How Independent is the InSt?

- “Independent Submissions are most valuable if they are, in fact, independent of the IETF process” (RFC 4846)
 - InSt publication can't be blocked by any of the IETF-related entities
- However:
 - IESG checks for conflicts with IETF work, and may suggest “IESG Notes” or other modifications to ISE

What type of RFCs can InSt publish?

- Intended Status of InSt RFCs can only be
 - Informational
 - Experimental
 - Historic
- *They may NOT be Standards Track or Best Current Practice*
 - Those require IETF community consensus
- InSt RFCs get two or more peer reviews, but don't represent any kind of consensus

What material is most suitable for the InSt?

- Work that doesn't fit within another Stream:
 - eduroam, vendor-developed systems (e.g. EIGRP)
 - Historic (e.g. Arpanet IMP manual)
- Work that one of the other Streams doesn't wish to devote resources to:
 - 'Specification-Required' codepoints in an IANA Registry
- Work that has been discussed in a WG or a RG, not adopted in that group, but that is already deployed in the Internet:
 - A technology alternative to one developed in a WG

Other possible material

- Critical reviews of IETF or other technical work
 - Consequently, comments on, or counterproposals to, IETF processes are generally unwelcome
- Republication, by mutual consent, of standards developed by other bodies for the convenience of the Internet community
- RFC 4846 lists other possibilities:
 - This list there is not exhaustive
 - It includes Eulogies (e.g. RFC 2441, Jon Postel)

Minimal Requirements for an InSt RFC

- Technology-related topic
 - Particularly with existing implementation(s) and deployment
- Not something that would be more suitable elsewhere (e.g. W3C, BBF, ...)
- Should not read like a Standard
- Reasonable technical quality
- Remember:
 - ISE has Editorial Discretion, and can "just say no"

Boilerplate, Intellectual Property

- InSt has its own boilerplate for RFCs
 - For example, see RFC 7593 (Eduroam)
- The IETF's IPR policy applies to all Internet Drafts
 - Independent submissions are usually first posted as Internet Drafts
 - All Internet Drafts say
 - *This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79*

How to Submit to the InSt

- Usually, create your document as an Internet Draft, then post it, see <https://www.ietf.org/id-info>
- <https://www.rfc-editor.org/about/independent/> lists the information you should give to support your submission
- Send an email (which provides the supporting information) to rfc-ise@rfc-editor.org

Information to support your submission

- The file name of the posted Internet-Draft that is being submitted
- The intended status (Informational, Experimental or Historic) of the RFC
- A summary of related discussion of this document, if any, that has occurred in an IETF working group, on an IETF mailing list, or in the IESG

Information to support your submission (2)

- An assertion that no IANA allocation in the document requires IETF Consensus or Standards Action; see RFC 5226 for more information
- Optionally, a statement of the purpose of publishing this document, its intended audience, its merits and significance
- Optionally, suggested names and contact information for one or more competent and independent potential reviewers for the document

Reviews

- If/when your submission is accepted for consideration, ISE must find two or more reviewers
- ISE can ask any appropriate party including IETF leadership or Editorial Board for help with finding reviewers (or for reviews)
 - Reviewers are asked for a brief opinion (for the ISE), and a full review within about three weeks
 - Reviewers may remain anonymous; most don't
 - They're asked to suggest other likely reviewers
- ISE must also ask IESG for a 'Conflict Review'

Reviewer Guidelines

- Is it technically sound?
 - Are there errors which must be corrected?
 - Could anything in it be explained more clearly?
- For protocols, is enough detail given for someone else to implement it (from the text)?
- Are all required Internet-Draft sections present and sufficient?

Authors' Response to Reviews

- ISE will send reviews to draft authors
 - ISE may send suggestions to authors
 - ISE may also request improvements, to be made before the draft can proceed further
 - Most reviewers are happy to discuss changes with authors
- Authors then post new revision(s) of their draft until reviewers and ISE agree that the draft is ready for further consideration
- ISE then asks IESG for a 'Conflict Review' of the draft

ISE Write-up for IESG

- When sending a draft to IESG, ISE provides a write-up for it
- Each draft's write-up may include:
 - Draft Abstract
 - Brief history of the draft's development
 - Comments on IANA and Security Considerations
 - List of reviewers
 - Copies of their reviews

