draft-gondwana-effective-terminology

GENDISPATCH 2020-09-01
Bron Gondwana

https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-gondwana-effective-terminology/
Goals

• Find/document the areas in which consensus exists in the IETF regarding terminology.

• Avoid trying to solve all the world’s problems or take sides in current political debates.

• Centre the IETF’s mission, and use that as the basis to inform our choices.
IETF Mission RFC3935

• “make the Internet work better by producing high quality, relevant technical documents”
• The IETF exists to improve the Internet
• The Internet exists to serve all humans
• It follows that our goal is to produce high quality documents that serve all humans
Not all problems

- There are many things wrong in the world
- Other organisations have other missions
- Ours is: “influence the way people design, use, and manage the Internet”:
  - Success of the internet has pros and cons for humans
  - We want to reduce the downsides where possible
  - But we are relentlessly pro-internet and proud of our work
Not all humans

• The IETF serves all humans, but doesn’t want everybody to be involved:
  – Only adult humans
  – Only people who bring technical competence
    • not e.g. those who believe that writing “data transfer faster than the speed of light” and stamping “RFC” on it makes it so.
  – Only people who sign on to our mission
    • not e.g. “all protocols must be designed with a primary purpose of ensuring extraterrestrials can be detected”.

Don’t bring your whole self

• Nudists: wear clothes when attending an IETF meeting, even if remote! Pants not optional.

• Assholes: behave professionally and debate issues, not people. Good behaviour not optional.

• The goals of our norms reflect our mission:
  - take away distractions that remove our focus from the work
  - welcome those with contributions to make
Persuasion

• Consensus: persuasion, fatigue, or fiat.

• “You’re all racists” would be unpersuasive, even if true.

• Build on enlightened self-interest and increasing the value of our work.
Next steps

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• I don’t expect this is close to final form yet!
  – Do we believe there is a consensus here that’s worth documenting?
  – Is there interest in adopting this draft as a basis for work?
  – Is there anybody who wants to co-author (or even take it from me entirely)?