IETF Working Group
Guidelines and Procedures

Status of this Memo

This document specifies an Internet Best Current Practices for the Internet Community, and requests discussion and suggestions for improvements. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Abstract

The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) has responsibility for developing and reviewing specifications intended as Internet Standards. IETF activities are organized into working groups (WGs). This document describes the guidelines and procedures for formation and operation of IETF working groups. It also describes the formal relationship between IETF participants WG and the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) and the basic duties of IETF participants, including WG Chairs, WG participants, and IETF Area Directors.

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1. Introduction

The Internet, a loosely-organized international collaboration of autonomous, interconnected networks, supports host-to-host communication through voluntary adherence to open protocols and procedures defined by Internet Standards. There are also many isolated interconnected networks, which are not connected to the global Internet but use the Internet Standards. Internet Standards are developed in the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). This document defines guidelines and procedures for IETF working groups. The Internet Standards Process of the IETF is defined in [1]. The organizations involved in the IETF Standards Process are described in [2] as are the roles of specific individuals.

The IETF is a large, open community of network designers, operators, vendors, users, and researchers concerned with the Internet and the technology used on it. The primary activities of the IETF are performed by committees known as working groups. There are currently more than 100 working groups. (See the IETF web page for an up-to-date list of IETF Working Groups - http://www.ietf.org.) Working groups tend to have a narrow focus and a lifetime bounded by the completion of a specific set of tasks, although there are exceptions.
For management purposes, the IETF working groups are collected together into areas, with each area having a separate focus. For example, the security area deals with the development of security-related technology. Each IETF area is managed by one or two Area Directors (ADs). There are currently 8 areas in the IETF but the number changes from time to time. (See the IETF web page for a list of the current areas, the Area Directors for each area, and a list of which working groups are assigned to each area.)

In many areas, the Area Directors have formed an advisory group or directorate. These comprise experienced members of the IETF and the technical community represented by the area. The specific name and the details of the role for each group differ from area to area, but the primary intent is that these groups assist the Area Director(s), e.g., with the review of specifications produced in the area.

The IETF area directors are selected by a nominating committee, which also selects an overall chair for the IETF. The nominations process is described in [3].

The area directors sitting as a body, along with the IETF Chair, comprise the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). The IETF Executive Director is an ex-officio participant of the IESG, as are the IAB Chair and a designated Internet Architecture Board (IAB) liaison. The IESG approves IETF Standards and approves the publication of other IETF documents. (See [1].)

A small IETF Secretariat provides staff and administrative support for the operation of the IETF.

There is no formal membership in the IETF. Participation is open to all. This participation may be by on-line contribution, attendance at face-to-face sessions, or both. Anyone from the Internet community who has the time and interest is urged to participate in IETF meetings and any of its on-line working group discussions. Participation is by individual technical contributors, rather than by formal representatives of organizations.

This document defines procedures and guidelines for the formation and operation of working groups in the IETF. It defines the relations of working groups to other bodies within the IETF. The duties of working group Chairs and Area Directors with respect to the operation of the working group are also defined. When used in this document the key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" are to be interpreted as described in RFC 2119 [6]. RFC 2119 defines the use of these key words to help make the intent of standards track documents as clear as possible. The same key words are used in this
document to help smooth WG operation and reduce the chance for confusion about the processes.

1.1. IETF approach to standardization

Familiarity with The Internet Standards Process [1] is essential for a complete understanding of the philosophy, procedures and guidelines described in this document.

1.2. Roles within a Working Group

The document, "Organizations Involved in the IETF Standards Process" [2] describes the roles of a number of individuals within a working group, including the working group chair and the document editor. These descriptions are expanded later in this document.

2. Working group formation

IETF working groups (WGs) are the primary mechanism for development of IETF specifications and guidelines, many of which are intended to be standards or recommendations. A working group may be established at the initiative of an Area Director or it may be initiated by an individual or group of individuals. Anyone interested in creating an IETF working group MUST obtain the advice and consent of the IETF Area Director(s) in whose area the working group would fall and MUST proceed through the formal steps detailed in this section.

Working groups are typically created to address a specific problem or to produce one or more specific deliverables (a guideline, standards specification, etc.). Working groups are generally expected to be short-lived in nature. Upon completion of its goals and achievement of its objectives, the working group is terminated. A working group may also be terminated for other reasons (see section 4).
Alternatively, with the concurrence of the IESG, Area Director, the WG Chair, and the WG participants, the objectives or assignment of the working group may be extended by modifying the working group’s charter through a rechartering process (see section 5).

2.1. Criteria for formation

When determining whether it is appropriate to create a working group, the Area Director(s) and the IESG will consider several issues:

- Are the issues that the working group plans to address clear and relevant to the Internet community?

- Are the goals specific and reasonably achievable, and achievable within a reasonable time frame?
- What are the risks and urgency of the work, to determine the level of effort required?

- Do the working group’s activities overlap with those of another working group? If so, it may still be appropriate to create the working group, but this question must be considered carefully by the Area Directors as subdividing efforts often dilutes the available technical expertise.

- Is there sufficient interest within the IETF in the working group’s topic with enough people willing to expend the effort to produce the desired result (e.g., a protocol specification)? Working groups require considerable effort, including management of the working group process, editing of working group documents, and contributing to the document text. IETF experience suggests that these roles typically cannot all be handled by one person; a minimum of four or five active participants in the management positions are typically required in addition to a minimum of one or two dozen people that will attend the working group meetings and contribute on the mailing list. NOTE: The interest must be broad enough that a working group would not be seen as merely the activity of a single vendor.

- Is there enough expertise within the IETF in the working group’s topic, and are those people interested in contributing in the working group?

- Does a base of interested consumers (end-users) appear to exist for the planned work? Consumer interest can be measured by participation of end-users within the IETF process, as well as by less direct means.

- Does the IETF have a reasonable role to play in the determination of the technology? There are many Internet-related technologies that may be interesting to IETF members but in some cases the IETF may not be in a position to effect the course of the technology in the "real world". This can happen, for example, if the technology is being developed by another standards body or an industry consortium.

- Are all known intellectual property rights relevant to the proposed working group’s efforts issues understood?

- Is the proposed work plan an open IETF effort or is it an attempt to "bless" non-IETF technology where the effect of input from IETF participants may be limited?
- Is there a good understanding of any existing work that is relevant to the topics that the proposed working group is to pursue? This includes work within the IETF and elsewhere.

- Do the working group’s goals overlap with known work in another standards body, and if so is adequate liaison in place?

Considering the above criteria, the Area Director(s), using his or her best judgment, will decide whether to pursue the formation of the group through the chartering process.

2.2. Charter

The formation of a working group requires a charter which is primarily negotiated between a prospective working group Chair and the relevant Area Director(s), although final approval is made by the IESG with advice from the Internet Architecture Board (IAB). A charter is a contract between a working group and the IETF to perform a set of tasks. A charter:

1. Lists relevant administrative information for the working group;
2. Specifies the direction or objectives of the working group and describes the approach that will be taken to achieve the goals; and
3. Enumerates a set of milestones together with time frames for their completion.

When the prospective Chair(s), the Area Director and the IETF Secretariat are satisfied with the charter form and content, it becomes the basis for forming a working group. Note that an Area Director MAY require holding an exploratory Birds of a Feather (BOF) meeting, as described below, to gage the level of support for a working group before submitting the charter to the IESG and IAB for approval.

Charters may be renegotiated periodically to reflect the current status, organization or goals of the working group (see section 5). Hence, a charter is a contract between the IETF and the working group which is committing to meet explicit milestones and delivering specific "products".

Specifically, each charter consists of the following sections:

Working group name

A working group name should be reasonably descriptive or identifiable. Additionally, the group shall define an acronym (maximum 8 printable ASCII characters) to reference the group in the IETF directories, mailing lists, and general documents.
Chair(s)
The working group may have one or more Chairs to perform the administrative functions of the group. The email address(es) of the Chair(s) shall be included. Generally, a working group is limited to two chairs.

Area and Area Director(s)
The name of the IETF area with which the working group is affiliated and the name and electronic mail address of the associated Area Director(s).

