

Avoiding Exclusionary Language in RFCs

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Keith Moore

- Language that offends or distracts is counterproductive to IETF's goals
- We can and should do better
 - I believe the community will willingly do so
- Changes to language can also harm clarity and readability
- Most (not all) suggestions to modify our language are probably uncontroversial, because:
 - The language is obviously disparaging, or obsolete
 - The language is of low value to IETF
- A few words are very useful, not easily replaced, and may lack compelling evidence of harm
 - Changing these may be controversial

- Recommendations high points:
 - RFC editor maintains exclusionary language section in style guide
 - I-D tools warn authors/editors of potentially exclusionary language, based on style guide
 - Author/editor and WG entrusted to make good decisions (perhaps in consultation with RFC editor)
 - They are subject matter experts
 - No automatic substitutions
 - Mandatory blocking rules require IETF consensus
 - No requirement to revise existing RFCs