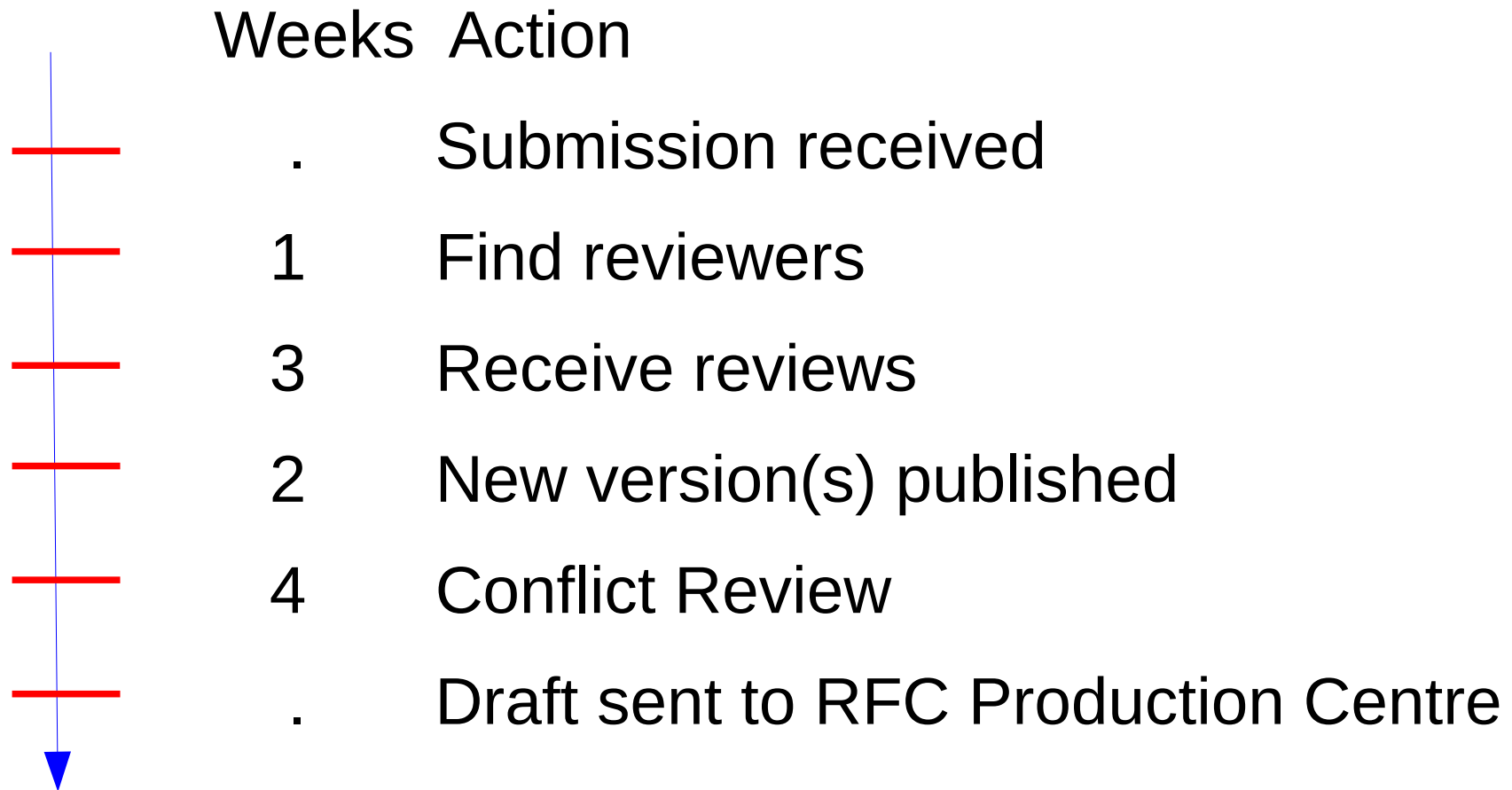
IESG Conflict Review

- When the draft is ready, the ISE sends it, together with its supporting write-up, to the IESG for their Conflict Review
- IESG review the draft (see RFC 5742 for details)
 - They may email questions to its authors and/or the ISE
- IESG sends a recommendation, optionally supported by review-like comments or textual suggestions, to the ISE

ISE action after the Conflict Review

- ISE may ask authors to revise the draft in response to IESG comments
- Once the ISE is convinced that any concerns have been adequately addressed, the draft is sent to the RFC Production Centre
 - You can then track it in the RFC Editor Queue
- Or ...
 - ISE may decide to publish it anyway
 - ISE may decide not to publish it

Timeline (optimistic best case)



- Times are approximate (total 10 weeks)
- ISE may ask for revisions during any step

Statistics for March 2015–March 2016 year

- 93 drafts handled
 - 54 *finished*
 - 22 published
 - 2 moved to IETF stream
 - 19 withdrawn by authors
 - 11 rejected (DNP)
 - 39 *in process*
 - 21 waiting on reviewers or reviews
 - 18 waiting on authors' revisions

Some InSt Myths

- InSt processing is faster than going through a Working Group or Research Group
 - *Possible, but not very often*
- InSt can be used to make an end-run around a Working Group
 - *ISE consults WG Chairs and Area Directors to prevent that*

1 April RFCs

- The RFC Editor may publish a few of these each year
- Do not post them as Internet Drafts
- Instead, send them as .txt or and/or .xml attachments in an email to the RFC Editor or the ISE
- They must reach us by early March to be considered for that year's 1 April RFCs

How to contact the ISE

- Email to rfc-ise@rfc-editor.org
- ISE holds Office Hours at IETF meetings (at the RFC Editor desk)
 - At IETF 98, they are
 - Wednesday 0900–1130
 - Thursday 1300–1720

Any Questions ?

- Feedback from this tutorial
 - Please fill in the short questionnaire at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/98ind>