Responsible Area Director
The Area Director who acts as the primary IESG contact for the working group.

Mailing list
An IETF working group MUST have a general Internet mailing list. Most of the work of an IETF working group will be conducted on the mailing list. The working group charter MUST include:

1. The address to which a participant sends a subscription request and the procedures to follow when subscribing,

2. The address to which a participant sends submissions and special procedures, if any, and

3. The location of the mailing list archive. A message archive MUST be maintained in a public place which can be accessed via FTP or via the web.

As a service to the community, the IETF Secretariat operates a mailing list archive for working group mailing lists. In order to take advantage of this service, working group mailing lists MUST include the address "wg_acronym-archive@lists.ietf.org" (where "wg_acronym" is the working group acronym) in the mailing list in order that a copy of all mailing list messages be recorded in the Secretariat’s archive. Those archives are located at ftp://ftp.ietf.org/ietf-mail-archive. For robustness, WGs SHOULD maintain an additional archive separate from that maintained by the Secretariat.

Description of working group
The focus and intent of the group shall be set forth briefly. By reading this section alone, an individual should be able to decide whether this group is relevant to their own work. The first paragraph must give a brief summary of the problem area, basis, goal(s) and approach(es) planned for the working group. This paragraph can be used as an overview of the working group’s
effort.

To facilitate evaluation of the intended work and to provide on-
going guidance to the working group, the charter must describe the
problem being solved and should discuss objectives and expected
impact with respect to:

- Architecture
- Operations
- Security
- Network management
- Scaling
- Transition (where applicable)

Goals and milestones
The working group charter MUST establish a timetable for specific
work items. While this may be renegotiated over time, the list of
milestones and dates facilitates the Area Director’s tracking of
working group progress and status, and it is indispensable to
potential participants identifying the critical moments for input.
Milestones shall consist of deliverables that can be qualified as
showing specific achievement; e.g., "Internet-Draft finished" is
fine, but "discuss via email" is not. It is helpful to specify
milestones for every 3-6 months, so that progress can be gauged
easily. This milestone list is expected to be updated
periodically (see section 5).

An example of a WG charter is included as Appendix A.

2.3. Charter review & approval

Proposed working groups often comprise technically competent
participants who are not familiar with the history of Internet
architecture or IETF processes. This can, unfortunately, lead to
good working group consensus about a bad design. To facilitate
working group efforts, an Area Director may assign a Consultant from
among the ranks of senior IETF participants. (Consultants are
described in section 6.) At the discretion of the Area Director,
approval of a new WG may be withheld in the absence of sufficient
consultant resources.

Once the Area Director (and the Area Directorate, as the Area
Director deems appropriate) has approved the working group charter,
the charter is submitted for review by the IAB and approval by the
IESG. After a review period of at least a week the proposed charter
is posted to the IETF-announce mailing list as a public notice that
the formation of the working group is being considered. At the same
time the proposed charter is also posted to the "new-work" mailing
list. This mailing list has been created to let qualified representatives from other standards organizations know about pending IETF working groups. After another review period lasting at least a week the IESG MAY approve the charter as-is, it MAY request that changes be made in the charter, or MAY decline to approve chartering of the working group.

If the IESG approves the formation of the working group it remands the approved charter to the IETF Secretariat who records and enters the information into the IETF tracking database. The working group is announced to the IETF-announce a by the IETF Secretariat.

2.4. Birds of a Feather (BOF)

Often it is not clear whether an issue merits the formation of a working group. To facilitate exploration of the issues the IETF offers the possibility of a Birds of a Feather (BOF) session, as well as the early formation of an email list for preliminary discussion. In addition, a BOF may serve as a forum for a single presentation or discussion, without any intent to form a working group.

A BOF is a session at an IETF meeting which permits "market research" and technical "brainstorming". Any individual may request permission to hold a BOF on a subject. The request MUST be filed with a relevant Area Director who must approve a BOF before it can be scheduled. The person who requests the BOF may be asked to serve as Chair of the BOF.

The Chair of the BOF is also responsible for providing a report on the outcome of the BOF. If the Area Director approves, the BOF is then scheduled by submitting a request to agenda@ietf.org with copies to the Area Director(s). A BOF description and agenda are required before a BOF can be scheduled.

Available time for BOFs is limited, and BOFs are held at the discretion of the ADs for an area. The AD(s) may require additional assurances before authorizing a BOF. For example,

- The Area Director MAY require the establishment of an open email list prior to authorizing a BOF. This permits initial exchanges and sharing of framework, vocabulary and approaches, in order to make the time spent in the BOF more productive.

- The Area Director MAY require that a BOF be held, prior to establishing a working group (see section 2.2).

- The Area Director MAY require that there be a draft of the WG charter prior to holding a BOF.
- The Area Director MAY require that a BOF not be held until an
  Internet-Draft describing the proposed technology has been
  published so it can be used as a basis for discussion in the BOF.

In general, a BOF on a particular topic is held only once (ONE slot
at one IETF Plenary meeting). Under unusual circumstances Area
Directors may, at their discretion, allow a BOF to meet for a second
time. BOFs are not permitted to meet three times. Note that all
other things being equal, WGs will be given priority for meeting
space over BOFs. Also, occasionally BOFs may be held for other
purposes than to discuss formation of a working group.

Usually the outcome of a BOF will be one of the following:

- There was enough interest and focus in the subject to warrant the
  formation of a WG;

- While there was a reasonable level of interest expressed in the
  BOF some other criteria for working group formation was not met
  (see section 2.1).

- The discussion came to a fruitful conclusion, with results to be
  written down and published, however there is no need to establish
  a WG; or

- There was not enough interest in the subject to warrant the
  formation of a WG.

3. Working Group Operation

The IETF has basic requirements for open and fair participation and
for thorough consideration of technical alternatives. Within those
constraints, working groups are autonomous and each determines most
of the details of its own operation with respect to session
participation, reaching closure, etc. The core rule for operation is
that acceptance or agreement is achieved via working group "rough
consensus". WG participants should specifically note the
requirements for disclosure of conflicts of interest in [2].

A number of procedural questions and issues will arise over time, and
it is the function of the Working Group Chair(s) to manage the group
process, keeping in mind that the overall purpose of the group is to
make progress towards reaching rough consensus in realizing the
working group’s goals and objectives.

There are few hard and fast rules on organizing or conducting working
group activities, but a set of guidelines and practices has evolved
over time that have proven successful. These are listed here, with
actual choices typically determined by the working group participants and the Chair(s).

3.1. Session planning

For coordinated, structured WG interactions, the Chair(s) MUST publish a draft agenda well in advance of the actual session. The agenda should contain at least:

- The items for discussion;
- The estimated time necessary per item; and
- A clear indication of what documents the participants will need to read before the session in order to be well prepared.

Publication of the working group agenda shall include sending a copy of the agenda to the working group mailing list and to agenda@ietf.org.

All working group actions shall be taken in a public forum, and wide participation is encouraged. A working group will conduct much of its business via electronic mail distribution lists but may meet periodically to discuss and review task status and progress, to resolve specific issues and to direct future activities. IETF Plenary meetings are the primary venue for these face-to-face working group sessions, and it is common (though not required) that active "interim" face-to-face meetings, telephone conferences, or video conferences may also be held. Interim meetings are subject to the same rules for advance notification, reporting, open participation, and process, which apply to other working group meetings.

All working group sessions (including those held outside of the IETF meetings) shall be reported by making minutes available. These minutes should include the agenda for the session, an account of the discussion including any decisions made, and a list of attendees. The Working Group Chair is responsible for insuring that session minutes are written and distributed, though the actual task may be performed by someone designated by the Working Group Chair. The minutes shall be submitted in printable ASCII text for publication in the IETF Proceedings, and for posting in the IETF Directories and are to be sent to: minutes@ietf.org

3.2. Session venue

Each working group will determine the balance of email and face-to-face sessions that is appropriate for achieving its milestones. Electronic mail permits the widest participation; face-to-face meetings often permit better focus and therefore can be more efficient for reaching a consensus among a core of the working group
participants. In determining the balance, the WG must ensure that its process does not serve to exclude contribution by email-only participants. Decisions reached during a face-to-face meeting about topics or issues which have not been discussed on the mailing list, or are significantly different from previously arrived mailing list consensus MUST be reviewed on the mailing list.

