Discussion of the IASA 2.0 Changes as They Relate to the IETF Trust
draft-arkko-iasa2-trust-rationale-00

Abstract

The IASA 2.0 changes will have an impact in the IETF Trust as well, because members of the IET Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) IAOC have also served as trustees of the IETF Trust. A proposal for a minimal change regarding this has been provided separately in [I-D.arkko-iasa2-trust-update].

This companion memo provides some background on the details of the current IETF Trust arrangements, explains the effect of the rules in the founding documents during a transition to a new arrangement, and provides a rationale for the update.

This memo is provided only for discussion.

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1. Introduction

The IASA 2.0 changes will have an impact in the IETF Trust as well [RFC4071] [RFC4371] [I-D.hall-iasa2-struct]. This is because members of the IET Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) IAOC have also served as trustees of the IETF Trust. A proposal for a minimal change regarding this has been provided separately in draft-arkko-iasa2-trust-update.

This companion memo provides some background on the details of the current IETF Trust arrangements, explains the effect of the rules in the founding documents during a transition to a new arrangement, and provides a rationale for the update.

This memo is provided only for discussion. There is no intention to publish this memo as an RFC.

2. Background

The purpose of the IETF Trust is to acquire, hold, maintain, and license certain existing and future intellectual property and other property used in connection with the administration of the IETF [RFC4371]. The intellectual property is, for instance, rights that the IETF contributors grant for text in RFCs and Internet Drafts. The IETF Trust also manages trademarks and domains such as "IETF" and ietf.org. The IETF Trust is also serving the broader Internet...
community by holding domains and trademarks associated with IANA [RFC7979].

The IETF Trust is a legal entity, registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia [Trust-FD].

Currently, the members of the IAOC are also serving as trustees of the IETF Trust. The founding documents specify persons eligible to become trustees as having to be then-current members of the IAOC [Trust-FD]. The documents also specify that if for any reason there are fewer than three individuals serving as trustees, then the IESG, or the IESG’s successor as the leadership of the IETF, shall appoint one or more individuals to serve in a temporary capacity as trustee(s) until eligible persons can be found.

In the current system there are eight IAOC members. They are named by the IETF Nominations Committee or NomCom (two members), IESG (one member), IAB (one member), Internet Society Board of Trustees (one member), along with three ex-officio members via their roles as IETF Chair, Internet Society CEO, or IAB Chair. In addition, the IETF Administrative Director (IAD) serves also as one of the trustees.

3. General Approach

There are two basic approaches to resolving the issue with the trustees, if the IAOC ceases to exist. One could imagine merging all IETF Trust functions in the new IASA structure and under the planned new legal entity. This memo advocates a second approach where the IETF Trust is kept independent.

The rationale for advocating the second approach is in part to avoid causing too much change for the IETF Trust at a time when the IETF administrative structure is ongoing major change. And, perhaps more importantly, the IETF Trust and other administrative IETF process are quite different. While very important, the IETF Trust is a very low activity entity where changes, if any, are minimal and gradual. There are no pressing issues, and the organisation serves the broader Internet community than perhaps the day-to-day and more IETF meetings-focused other parts of IASA.

4. Changing the Way Trustees Are Selected

At the time the trustees served both the IETF Trust and the IAOC, many of the requirements for naming a particular group of people were driven by the IAOC’s requirements. For the IETF Trust in the new model, some of those arrangements can be rethought, both in terms of the number and source of the trustees, as well as the desired qualifications and length of terms.
Several options are possible, of course. A newly designed naming process could be devised. This memo argues for relatively limited change, however, largely on the basis of the IETF Trust arrangements generally working well, and on the relatively modest expected time commitments combined with the need for very careful management of the assets.

As a result, a smaller group of trustees appears sufficient.

In addition, the terms for the trustees selected from the IETF community could be set to longer than the two year period typical of other IETF bodies.

One could continue the practice of having the chairs and CEOs from IETF, IAB, and Internet Society be trustees as well, but this may not be necessary. In general, the tasks of the IETF Trust are well defined, and while there is a need for coordination, it does not need to be at the level of chairs or CEOs.

Given all this, one approach to the appointments is to have trustees appointed by the Nominations Committee, IESG, and Internet Society Board of Trustees (or the new legal entity, but the Internet Society is perhaps more focused on the broad use of the IETF Trust assets and not merely administrative aspects).

If the same principles continue to be used as are used in today’s appointments, then appointments performed by the Nominations Committee need to be confirmed by another entity, which could be, for instance, either the IESG or the IAB.

5. Transition

When new entity for IETF administration is set up, at some point the IAOC will be discontinued. Fortunately, there’s no pressing need to change all the components at the same time. As discussed above (Section 2), the IESG holds the ability to continue to name trustees. Once the changes suggested in Section 4 are in place, the IETF Trust will have management nominated in the usual manner, and the exceptional IESG process is no longer needed.

6. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank members of the earlier IASA 2.0 design team, as well as Alissa Cooper, Ted Hardie, Andrew Sullivan, Brian Carpenter, Lucy Lynch, and John Levine for interesting discussions in this problem space.
7. References

7.1. Normative References


7.2. Informative References


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