Abstract

This document proposes that the IETF never publish any IETF stream
RFCs without IETF rough consensus. This updates RFC 2026.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the
provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the Internet Engineering
Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute
working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-
Drafts is at https://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/.

Internet-Drafts are draft documents valid for a maximum of six months
and may be updated, replaced, or obsoleted by other documents at any
time. It is inappropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference
material or to cite them other than as "work in progress."

This Internet-Draft will expire on 15 June 2020.

Copyright Notice

Copyright (c) 2019 IETF Trust and the persons identified as the
document authors. All rights reserved.

This document is subject to BCP 78 and the IETF Trust’s Legal
license-info) in effect on the date of publication of this document.
Please review these documents carefully, as they describe your rights
and restrictions with respect to this document. Code Components
extracted from this document must include Simplified BSD License text
as described in Section 4.e of the Trust Legal Provisions and are
provided without warranty as described in the Simplified BSD License.
1. Introduction

IETF procedures, as defined by [RFC2026] allow for Informational or Experimental RFCs to be published without IETF rough consensus. For context, it should be remembered that this RFC predates the separation of the various streams (e.g. IRTF, IAB, and Independent.) When it was written, there were only "RFC"s.

As a consequence, it is currently permitted for the IETF to approve an Internet Draft for publication as an RFC without IETF rough consensus.

2. Terminology

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

3. Proposal

The IETF MUST NOT publish RFCs on the IETF stream without establishing IETF rough consensus for publication.

4. Discussion

The current procedures permit such publication. The IESG has issued a statement saying that no document will be issued without first conducting an IETF Last Call. While this apparently improves the situation, looking closely it makes it worse. Rather than publishing documents without verifying that there is rough consensus, as the wording in [RFC2026] suggests, this has the IESG explicitly publishing documents on the IETF stream that have failed to achieve rough consensus.
One could argue that there is a need for publishing some documents that the community can not agree on. However, we have an explicit procedure for such publication, namely the Independent Stream. Or, for research documents, the IRTF stream, which explicitly publishes many minority opinion Informational RFCs.

If this proposal is not accepted, there is still a minor problem to be addressed. When a non-consensus document is published, the current boilerplate simply omits the sentence claiming that there is consensus. If the community feels that we need to keep the right for the IESG to publish Informational or Experimental RFCs without IETF rough consensus, then please, the IAB SHOULD use its authority over the boilerplate for RFCs to make the boilerplate explicit rather than relying on readers to detect a missing sentence.

5. IANA Considerations

No values are assigned in this document, no registries are created, and there is no action assigned to the IANA by this document.

6. Security Considerations

This document introduces no new security considerations. It is a process document about changes to the rules for certain corner cases in publishing IETF stream RFCs.

7. Normative References


Authors’ Addresses

Joel M. Halpern (editor)
Ericsson
P. O. Box 6049
Leesburg, VA 20178
United States of America

Email: joel.halpern@ericsson.com

Eric K. Rescorla (editor)
Mozilla
331 E. Evelyn Ave
Mountain View, CA 94101
United States of America

Email: ekr@rtfm.com