IETF Meetings
If a WG needs a session at an IETF meeting, the Chair must apply for time-slots as soon as the first announcement of that IETF meeting is made by the IETF Secretariat to the WG-chairs list. Session time is a scarce resource at IETF meetings, so placing requests early will facilitate schedule coordination for WGs requiring the same set of experts.

The application for a WG session at an IETF meeting MUST be made to the IETF Secretariat at the address agenda@ietf.org. Some Area Directors may want to coordinate WG sessions in their area and request that time slots be coordinated through them. If this is the case it will be noted in the IETF meeting announcement. A WG scheduling request MUST contain:

- The working group name and full title;
- The amount of time requested;
- The rough outline of the WG agenda that is expected to be covered;
- The estimated number of people that will attend the WG session;
- Related WGs that should not be scheduled for the same time slot(s);
and
- Optionally a request can be added for the WG session to be transmitted over the Internet in audio and video.

NOTE: While open discussion and contribution is essential to working group success, the Chair is responsible for ensuring forward progress. When acceptable to the WG, the Chair may call for restricted participation (but not restricted attendance!) at IETF working group sessions for the purpose of achieving progress. The Working Group Chair then has the authority to refuse to grant the floor to any individual who is unprepared or otherwise covering inappropriate material, or who, in the opinion of the Chair is disrupting the WG process. The Chair should consult with the Area Director(s) if the individual persists in disruptive behavior.

On-line
It can be quite useful to conduct email exchanges in the same manner as a face-to-face session, with published schedule and agenda, as well as on-going summarization and consensus polling.
Many working group participants hold that mailing list discussion is the best place to consider and resolve issues and make decisions. The choice of operational style is made by the working group itself. It is important to note, however, that Internet email discussion is possible for a much wider base of interested persons than is attendance at IETF meetings, due to the time and expense required to attend.

As with face-to-face sessions occasionally one or more individuals may engage in behavior on a mailing list which disrupts the WG’s progress. In these cases the Chair should attempt to discourage the behavior by communication directly with the offending individual rather than on the open mailing list. If the behavior persists then the Chair must involve the Area Director in the issue. As a last resort and after explicit warnings, the Area Director, with the approval of the IESG, may request that the mailing list maintainer block the ability of the offending individual to post to the mailing list. (If the mailing list software permits this type of operation.) Even if this is done, the individual must not be prevented from receiving messages posted to the list. Other methods of mailing list control may be considered but must be approved by the AD(s) and the IESG.

3.3. Session management

Working groups make decisions through a "rough consensus" process. IETF consensus does not require that all participants agree although this is, of course, preferred. In general, the dominant view of the working group shall prevail. (However, it must be noted that "dominance" is not to be determined on the basis of volume or persistence, but rather a more general sense of agreement.) Consensus can be determined by a show of hands, humming, or any other means on which the WG agrees (by rough consensus, of course). Note that 51% of the working group does not qualify as "rough consensus" and 99% is better than rough. It is up to the Chair to determine if rough consensus has been reached.

It can be particularly challenging to gauge the level of consensus on a mailing list. There are two different cases where a working group may be trying to understand the level of consensus via a mailing list discussion. But in both cases the volume of messages on a topic is not, by itself, a good indicator of consensus since one or two individuals may be generating much of the traffic.

In the case where a consensus which has been reached during a face-to-face meeting is being verified on a mailing list the people who were in the meeting and expressed agreement must be taken into account. If there were 100 people in a meeting and only a few people
on the mailing list disagree with the consensus of the meeting then the consensus should be seen as being verified. Note that enough time should be given to the verification process for the mailing list readers to understand and consider any objections that may be raised on the list. The normal two week last-call period should be sufficient for this.

The other case is where the discussion has been held entirely over the mailing list. The determination of the level of consensus may be harder to do in this case since most people subscribed to mailing lists do not actively participate in discussions on the list. It is left to the discretion of the working group chair how to evaluate the level of consensus. The most common method used is for the working group chair to state what he or she believes to be the consensus view and, at the same time, requests comments from the list about the stated conclusion.

The challenge to managing working group sessions is to balance the need for open and fair consideration of the issues against the need to make forward progress. The working group, as a whole, has the final responsibility for striking this balance. The Chair has the responsibility for overseeing the process but may delegate direct process management to a formally-designated Facilitator.

It is occasionally appropriate to revisit a topic, to re-evaluate alternatives or to improve the group’s understanding of a relevant decision. However, unnecessary repeated discussions on issues can be avoided if the Chair makes sure that the main arguments in the discussion (and the outcome) are summarized and archived after a discussion has come to conclusion. It is also good practice to note important decisions/consensus reached by email in the minutes of the next ’live’ session, and to summarize briefly the decision-making history in the final documents the WG produces.

To facilitate making forward progress, a Working Group Chair may wish to decide to reject or defer the input from a member, based upon the following criteria:

Old
The input pertains to a topic that already has been resolved and is redundant with information previously available;

Minor
The input is new and pertains to a topic that has already been resolved, but it is felt to be of minor import to the existing decision;
Timing
The input pertains to a topic that the working group has not yet opened for discussion; or

Scope
The input is outside of the scope of the working group charter.

3.4. Contention and appeals

Disputes are possible at various stages during the IETF process. As much as possible the process is designed so that compromises can be made, and genuine consensus achieved; however, there are times when even the most reasonable and knowledgeable people are unable to agree. To achieve the goals of openness and fairness, such conflicts must be resolved by a process of open review and discussion.

Formal procedures for requesting a review of WG, Chair, Area Director or IESG actions and conducting appeals are documented in The Internet Standards Process [1].

4. Working Group Termination

Working groups are typically chartered to accomplish a specific task or tasks. After the tasks are complete, the group will be disbanded. However, if a WG produces a Proposed or Draft Standard, the WG will frequently become dormant rather than disband (i.e., the WG will no longer conduct formal activities, but the mailing list will remain available to review the work as it moves to Draft Standard and Standard status.)

If, at some point, it becomes evident that a working group is unable to complete the work outlined in the charter, or if the assumptions which that work was based have been modified in discussion or by experience, the Area Director, in consultation with the working group can either:

1. Recharter to refocus its tasks,
2. Choose new Chair(s), or
3. Disband.

If the working group disagrees with the Area Director’s choice, it may appeal to the IESG (see section 3.4).

5. Rechartering a Working Group

Updated milestones are renegotiated with the Area Director and the IESG, as needed, and then are submitted to the IESG Secretariat: iesg-secretary@ietf.org.
Rechartering (other than revising milestones) a working group follows the same procedures that the initial chartering does (see section 2). The revised charter must be submitted to the IESG and IAB for approval. As with the initial chartering, the IESG may approve new charter as-is, it may request that changes be made in the new charter (including having the Working Group continue to use the old charter), or it may decline to approve the rechartered working group. In the latter case, the working group is disbanded.

6. Staff Roles

Working groups require considerable care and feeding. In addition to general participation, successful working groups benefit from the efforts of participants filling specific functional roles. The Area Director must agree to the specific people performing the WG Chair, and Working Group Consultant roles, and they serve at the discretion of the Area Director.

6.1. WG Chair

The Working Group Chair is concerned with making forward progress through a fair and open process, and has wide discretion in the conduct of WG business. The Chair must ensure that a number of tasks are performed, either directly or by others assigned to the tasks.

The Chair has the responsibility and the authority to make decisions, on behalf of the working group, regarding all matters of working group process and staffing, in conformance with the rules of the IETF. The AD has the authority and the responsibility to assist in making those decisions at the request of the Chair or when circumstances warrant such an intervention.

