Network Working Group S. Bradner Request for Comments: 2026 Harvard University October 1996

BCP: 9

Obsoletes: 1602

Category: Best Current Practice

The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3

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.

Abstract

This memo documents the process used by the Internet community for the standardization of protocols and procedures. It defines the stages in the standardization process, the requirements for moving a document between stages and the types of documents used during this process. It also addresses the intellectual property rights and copyright issues associated with the standards process.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Internet Standards	3
1.2 The Internet Standards Process	3
1.3 Organization of This Document	5
2. INTERNET STANDARDS-RELATED PUBLICATIONS	5
2.1 Requests for Comments (RFCs)	5
2.2 Internet-Drafts	7
3. INTERNET STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS	8
3.1 Technical Specification (TS)	8
3.2 Applicability Statement (AS)	8
3.3 Requirement Levels	9
4. THE INTERNET STANDARDS TRACK	10
4.1 Standards Track Maturity Levels	11
4.1.1 Proposed Standard	11
4.1.2 Draft Standard	12
4.1.3 Internet Standard	13
4.2 Non-Standards Track Maturity Levels	13
4.2.1 Experimental	13
4.2.2 Informational	14
4.2.3 Procedures for Experimental and Informational RFCs	14
4.2.4 Historic	15

Best Current Practice Bradner [Page 1]



5. Best Current Practice (BCP) RFCs15
5.1 BCP Review Process
6. THE INTERNET STANDARDS PROCESS
6.1 Standards Actions
6.1.1 Initiation of Action
6.1.2 IESG Review and Approval17
6.1.3 Publication18
6.2 Advancing in the Standards Track19
6.3 Revising a Standard
6.4 Retiring a Standard
6.5 Conflict Resolution and Appeals21
6.5.1 Working Group Disputes21
6.5.2 Process Failures22
6.5.3 Questions of Applicable Procedure22
6.5.4 Appeals Procedure23
7. EXTERNAL STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS23
7.1 Use of External Specifications24
7.1.1 Incorporation of an Open Standard24
7.1.2 Incorporation of a Other Specifications24
7.1.3 Assumption
8. NOTICES AND RECORD KEEPING25
9. VARYING THE PROCESS
9.1 The Variance Procedure26
9.2 Exclusions27
10. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS27
10.1. General Policy
10.2 Confidentiality Obligations28
10.3. Rights and Permissions28
10.3.1. All Contributions28
10.3.2. Standards Track Documents29
10.3.3 Determination of Reasonable and
Non-discriminatory Terms30
10.4. Notices
11. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS32
12. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS32
13. REFERENCES
14. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS
15. AUTHOR'S ADDRESS
APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS35

Bradner

Best Current Practice

[Page 2]



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 (IESG).

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 interconnected networks, which are not connected to the global Internet but use the Internet Standards.

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 normally applies 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.

1.2 The Internet Standards Process

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 revision based upon experience, is adopted as a Standard by the appropriate body (see below), and is published. In practice, the process is more complicated, due to (1) the difficulty of creating specifications of high technical quality; (2) the need to consider the interests of all of the affected parties; (3) the importance of establishing widespread community consensus; and (4) the difficulty of evaluating the utility of a particular specification for the Internet community.

Bradner

Best Current Practice

[Page 3]



The goals of the Internet Standards Process are:

- o technical excellence;
- o prior implementation and testing;
- o clear, concise, and easily understood documentation;
- o openness and fairness; and
- o timeliness.

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 must be 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 demands timely development of standards. The Internet Standards Process is intended to balance these conflicting goals. The process is believed to be as short and simple as possible without sacrificing technical excellence, thorough testing before adoption of a standard, or openness and fairness.

From its inception, the Internet has been, and is expected to remain, an evolving system whose participants regularly factor new requirements and technology into its design and implementation. Users of the Internet and providers of the equipment, software, and services that support it should anticipate and embrace this evolution as a major tenet of Internet philosophy.

Bradner Best Current Practice [Page 4]



The procedures described in this document are the result of a number of years of evolution, driven both by the needs of the growing and increasingly diverse Internet community, and by experience.

Bradner

Best Current Practice

[Page 5]



DOCKET

Explore Litigation Insights



Docket Alarm provides insights to develop a more informed litigation strategy and the peace of mind of knowing you're on top of things.

Real-Time Litigation Alerts



Keep your litigation team up-to-date with **real-time** alerts and advanced team management tools built for the enterprise, all while greatly reducing PACER spend.

Our comprehensive service means we can handle Federal, State, and Administrative courts across the country.

Advanced Docket Research



With over 230 million records, Docket Alarm's cloud-native docket research platform finds what other services can't. Coverage includes Federal, State, plus PTAB, TTAB, ITC and NLRB decisions, all in one place.

Identify arguments that have been successful in the past with full text, pinpoint searching. Link to case law cited within any court document via Fastcase.

Analytics At Your Fingertips



Learn what happened the last time a particular judge, opposing counsel or company faced cases similar to yours.

Advanced out-of-the-box PTAB and TTAB analytics are always at your fingertips.

API

Docket Alarm offers a powerful API (application programming interface) to developers that want to integrate case filings into their apps.

LAW FIRMS

Build custom dashboards for your attorneys and clients with live data direct from the court.

Automate many repetitive legal tasks like conflict checks, document management, and marketing.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Litigation and bankruptcy checks for companies and debtors.

E-DISCOVERY AND LEGAL VENDORS

Sync your system to PACER to automate legal marketing.

