Discussion of the IASA 2.0 Changes as They Relate to the IETF Trust
draft-ietf-iasa2-trust-rationale-03

Abstract

This document is published to capture the rationale for the changes introduced in RFC NNNN (RFC Editor: please replace NNNN with the RFC number of [I-D.ietf-iasa2-trust-update]), Update to the Process for Selection of Trustees for the IETF Trust.

At the time RFC NNNN was published, IETF administrative structure changes ("IASA 2.0") had an impact on the IETF Trust because members of the IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC), which was being phased out, had served as Trustees of the IETF Trust. This document provides background on the past IETF Trust arrangements, explains the effect of the rules in the founding documents during the transition to the new arrangement, and provides a rationale for the update.

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This document is published to capture the rationale for the changes introduced in [I-D.ietf-iasa2-trust-update].

At the time [I-D.ietf-iasa2-trust-update] was published, IETF administrative structure changes ("IASA 2.0") had an impact on the IETF Trust [RFC4071] [RFC4371] [I-D.ietf-iasa2-struct]. This is because members of the IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC), which was being phased out, had served as Trustees of the IETF Trust. A minimal change regarding the selection of the trustees is implemented by [I-D.ietf-iasa2-trust-update].

This companion memo provides some background on the details of the past IETF Trust arrangements, explains the effect of the rules in the founding documents during the transition to the new arrangement, and provides a rationale for the update.
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 such as "IETF" and domain names such as "ietf.org". The IETF Trust is also serving the broader Internet community by holding domains and trademarks associated with Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) [RFC7979].

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

Previously, the members of the IAOC also served as ex officio 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 Internet Engineering Steering Group (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 previous system there were eight IAOC members. Two were named by the IETF Nominating Committee (NomCom), one by the IESG, one by the Internet Architecture Board (IAB), and one by the Internet Society (ISOC) Board of Trustees. In addition, there were three ex officio members via their roles as IETF Chair, ISOC CEO, and IAB Chair. In addition, the IETF Administrative Director (IAD) served also as one of the trustees.

3. General Approach

There were two basic approaches to resolving the issue with the trustees, when the IAOC ceased to exist. One could have imagined merging all IETF Trust functions in the new IASA structure and under the new legal entity. This memo advocated a second approach where the IETF Trust is kept independent.

The rationale for advocating the second approach is in part to minimize changes to the IETF Trust while the IETF’s administrative structure is undergoing major change. In addition, the IETF Trust and other administrative IETF processes are quite different. While very important, the IETF Trust is a low-activity entity where changes are minimal and gradual, and there are no pressing issues.
4. Changing the Way Trustees Are Selected

At the time when the trustees served on 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 were able to 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 were possible, of course. A newly designed naming process could have been devised. The argument here is for a 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 appeared 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 have continued 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 was to have trustees appointed by the NomCom, IESG, and ISOC Board of Trustees. (One might also have considered the IETF Administration LLC legal entity instead of the Internet Society for this role. But the Internet Society is perhaps more suitable for the role, given their focus on the broad use of the IETF Trust assets and not merely administrative aspects).

If the same principles would continue to be used as were used in previous appointments, then appointments performed by the NomCom would need to be confirmed by another entity, which could be, for instance, either the IESG or the IAB. The IESG had previously been the confirming body for the IAOC, so it has been retained in that role for the trustees.

5. Transition

When the new entity for IETF Administration LLC was set up, the IAOC was expected to be discontinued soon thereafter. Fortunately, there was no pressing need to change all the components of the IAOC and its dependent organizations at the same time. As discussed above
(Section 2), the IESG holds the ability to continue to name trustees. And once the updated procedures were in place, the IETF Trust had its management nominated in the usual manner, and the exceptional IESG process was no longer needed.

6. Security Considerations

This memo has no security implications for the Internet.

7. IANA Considerations

This memo requests no action from IANA.

8. Acknowledgements

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9. References

9.1. Normative References


9.2. Informative References


Appendix A. Changes from Previous Versions

RFC Editor: Please remove this section upon publication.

The version draft-ietf-iasa2-trust-rationale-03.txt made some editorial corrections.

The version draft-ietf-iasa2-trust-rationale-02.txt made some editorial corrections.

The version draft-ietf-iasa2-trust-rationale-01.txt includes changes relating to last call comments. The changes are 1) indication of why this document is being published 2) updates to references, 3) the addition of empty security and IANA consideration sections, 4) editorial changes necessary for a document that is also read later, and not just used in discussions at this time.

The version draft-ietf-iasa2-trust-rationale-00.txt includes only editorial and language updates.

The version draft-arkko-iasa2-trust-rationale-00.txt was the initial version.

Author’s Address

Jari Arkko
Ericsson
Kauniainen 02700
Finland

Email: jari.arkko@piuha.net