The Chair’s responsibility encompasses at least the following:

Ensure WG process and content management

The Chair has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that a working group achieves forward progress and meets its milestones. The Chair is also responsible to ensure that the working group operates in an open and fair manner. For some working groups, this can be accomplished by having the Chair perform all management-related activities. In other working groups -- particularly those with large or divisive participation -- it is helpful to allocate process and/or secretarial functions to other participants. Process management pertains strictly to the style of working group interaction and not to its content. It ensures fairness and detects redundancy. The secretarial function encompasses document editing. It is quite common for a working
group to assign the task of specification Editor to one or two participants. Sometimes, they also are part of the design team, described below.

Moderate the WG email list

The Chair should attempt to ensure that the discussions on this list are relevant and that they converge to consensus agreements. The Chair should make sure that discussions on the list are summarized and that the outcome is well documented (to avoid repetition). The Chair also may choose to schedule organized on-line "sessions" with agenda and deliverables. These can be structured as true meetings, conducted over the course of several days (to allow participation across the Internet).

Organize, prepare and chair face-to-face and on-line formal sessions.

Plan WG Sessions

The Chair must plan and announce all WG sessions well in advance (see section 3.1).

Communicate results of sessions

The Chair and/or Secretary must ensure that minutes of a session are taken and that an attendance list is circulated (see section 3.1).

Immediately after a session, the WG Chair MUST provide the Area Director with a very short report (approximately one paragraph, via email) on the session.

Distribute the workload

Of course, each WG will have participants who may not be able (or want) to do any work at all. Most of the time the bulk of the work is done by a few dedicated participants. It is the task of the Chair to motivate enough experts to allow for a fair distribution of the workload.

Document development

Working groups produce documents and documents need authors. The Chair must make sure that authors of WG documents incorporate changes as agreed to by the WG (see section 6.3).
Document publication

The Chair and/or Document Editor will work with the RFC Editor to ensure document conformance with RFC publication requirements [5] and to coordinate any editorial changes suggested by the RFC Editor. A particular concern is that all participants are working from the same version of a document at the same time.

Document implementations

Under the procedures described in [1], the Chair is responsible for documenting the specific implementations which qualify the specification for Draft or Internet Standard status along with documentation about testing of the interoperation of these implementations.

6.2. WG Secretary

Taking minutes and editing working group documents often is performed by a specifically-designated participant or set of participants. In this role, the Secretary’s job is to record WG decisions, rather than to perform basic specification.

6.3. Document Editor

Most IETF working groups focus their efforts on a document, or set of documents, that capture the results of the group’s work. A working group generally designates a person or persons to serve as the Editor for a particular document. The Document Editor is responsible for ensuring that the contents of the document accurately reflect the decisions that have been made by the working group.

As a general practice, the Working Group Chair and Document Editor positions are filled by different individuals to help ensure that the resulting documents accurately reflect the consensus of the working group and that all processes are followed.

6.4. WG Facilitator

When meetings tend to become distracted or divisive, it often is helpful to assign the task of "process management" to one participant. Their job is to oversee the nature, rather than the content, of participant interactions. That is, they attend to the style of the discussion and to the schedule of the agenda, rather than making direct technical contributions themselves.
6.5. Design teams

It is often useful, and perhaps inevitable, for a sub-group of a working group to develop a proposal to solve a particular problem. Such a sub-group is called a design team. In order for a design team to remain small and agile, it is acceptable to have closed membership and private meetings. Design teams may range from an informal chat between people in a hallway to a formal set of expert volunteers that the WG chair or AD appoints to attack a controversial problem. The output of a design team is always subject to approval, rejection or modification by the WG as a whole.

6.6. Working Group Consultant

At the discretion of the Area Director, a Consultant may be assigned to a working group. Consultants have specific technical background appropriate to the WG and experience in Internet architecture and IETF process.

6.7. Area Director

Area Directors are responsible for ensuring that working groups in their area produce coherent, coordinated, architecturally consistent and timely output as a contribution to the overall results of the IETF.

7. Working Group Documents

7.1. Session documents

All relevant documents to be discussed at a session should be published and available as Internet-Drafts at least two weeks before a session starts. Any document which does not meet this publication deadline can only be discussed in a working group session with the specific approval of the working group chair(s). Since it is important that working group members have adequate time to review all documents, granting such an exception should only be done under unusual conditions. The final session agenda should be posted to the working group mailing list at least two weeks before the session and sent at that time to agenda@ietf.org for publication on the IETF web site.

7.2. Internet-Drafts (I-D)

The Internet-Drafts directory is provided to working groups as a resource for posting and disseminating in-process copies of working group documents. This repository is replicated at various locations around the Internet. It is encouraged that draft documents be posted
as soon as they become reasonably stable.

It is stressed here that Internet-Drafts are working documents and have no official standards status whatsoever. They may, eventually, turn into a standards-track document or they may sink from sight. Internet-Drafts are submitted to: internet-drafts@ietf.org

The format of an Internet-Draft must be the same as for an RFC [2]. Further, an I-D must contain:

- Beginning, standard, boilerplate text which is provided by the Secretariat on their web site and in the ftp directory;
- The I-D filename; and
- The expiration date for the I-D.

Complete specification of requirements for an Internet-Draft are found in the file "lid-guidelines.txt" in the Internet-Drafts directory at an Internet Repository site. The organization of the Internet-Drafts directory is found in the file "lid-organization" in the Internet-Drafts directory at an Internet Repository site. This file also contains the rules for naming Internet-Drafts. (See [1] for more information about Internet-Drafts.)

7.3. Request For Comments (RFC)

The work of an IETF working group often results in publication of one or more documents, as part of the Request For Comments (RFCs) [1] series. This series is the archival publication record for the Internet community. A document can be written by an individual in a working group, by a group as a whole with a designated Editor, or by others not involved with the IETF.

NOTE: The RFC series is a publication mechanism only and publication does not determine the IETF status of a document. Status is determined through separate, explicit status labels assigned by the IESG on behalf of the IETF. In other words, the reader is reminded that all Internet Standards are published as RFCs, but NOT all RFCs specify standards [4].

7.4. Working Group Last-Call

When a WG decides that a document is ready for publication it may be submitted to the IESG for consideration. In most cases the determination that a WG feels that a document is ready for publication is done by the WG Chair issuing a working group Last-Call. The decision to issue a working group Last-Call is at the discretion of the WG Chair working with the Area Director. A working group Last-Call serves the same purpose within a working group that
an IESG Last-Call does in the broader IETF community (see [1]).

7.5. Submission of documents

Once that a WG has determined at least rough consensus exists within the WG for the advancement of a document the following must be done:

- The version of the relevant document exactly as agreed to by the WG MUST be in the Internet-Drafts directory.

- The relevant document MUST be formatted according to section 7.3.

- The WG Chair MUST send email to the relevant Area Director. A copy of the request MUST be also sent to the IESG Secretariat. The mail MUST contain the reference to the document’s ID filename, and the action requested. The copy of the message to the IESG Secretariat is to ensure that the request gets recorded by the Secretariat so that they can monitor the progress of the document through the process.

Unless returned by the IESG to the WG for further development, progressing of the document is then the responsibility of the IESG. After IESG approval, responsibility for final disposition is the joint responsibility of the RFC Editor, the WG Chair and the Document Editor.

8. Review of documents

The IESG reviews all documents submitted for publication as RFCs. Usually minimal IESG review is necessary in the case of a submission from a WG intended as an Informational or Experimental RFC. More extensive review is undertaken in the case of standards-track documents.

Prior to the IESG beginning their deliberations on standards-track documents, IETF Secretariat will issue a "Last-Call" to the IETF mailing list (see [1]). This Last Call will announce the intention of the IESG to consider the document, and it will solicit final comments from the IETF within a period of two weeks. It is important to note that a Last-Call is intended as a brief, final check with the Internet community, to make sure that no important concerns have been missed or misunderstood. The Last-Call should not serve as a more general, in-depth review.

The IESG review takes into account responses to the Last-Call and will lead to one of these possible conclusions:
1. The document is accepted as is for the status requested.  
   This fact will be announced by the IETF Secretariat to the IETF 
   mailing list and to the RFC Editor.

2. The document is accepted as-is but not for the status requested. 
   This fact will be announced by the IETF Secretariat to the IETF 
   mailing list and to the RFC Editor (see [1] for more details).

