                 The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 2

Status of this Memo

   This memo provides information for the Internet community. This memo
   does not specify an Internet standard of any kind. Distribution of
   this memo is unlimited.

Notice

   This informational memo presents the current procedures for creating
   and documenting Internet Standards. This document is provisional,
   pending legal review and concurrence of the Internet Society
   Trustees. It is being published in this form to keep the Internet
   Community informed as to the current status of policies and
   procedures for Internet Standards work.

Abstract

   This document is a revision of RFC 1310, which defined the official
   procedures for creating and documenting Internet Standards.

   This revision (revision 2) includes the following major changes:

   (a) The new management structure arising from the POISED Working
        Group is reflected. These changes were agreed to by the IETF
        plenary and by the IAB and IESG in November 1992 and accepted by
        the ISOC Board of Trustees at their December 1992 meeting.

   (b) Prototype status is added to the non-standards track maturity
        levels (Section 2.4.1).

   (c) The Intellectual Property Rights section is completely revised,
        in accordance with legal advice. Section 5 of this document
        replaces Sections 5 and 6 of RFC-1310. The new section 5 has
        been reviewed by legal counsel to the Internet Society.

(d) An appeals procedure is added (Section 3.6).

(e) The wording of sections 1 and 1.2 has been changed to clarify
     the relationships that exist between the Internet Society and
     the IAB, the IESG, the IETF, and the Internet Standards process.

(f) An Appendix B has been added, listing the contact points for the
     RFC editor, the IANA, the IESG, the IAB and the ISOC. The
     "future issues" are now listed in Appendix C.

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1. INTRODUCTION

    This memo documents the process currently used by the Internet
    community for the standardization of protocols and procedures. The
    Internet Standards process is an activity of the Internet Society
    that is organized and managed on behalf of the Internet community by
    the Internet Architecture Board (IAB) and the Internet Engineering
    Steering Group.

1.1 Internet Standards

   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 internets, i.e., sets of interconnected networks, which
   are not connected to the Internet but use the Internet Standards.

   Internet Standards were once limited to those protocols composing
   what has been commonly known as the "TCP/IP protocol suite".
   However, the Internet has been evolving towards the support of
   multiple protocol suites, especially the Open Systems
   Interconnection (OSI) suite. The Internet Standards process
   described in this document is concerned with all protocols,
   procedures, and conventions that are used in or by the Internet,
   whether or not they are part of the TCP/IP protocol suite. In the
   case of protocols developed and/or standardized by non-Internet
   organizations, however, the Internet Standards process may apply
   only to the application of the protocol or procedure in the
   Internet context, not to the specification of the protocol itself.

   In general, an Internet Standard is a specification that is stable
   and well-understood, is technically competent, has multiple,
   independent, and interoperable implementations with substantial
   operational experience, enjoys significant public support, and is
   recognizably useful in some or all parts of the Internet.

   The procedures described in this document are designed to be fair,
   open and objective; to reflect existing (proven) practice; and to
   be flexible.

o   These procedures are intended to provide a fair, open, and
     objective basis for developing, evaluating, and adopting
     Internet Standards. They provide ample opportunity for
     participation and comment by all interested parties. At each
     stage of the standardization process, a specification is
     repeatedly discussed and its merits debated in open meetings
     and/or public electronic mailing lists, and it is made
     available for review via world-wide on-line directories.

o   These procedures are explicitly aimed at recognizing and
     adopting generally-accepted practices. Thus, a candidate
     specification is implemented and tested for correct operation
     and interoperability by multiple independent parties and
     utilized in increasingly demanding environments, before it
     can be adopted as an Internet Standard.

o   These procedures provide a great deal of flexibility to adapt
     to the wide variety of circumstances that occur in the
     standardization process. Experience has shown this
     flexibility to be vital in achieving the goals listed above.

The goal of technical competence, the requirement for prior
implementation and testing, and the need to allow all interested
parties to comment, all require significant time and effort. On
the other hand, today's rapid development of networking technology
places an urgency on timely development of standards. The
Internet standardization rules described here are intended to
balance these conflicting goals. The process is believed to be as
short and simple as possible without undue sacrifice of technical
competence, prior testing, or openness and fairness.

In summary, the goals for the Internet standards process are:

*   technical excellence;

*   prior implementation and testing;

*   clear, short, and easily understandable documentation;

*   openness and fairness; and

*   timeliness.

In outline, the process of creating an Internet Standard is
straightforward: a specification undergoes a period of development
and several iterations of review by the Internet community and

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