3. Changes regarding content are suggested to the author(s)/WG. 
   Suggestions from the IESG must be clear and direct, so as to 
   facilitate working group and author correction of the 
   specification.  If the author(s)/WG can explain to the 
   satisfaction of the IESG why the changes are not necessary, the 
   document will be accepted for publication as under point 1, above. 
   If the changes are made the revised document may be resubmitted 
   for IESG review.

4. Changes are suggested by the IESG and a change in status is 
   recommended. 
   The process described above for 3 and 2 are followed in that 
   order.

5. The document is rejected. 
   Any document rejection will be accompanied by specific and 
   thorough arguments from the IESG. Although the IETF and working 
   group process is structured such that this alternative is not 
   likely to arise for documents coming from a working group, the 
   IESG has the right and responsibility to reject documents that the 
   IESG feels are fatally flawed in some way.

   If any individual or group of individuals feels that the review 
   treatment has been unfair, there is the opportunity to make a 
   procedural complaint. The mechanism for this type of complaints is 
   described in [1].

9. Security Considerations

   Documents describing IETF processes, such as this one, do not have an 
   impact on the security of the network infrastructure or of Internet 
   applications.

   It should be noted that all IETF working groups are required to 
   examine and understand the security implications of any technology 
   they develop. This analysis must be included in any resulting RFCs 
   in a Security Considerations section. Note that merely noting a 
   significant security hole is no longer sufficient. IETF developed 
   technologies should not add insecurity to the environment in which 
   they are run.
10. Acknowledgments

This revision of this document relies heavily on the previous version (RFC 1603) which was edited by Erik Huizer and Dave Crocker. It has been reviewed by the Poisson Working Group.

11. References


12. Editor’s Address

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Appendix: Sample Working Group Charter

Working Group Name:
IP Telephony (iptel)

IETF Area:
Transport Area

Chair(s):
Jonathan Rosenberg <jdrosen@bell-labs.com>

Transport Area Director(s):
Scott Bradner <sob@harvard.edu>
Allyn Romanow <allyn@mci.net>

Responsible Area Director:
Allyn Romanow <allyn@mci.net>

Mailing Lists:
General Discussion: iptel@lists.research.bell-labs.com
To Subscribe: iptel-request@lists.research.bell-labs.com
Archive: http://www.bell-labs.com/mailing-lists/siptel

Description of Working Group:

Before Internet telephony can become a widely deployed service, a number of protocols must be deployed. These include signaling and capabilities exchange, but also include a number of "peripheral" protocols for providing related services.

The primary purpose of this working group is to develop two such supportive protocols and a framework document. They are:

1. Call Processing Syntax. When a call is setup between two endpoints, the signaling will generally pass through several servers (such as an H.323 gatekeeper) which are responsible for forwarding, redirecting, or proxying the signaling messages. For example, a user may make a call to j.doe@bigcompany.com. The signaling message to initiate the call will arrive at some server at bigcompany. This server can inform the caller that the callee is busy, forward the call initiation request to another server closer to the user, or drop the call completely (among other possibilities). It is very desirable to allow the callee to provide input to this process, guiding the server in its decision on how to act. This can enable a wide variety of advanced personal mobility and call agent services.
Such preferences can be expressed in a call processing syntax, which can be authored by the user (or generated automatically by some tool), and then uploaded to the server. The group will develop this syntax, and specify means of securely transporting and extending it. The result will be a single standards track RFC.

2. In addition, the group will write a service model document, which describes the services that are enabled by the call processing syntax, and discusses how the syntax can be used. This document will result in a single RFC.

3. Gateway Attribute Distribution Protocol. When making a call between an IP host and a PSTN user, a telephony gateway must be used. The selection of such gateways can be based on many criteria, including client expressed preferences, service provider preferences, and availability of gateways, in addition to destination telephone number. Since gateways outside of the hosts’ administrative domain might be used, a protocol is required to allow gateways in remote domains to distribute their attributes (such as PSTN connectivity, supported codecs, etc.) to entities in other domains which must make a selection of a gateway. The protocol must allow for scalable, bandwidth efficient, and very secure transmission of these attributes. The group will investigate and design a protocol for this purpose, generate an Internet Draft, and advance it to RFC as appropriate.

Goals and Milestones:

May 98  Issue first Internet-Draft on service framework
Jul 98  Submit framework ID to IESG for publication as an RFC.
Aug 98  Issue first Internet-Draft on Call Processing Syntax
Oct 98  Submit Call processing syntax to IESG for consideration as a Proposed Standard.
Dec 98  Achieve consensus on basics of gateway attribute distribution protocol
Jan 99  Submit Gateway Attribute Distribution protocol to IESG for consideration as a RFC (info, exp, stds track TB
Updates to RFC 2418 Regarding the Management of IETF Mailing Lists

Status of this Memo

This document specifies an Internet Best Current Practices for the
Internet Community, and requests discussion and suggestions for
improvements. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Abstract

This document is an update to RFC 2418 that gives WG chairs explicit
responsibility for managing WG mailing lists. In particular, it
gives WG chairs the authority to temporarily suspend the mailing list
posting privileges of disruptive individuals.

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1. Introduction

As written, RFC 2418 [RFC2418] gives WG chairs more authority to manage face-to-face discussions than to manage mailing list discussions. In face-to-face meetings, the WG chair has the authority "to refuse to grant the floor to any individual who is unprepared or otherwise covering inappropriate material, or who, in the opinion of the Chair, is disrupting the WG process." However, RFC 2418 does not give the WG Chair the authority to suspend the mailing list posting privileges of an individual who is similarly disrupting WG mailing list discussions. RFC 2418 explicitly requires full IESG approval for this action.

This document is an update to RFC 2418, section 3.2. It gives WG chairs the authority to temporarily suspend the posting privileges of disruptive individuals without IESG approval.

2. Specific Changes to RFC 2418

The following paragraphs supersede the last paragraph of RFC 2418, section 3.2:

As in face-to-face sessions, occasionally one or more individuals may engage in behavior on a mailing list that, in the opinion of the WG chair, is disruptive to the WG process. Unless the disruptive behavior is severe enough that it must be stopped immediately, the WG chair should attempt to discourage the disruptive behavior by communicating directly with the offending individual. If the behavior persists, the WG chair should send at least one public warning on the WG mailing list. As a last resort and typically after one or more explicit warnings and consultation with the responsible Area Director, the WG chair may suspend the mailing list posting privileges of the disruptive individual for a period of not more than 30 days. Even while posting privileges are suspended, the individual must not be prevented from receiving messages posted to the list. Like all other WG chair decisions, any suspension of posting privileges is subject to appeal, as described in RFC 2026 [RFC2026].

This mechanism is intended to permit a WG chair to suspend posting privileges of a disruptive individual for a short period of time. This mechanism does not permit WG chairs to suspend an individual’s posting privileges for a period longer than 30 days regardless of the type or severity of the disruptive incident. However, further disruptive behavior by the same individual will be considered separately and may result in further warnings or suspensions. Other methods of mailing list control, including longer suspensions, must
be carried out in accordance with other IETF-approved procedures. See BCP 83 [RFC3683] for one set of procedures already defined and accepted by the community.

3. Security Considerations

This document describes a modification to the IETF process for managing mailing list discussions. It has no security considerations.

4. Acknowledgements

This document reflects a discussion that was held on the MPOWR mailing list in December 2003 and January 2004. In particular, the following people contributed ideas that influenced this document: Harald Alvestrand, Dave Crocker, James Kempf, and John Klensin.

This document was written with the xml2rfc tool described in RFC 2629 [RFC2629].

5. References

5.1. Normative References


5.2. Informative References


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Acknowledgement

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IETF Anti-Harassment Procedures

Abstract

IETF Participants must not engage in harassment while at IETF meetings, virtual meetings, or social events or while participating in mailing lists. This document lays out procedures for managing and enforcing this policy.

This document updates RFC 2418 by defining new working group guidelines and procedures. This document updates RFC 7437 by allowing the Ombudsteam to form a recall petition without further signatories.

Status of This Memo

This memo documents an Internet Best Current Practice.

This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). It represents the consensus of the IETF community. It has received public review and has been approved for publication by the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Further information on BCPs is available in Section 2 of RFC 5741.

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7776.
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1. Introduction

The IETF has general policies for managing disruptive behavior in the context of IETF activities. In particular, [RFC7154] provides a set of guidelines for personal interaction in the IETF, and [RFC2418] and [RFC3934] give guidelines for how to deal with disruptive behavior that occurs in the context of IETF working group face-to-face meetings and on mailing lists.

However, there is other problematic behavior that may be more personal and that can occur in the context of IETF activities (meetings, mailing list discussions, or social events) that does not directly disrupt working group progress but nonetheless is unacceptable behavior between IETF Participants. This sort of behavior, described in the IESG Statement "IETF Anti-Harassment Policy" [Policy], is not easily dealt with by our previously existing working group guidelines and procedures. Therefore, this document sets forth procedures to deal with such harassing behavior.

These procedures are intended to be used when other IETF policies and procedures do not apply or have been ineffective.

Nothing in this document should be taken to interfere with the due process of law. Similarly, it does not release any person from any contractual or corporate policies to which they may be subject.

2. Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

- IETF Participant: Anyone who participates in an IETF activity, including IETF support staff.
- Reporter: An IETF Participant who reports potential harassment to an Ombudsperson.
- Respondent: An IETF Participant who is claimed to have engaged in harassing behavior.
- Ombudsteam: A group of people who have been selected to take reports of potential harassment, evaluate them, and impose appropriate actions and/or remedies to address the circumstances.
- Ombudsperson: A member of the Ombudsteam.
- Lead Ombudsperson: The Ombudsperson assigned to be the primary contact person for a particular report of potential harassment.
Subject: An individual, group, or class of IETF Participant to whom the potentially harassing behavior was directed or who might be subject to the behavior.

The IESG Statement on harassment [Policy] gives a general definition of harassment as:

unwelcome hostile or intimidating behavior -- in particular, speech or behavior that is sexually aggressive or intimidates based on attributes such as race, gender, religion, age, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

This document adopts that general definition but does not attempt to further precisely define behavior that falls under the set of procedures identified here, nor does it attempt to list every possible attribute that might be the basis for harassment, except to note that it may be targeted at an individual, directed at a specific group of people, or more generally impact a broader class of people.

This document concerns itself with harassment that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s participation in IETF activities or of creating an environment within the IETF that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive in such a situation.

One way in which harassment can occur is when submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual’s participation in IETF activities or is used as a basis for decisions affecting that individual’s relationship to the IETF.

In general, disruptive behavior that occurs in the context of an IETF general or working group mailing list, or happens in a face-to-face or virtual meeting of a working group or the IETF plenary, can be dealt with by our normal procedures, whereas harassing behavior is more appropriately handled by the procedures described here.

However, there are plausible reasons to address behaviors that take place during working group meetings using these procedures. This document gives some guidance to those involved in these situations in order to decide how to handle particular incidents, but the final decision will involve judgment and the guidance of the Ombudsteam.

Any definition of harassment prohibited by an applicable law can be subject to this set of procedures.
3. The Ombudsteam

This section describes the role of the Ombudsteam in terms of the appointment of Ombudspersons, their qualifications and training, the length of the term of service, any compensation from the IETF for their service, and how they may be removed from service. The general operational procedures for the Ombudsteam are described in Sections 4, 5, and 6.

3.1. Size of the Ombudsteam

The Ombudsteam shall comprise no fewer than three people. From time to time, the size may fall below that number owing to changes in membership, but the team will be rapidly brought up to size through new appointments. The team may be grown to a larger size as described in Section 3.2

3.2. Appointing the Ombudsteam

The Ombudsteam is appointed by the IETF Chair. The appointment is solely the responsibility of the IETF Chair, who may choose to consult with members of the IETF community.

The IETF Chair is encouraged to appoint at least some of the Ombudsteam from within the IETF community.

The IETF Chair may choose to solicit nominations or advertise the post. This is entirely at the discretion of the IETF Chair.

The IETF Chair may also be free to decide to appoint more than three Ombudspersons to the Ombudsteam. This may depend on the skill sets available, the work load, and the opinions of the seated Ombudsteam. Furthermore, the IETF Chair may consider elements of diversity in making this decision.

3.3. Professional Advisors

It is recognized that the Ombudsteam may need to call on professional services from external advisors for certain matters, including legal and Human Resources (HR) advice. The IETF (via the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA)) is committed to funding such advice as needed.
3.4. Qualifications and Training

It is not expected that there will be candidates with all of the necessary Ombudsperson skills and training who also have a clear understanding and familiarity with the IETF processes and culture. The Chair might choose someone with a great deal of professional experience evaluating and mediating harassment disputes but little exposure to the IETF or could select someone with more exposure to the IETF community but without as much experience dealing with issues of harassment. Since all of these attributes may be regarded by the IETF Chair as essential for the team, the IETF is committed to providing training (or funding for it) as deemed necessary for appointed Ombudspersons. In determining the appropriate training, the IETF Chair and Ombudsteam shall take professional advice and will consult with the IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) with respect to the overall IETF budget.

3.5. Term of Service

An Ombudsperson shall be appointed for a two-year term. That is, the Ombudsperson is making a commitment to serve for two years. It is understood, however, that circumstances may lead an Ombudsperson to resign for personal or other reasons. See also Section 3.7.

If an Ombudsperson’s term ends while they are acting as Lead Ombudsperson for a report as described in Section 4, that Ombudsperson’s term shall be extended until the handling of that report has been completed.

It is entirely at the discretion of the IETF Chair whether a serving Ombudsperson is reappointed at the end of their term. Given the sensitivity of, and training required for, this role and the ideal being a lack of activity, it is likely the IETF Chair may choose to reappoint a successful and still-willing Ombudsperson for a number of two-year terms.

3.6. Compensation

An Ombudsperson shall receive no compensation from the IETF for their services. This includes, but is not limited to:

- IETF meeting fees
- Remuneration for time spent
- Out-of-pocket expenses (such as telephone charges)
- Travel or accommodation expenses
The IETF will, however, meet the costs of training when agreed to by the IETF Chair as described in Section 3.4.

3.7. Removal

The IETF Chair may remove a serving Ombudsperson before the end of their term without explanation to the community, including during the course of processing an active case. Such an action shall be appealable as described in Section 3.8.

An Ombudsperson shall not be removed from service, even if their term has expired, during the period that the IETF Chair is recused as described in Section 7. Once the case that led to the Chair being recused has been closed, normal processes resume.

3.8. Disputes with the IETF Chair Regarding the Ombudsteam

If an individual should disagree with an action taken by the IETF Chair regarding the appointment, removal, or management of an Ombudsperson or the Ombudsteam, that person should first discuss the issue with the IETF Chair directly. If the IETF Chair is unable to resolve the issue, the dissatisfied party may appeal to the IESG as a whole. The IESG shall then review the situation and attempt to resolve it in a manner of its own choosing. The procedures of Section 6.5.4 of [RFC2026] apply to this sort of appeal.

4. Handling Reports of Harassment

Any IETF Participant who believes that they have been harassed, or that any other IETF Participant or group of IETF Participants has been or may have been harassed, should bring the concern to the attention of any serving Ombudsperson. This can be done by email to ombuds@ietf.org or can be done directly to a chosen Ombudsperson. Direct contact information for the members of the Ombudsteam, including the email addresses to which mail to ombuds@ietf.org is forwarded, can be found at <https://www.ietf.org/ombudsteam> [OmbudsteamPages].

All IETF Participants are encouraged to talk with the Ombudsteam if they are uncomfortable or unsure about any behaviors. Though much of this document relates to the formal duties of the Ombudsteam, it should be understood that an important function of the Ombudsteam is to provide confidential advice and counsel for any IETF Participant regarding issues of harassment. The Ombudsteam will not commence a formal investigation of any potential incident of harassment without agreement by the Reporter and Subject.
When a Reporter brings an incident of potential harassment to the attention of the Ombudsteam, a single Ombudsperson shall be designated as the primary contact person (the Lead Ombudsperson) for the report. When the Reporter contacts a single Ombudsperson, that Ombudsperson shall be the Lead Ombudsperson for the report unless the Reporter and Ombudsperson mutually agree to select another Lead Ombudsperson.

Information conveyed by the Reporter should be kept in confidence by the Lead Ombudsperson to the greatest extent possible. When necessary (for example, in the course of a formal investigation), the Lead Ombudsperson may share information regarding the report with the rest of the Ombudsteam except when an Ombudsperson is recused (see Section 7). If a Reporter believes that a member of the Ombudsteam should recuse themself, the Reporter should make this known to the Lead Ombudsperson as soon as possible. See Section 4.1 for further discussion of the confidentiality requirements of the Ombudsteam.

The Lead Ombudsperson will discuss the events with the Reporter and may give advice, including recommendations on how the Reporter can handle the issue on their own as well as strategies on how to prevent the issue from arising again. The Lead Ombudsperson may also indicate that the issue would be best handled using regular IETF procedures (such as those for dealing with disruptive behavior) outside the context of harassment, and in this case, the Lead Ombudsperson will provide assistance in using the relevant IETF procedures. Otherwise, with agreement to proceed from the Subject (or the Reporter if there is no individual Subject), the Ombudsteam may initiate a detailed investigation of the matter and may subsequently, after completing their investigation, impose a remedy as described in Section 5. The Subject can withdraw their agreement to proceed at any time.

4.1. Ombudsteam Operating Practices

The Ombudsteam is responsible for devising and documenting their operating practices. These practices must be discussed with the IESG and published in a publicly visible place (such as on the IETF website). Discussion with the IETF community is encouraged and, while IETF consensus is not necessary, significant objections to the processes that are not addressed should result in an appeal per Section 6.5.3 of [RFC2026] and/or a recall petition against the IETF Chair (and any of the rest of the IESG if appropriate) if they do not address the concern.
The practices must include at least the following high-level components:

- Each member of the Ombudsteam is expected to be present at the majority of IETF meetings and to be available for face-to-face discussions. The Ombudsteam is expected to arrange itself so that there is coverage of every IETF meeting by at least one Ombudsperson.

- The Ombudsteam shall strive to keep all information brought to it in strict confidence. However, it is acknowledged that the operation of the Ombudsteam may involve sharing of information within the team and may require that the parties to the complaint (the Reporter, Respondent, and Subject) learn some of the confidential information. The Ombudsteam is responsible for documenting its expectations of when disclosures of confidential information are likely to be made in the process and to whom. Any electronic information (such as email messages) that needs to be archived shall be encrypted before it is stored using tools similar to those used by the Nominating Committee (NomCom).

- When conducting a detailed investigation of the circumstances regarding the complaint of harassment, the Ombudsteam may contact the Respondent and request a meeting in person or by a voice call. The Ombudsteam shall have contacted the Respondent and either discussed the matter or ascertained the Respondent’s unwillingness to cooperate prior to deciding to impose a remedy as described in Section 5. The Respondent is not obliged to cooperate, but the Ombudsteam may consider failure to cooperate when determining a remedy (Section 5).

- The Ombudsteam shall endeavor to complete its investigation in a timely manner.

- Any individuals who make a good faith report of harassment or who cooperate with an investigation shall not be subject to retaliation for reporting, complaining, or cooperating, even if the investigation, once completed, shows no harassment occurred. Anti-retaliation is noted here to alleviate concerns individuals may have with reporting an incident they feel should be reviewed or cooperating with an investigation.

- In all cases, the Ombudteam will strive to maintain confidentiality for all parties, including the very fact of contact with the Ombudsteam.
The results of investigations as reported to the Subject or Respondent and all requests for remedial action (such as to the IETF Secretariat) shall be in writing.

The Ombudsteam shall keep written records of their investigation and any contacts or interviews such that there is material available in the event of an appeal or legal action. Such records shall be held securely and in confidence.

When investigating reports of harassment and determining remedies, it is up to the Ombudsteam whether they choose to act as a body or delegate duties to the Lead Ombudsperson.

5. Remedies

After examining the circumstances regarding the complaint of harassment, the Ombudsteam should prepare a brief summary of the incident and their conclusions and discuss this with all parties. The objective of this step is to make clear what the Ombudsteam has concluded and to make an attempt at getting all parties to reach agreement.

If the Ombudsteam determines that harassment has taken place, the Ombudsteam is expected to determine the next action.

In some cases, a mechanism or established IETF process may already exist for handling the specific event. In these cases, the Ombudsteam may decide that the misbehavior is best handled with the regular IETF procedures for dealing with disruptive behavior and may assist the Reporter to bring the issue to the attention of the WG Chair or IESG member who can deal with the incident.

In other cases, there is a spectrum of remedies that may be appropriate to the circumstances. At one end of the spectrum, the Ombudsteam might choose to discuss the situation with the Respondent and come up with a plan such that there is no repeat of the harassment. With the agreement of both parties, the Ombudsteam can also help to mediate a conversation between the Respondent and the Subject (or the Reporter if there is no individual Subject) in order to address the issue. If mediation fails, then the Ombudsteam can decide to apply other remedies, including those discussed here.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Ombudsteam could decide that the Respondent is no longer permitted to participate in a particular IETF activity, for example, ejecting them from a meeting or requiring that the Respondent can no longer attend future meetings to ensure that the reported harassment cannot
continue or escalate. If the Respondent holds a management position in the IETF, the remedies imposed may make it difficult or impossible for them to perform the duties required of that position. Further remedies may be applied to Respondents in IETF management positions as described in Section 5.1.

- In determining the appropriate remedy, the Ombudsteam may communicate with the Reporter, Subject, or Respondent in order to assess the impact that the imposition of a remedy might have on any of those parties. However, the Ombudsteam has ultimate responsibility for the choice of remedy.

- In all cases, the Lead Ombudsperson informs the Respondent of the decision and imposes the remedy as appropriate. In cases where the remedy is removal from IETF activities, the Lead Ombudsperson will confidentially notify the Secretariat in writing of the remedy such that the Secretariat can take whatever logistical actions are required to effect the remedy. Only the remedy itself shall be disclosed to the Secretariat, not any information regarding the nature of the harassment.

Where specific action is required to ensure that a remedy is realized or enforced, the Ombudsteam will make a request in writing to the IETF Secretariat and/or IETF Administrative Director (IAD) to take action as appropriate.

5.1. Remedies for Respondents in IETF Positions

The remedies discussed earlier in this section are equally applicable to all IETF Participants regardless of role.

The Ombudsteam will want to be aware of the impact of remedies on the ability of an individual to carry out their duties in IETF management positions, but this should not dissuade the Ombudsteam from applying remedies that they deem appropriate. Per Section 5, the Ombudsteam is expected to apply proportionality and reasonableness, as well as to consider the impact of the remedy on the Respondent. Per Section 4.1, the Ombudsteam may communicate with the Respondent in order to assess the impact that the remedy might have.

There may be cases where the Ombudsteam considers that it is inappropriate for a Respondent to continue in their IETF management position, that is, where the desired remedy is to remove the Respondent from their management position. The Ombudsteam cannot by itself remove a Respondent who is in an IETF management position from that position. However, the Ombudsteam can recommend the use of existing mechanisms within the IETF process for the removal of people from IETF management positions as follows:
o Many IETF management positions are appointed by the NomCom with confirmation from the IESG, IAB, or ISOC. [RFC7437] describes the recall procedure for such appointments. This document updates [RFC7437] by allowing the Ombudsteam to form a recall petition on its own and without requiring 20 signatories from the community. Such a petition shall be treated in all ways like any other recall petition as described in [RFC7437]: that is, the fact of the petition and its signatories (the Ombudsteam) shall be announced to the IETF community, and a Recall Committee Chair shall be appointed to complete the Recall Committee process. It is expected that the Recall Committee will receive a briefing from the Ombudsteam explaining why recall is considered an appropriate remedy.

o Other IETF management positions are filled by appointment of the IESG, the IAB, the ISOC Board, or the ISOC President. In such cases, the Ombudsteam may recommend to the appointing body that the Respondent be removed from their position.

o Many IETF management positions are filled through appointment by an AD or by the ADs for an IETF Area. In such cases, the Ombudsteam may recommend to those ADs in writing that the Respondent be removed from their position.

o Some other IETF management positions are filled through appointment by WG Chairs. In such cases, the Ombudsteam may make a recommendation in writing to the responsible AD (that is, not directly to the WG Chairs) that the Respondent be removed from their position.

In each of the cases listed here, it is expected that the person or body responsible for removing someone from an IETF management position will take a recommendation from the Ombudsteam extremely seriously and that it would be very unusual for them to not act on the recommendation. It is not the intent that the person or body attempt to reinvestigate the circumstances of the harassment. They are expected to understand that they are not qualified in evaluating or handling issues of harassment. They must seek to preserve confidentiality. If the person or body feels removal from position is not the correct remedy, they must discuss their concern with the Ombudsteam.

In the event that an AD declines to follow the recommendation of the Ombudsteam, and if the AD fails to convince the Ombudsteam of the reasons for this, the Ombudsteam should raise the issue with the whole IESG while continuing to attempt to retain confidentiality. The IESG may choose to reorganize the responsibilities for working
groups within its own structure so that the AD concerned is no longer in the direct management path.

All such forced removals from management positions must be considered by the Ombudsteam as acts of last resort. That is, before a Respondent is recommended for removal, the Ombudsteam should consider other possible remedies and should discuss the situation with the Respondent, giving them ample opportunity to understand what might happen and to step down of their own volition.

As described in Section 4.1, the Ombudsteam is required to maintain the highest degree of confidentiality. In recommending action as described above, the Ombudsteam will clearly have to indicate that some event has occurred that led to their recommendation, but it is not expected that the Ombudsteam will need to divulge substantially more information. It should be enough that the Ombudsteam explains the severity of the situation, that they have considered other lesser remedies, and that they deem the recommended remedy to be appropriate.

In removing someone from their position, it may become apparent to the IETF community that the removal is a remedy recommended by the Ombudsteam. However, revealing the underlying events should be avoided as far as possible.

5.2. Purpose of Remedies

The purpose of the anti-harassment policy is to prevent all incidents of harassment in the IETF. The set of procedures documented here serves to provide a mechanism whereby any harassment that occurs can be reported and handled both sympathetically and effectively. The policy also sends a clear message that the IETF does not tolerate harassment in any form.

However, any remedy is imposed to try to make sure that the incident does not escalate and to ensure that a similar situation is unlikely to occur with the same Respondent in the future.

Because the handling of incidents of harassment (including the imposition of remedies) is confidential, an imposed remedy cannot itself serve as a deterrent to others, nor can it be used to "teach" the community how to behave. ([RFC7154] gives guidelines for conduct in the IETF.) Furthermore, a remedy is not to be imposed for the purposes of retribution. However, the knowledge of the existence of a range of remedies and of processes by which they can be applied serves both as a statement of the IETF’s seriousness in this matter and as a deterrent to potential offenders.
The Ombudsteam is expected to apply the above considerations, as well as proportionality and reasonableness, in selecting a remedy. They are asked to consider the impact of the remedy on the Respondent as well as on the Subject.

6. Disputes with the Ombudsteam

If either the Subject (or the Reporter if there is no individual Subject) or the Respondent is dissatisfied with the decision of the Ombudsteam, the dissatisfied party should first contact the Lead Ombudsperson and discuss the situation. If the issue cannot be resolved through discussion with the Lead Ombudsperson, the issue may be raised with the IETF Chair.

If necessary, the IETF Chair may recuse themself from any part of this process (see Section 7) and request the IESG to select another of its members to serve in this role. This IESG member is known as the "delegated IESG member".

The IETF Chair (or the delegated IESG member if the Chair is recused) will attempt to resolve the issue in discussion with the dissatisfied party and the Lead Ombudsperson. If this further discussion does not bring a satisfactory resolution, the Ombudsteam’s decision may be formally appealed. The appeal is strictly on the issue of whether the Ombudsteam exercised due diligence both in their decision as to whether harassment had taken place as well as in their determination of any appropriate remedy that was imposed. In particular, the purpose of the appeal is not to re-investigate the circumstances of the incident or to negotiate the severity of the remedy.

All elements of the appeal, including the fact of the appeal, will be held in confidence but will be recorded and held securely for future reference.

The appeal will be evaluated by the IETF Chair (or the delegated IESG member) and two other members of the IESG selected by the IETF Chair (or the delegated IESG member) and confirmed by the appellant. This Appeals Group shall convene as quickly as possible to evaluate and determine the appeal. Where the impacts are immediate and related to participation in an ongoing meeting, this shall happen in no more than 24 hours after receiving the appeal. The Appeals Group may ask the appellant and the Lead Ombudsperson for statements or other information to consider. If the Appeals Group concludes that due diligence was exercised by the Ombudsteam, this shall be reported to the appellant, and the matter is concluded. If the Appeals Group finds that due diligence was not exercised, the Appeals Group shall report this to the Ombudsteam and consult with the Ombudsteam on how to complete the due diligence.
Because of the need to keep the information regarding these matters as confidential as possible, the Appeals Group’s decision is final with respect to the question of whether the Ombudsteam has used due diligence in their decision. The only further recourse available is to claim that the procedures themselves (i.e., the procedures described in this document) are inadequate or insufficient to the protection of the rights of all parties. Such a claim may be made in an appeal to the Internet Society Board of Trustees, as described in Section 6.5.3 of [RFC2026]. Again, even in this circumstance, the particulars of the incident at hand will be held in confidence.

7. Conflicts of Interest

In the event of any conflict of interest, the conflicted person (member of the Ombudsteam, member of the Appeals Group, IETF Chair, etc.) is expected to recuse themselves.

A conflict of interest may arise if someone involved in the process of handling a harassment report is in the role of Reporter, Respondent, or Subject. Furthermore, a conflict of interest arises if the person involved in the process of handling a harassment report is closely associated personally or through affiliation with any of the Reporter, Respondent, or Subject.

For the avoidance of doubt, recusal in this context means completely stepping out of any advisory or decision-making part of any process associated with handling a harassment report, remedy arising from a harassment report, or appeal into the handling of a harassment report. That means that a recused person has no more right to participate in or witness the process than any other person from the community in the same situation. For example, an Ombudsperson subject to a complaint of harassment shall not be privy to the deliberations of another Ombudsperson handling the report. Nor would an IESG member who was party to an appeal be able to witness the discussions of the Appeals Group.

In the event that there is an appeal and the IETF Chair is somehow involved, the Chair will immediately recuse themself, and the IESG will select a single person to take the Chair’s role in the appeal process as described in Section 6.

8. Confidentiality

Throughout this document, there are mentions of requirements to keep information confidential. This section summarizes those requirements for clarity.
The Ombudsteam is expected to strive for confidentiality. Confidentiality protects the Reporter, Subject, and Respondent in any case of alleged harassment. It also protects witnesses or others consulted by the Ombudsteam during their investigation.

The Ombudsteam will keep its email and other archival records in a secure system and will not discuss details of any case beyond what is necessary for executing a thorough investigation.

Third-party receivers of output from the Ombudsteam (for example, ADs or the IETF Secretariat who are asked to take action) are required to keep such output confidential.

Participants in an investigation (Reporters, Subjects, Respondents, and anyone interviewed by the Ombudsteam during an investigation) are requested to keep the details of the events and investigation confidential.

It is likely that members of the community will want to know more when they have become aware of some details of a case of harassment. The community is asked to show restraint and to trust the Ombudsteam. This process is designed to provide remedies not punishment, as described in Section 5.2, and public discussion of the events or remedies does not form part of this process.

9. Security Considerations

"Human beings the world over need freedom and security that they may be able to realize their full potential." -- Aung San Suu Kyi

10. References

10.1. Normative References


10.2. Informative References

[OmbudsteamPages]


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