

INTERNET OFFICIAL PROTOCOL STANDARDS

Status of this Memo

This memo describes the state of standardization of protocols used in the Internet as determined by the Internet Architecture Board (IAB). This memo is an Internet Standard. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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Introduction

A discussion of the standardization process and the RFC document series is presented first, followed by an explanation of the terms. Sections 6.2 - 6.10 contain the lists of protocols in each stage of standardization. Finally are pointers to references and contacts for further information.

This memo is intended to be issued approximately quarterly; please be sure the copy you are reading is current. Current copies may be obtained from the Network Information Center (INTERNIC) or from the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) (see the contact information at the end of this memo). Do not use this edition after 1-Mar-95.

See Section 6.1 for a description of recent changes. In the official lists in sections 6.2 - 6.10, an asterisk (*) next to a protocol denotes that it is new to this document or has been moved from one protocol level to another, or differs from the previous edition of this document.

1. The Standardization Process

The Internet Architecture Board maintains this list of documents that define standards for the Internet protocol suite. See [RFC-1601](#) for the charter of the IAB and [RFC-1160](#) for an explanation of the role and organization of the IAB and its subsidiary groups, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF). Each of these groups has a steering group called the IESG and IRSG, respectively. The IETF develops these standards with the goal of co-ordinating the evolution of the Internet protocols; this co-ordination has become quite important as the Internet protocols are increasingly in general commercial use. The definitive description of the Internet standards process is found in [RFC-1602](#).

The majority of Internet protocol development and standardization activity takes place in the working groups of the IETF.

Protocols which are to become standards in the Internet go through a series of states or maturity levels (proposed standard, draft standard, and standard) involving increasing amounts of scrutiny and testing. When a protocol completes this process it is assigned a STD number (see [RFC-1311](#)). At each step, the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) of the IETF must make a recommendation for advancement of the protocol.

To allow time for the Internet community to consider and react to standardization proposals, a minimum delay of 6 months before a proposed standard can be advanced to a draft standard and 4 months before a draft standard can be promoted to standard.

It is general practice that no proposed standard can be promoted to draft standard without at least two independent implementations (and the recommendation of the IESG). Promotion from draft standard to standard generally requires operational experience and demonstrated interoperability of two or more implementations (and the recommendation of the IESG).

In cases where there is uncertainty as to the proper decision concerning a protocol a special review committee may be appointed consisting of experts from the IETF, IRTF and the IAB with the purpose of recommending an explicit action.

Advancement of a protocol to proposed standard is an important step since it marks a protocol as a candidate for eventual standardization (it puts the protocol "on the standards track"). Advancement to draft standard is a major step which warns the community that, unless major objections are raised or flaws are discovered, the protocol is likely to be advanced to standard in six months.

Some protocols have been superseded by better ones or are otherwise unused. Such protocols are still documented in this memorandum with the designation "historic".

Because it is useful to document the results of early protocol research and development work, some of the RFCs document protocols which are still in an experimental condition. The protocols are designated "experimental" in this memorandum. They appear in this report as a convenience to the community and not as evidence of their standardization.

Other protocols, such as those developed by other standards organizations, or by particular vendors, may be of interest or may be recommended for use in the Internet. The specifications of such protocols may be published as RFCs for the convenience of the Internet community. These protocols are labeled "informational" in this memorandum.

In addition to the working groups of the IETF, protocol development and experimentation may take place as a result of the work of the research groups of the Internet Research Task Force, or the work of other individuals interested in Internet protocol development. The the documentation of such experimental work in the RFC series is encouraged, but none of this work is considered to be on the track for standardization until the IESG has made a recommendation to advance the protocol to the proposed standard state.

A few protocols have achieved widespread implementation without the approval of the IESG. For example, some vendor protocols have become very important to the Internet community even though they have not been recommended by the IESG. However, the IAB strongly recommends that the standards process be used in the evolution of the protocol suite to maximize interoperability (and to prevent incompatible protocol requirements from arising). The use of the terms "standard", "draft standard", and "proposed standard" are reserved in any RFC or other publication of Internet protocols to only those protocols which the IESG has approved.

In addition to a state (like "Proposed Standard"), a protocol is also assigned a status, or requirement level, in this document. The possible requirement levels ("Required", "Recommended", "Elective", "Limited Use", and "Not Recommended") are defined in [Section 4.2](#). When a protocol is on the standards track, that is in the proposed standard, draft standard, or standard state (see [Section 5](#)), the status shown in [Section 6](#) is the current status.

Few protocols are required to be implemented in all systems; this is because there is such a variety of possible systems, for example,

gateways, routers, terminal servers, workstations, and multi-user hosts. The requirement level shown in this document is only a one word label, which may not be sufficient to characterize the implementation requirements for a protocol in all situations. For some protocols, this document contains an additional status paragraph (an applicability statement). In addition, more detailed status information may be contained in separate requirements documents (see [Section 3](#)).

2. The Request for Comments Documents

The documents called Request for Comments (or RFCs) are the working notes of the "Network Working Group", that is the Internet research and development community. A document in this series may be on essentially any topic related to computer communication, and may be anything from a meeting report to the specification of a standard.

Notice:

All standards are published as RFCs, but not all RFCs specify standards.

Anyone can submit a document for publication as an RFC. Submissions must be made via electronic mail to the RFC Editor (see the contact information at the end of this memo, and see [RFC 1543](#)).

While RFCs are not refereed publications, they do receive technical review from the task forces, individual technical experts, or the RFC Editor, as appropriate.

The RFC series comprises a wide range of documents, ranging from informational documents of general interests to specifications of standard Internet protocols. In cases where submission is intended to document a proposed standard, draft standard, or standard protocol, the RFC Editor will publish the document only with the approval of the IESG. For documents describing experimental work, the RFC Editor will notify the IESG before publication, allowing for the possibility of review by the relevant IETF working group or IRTF research group and provide those comments to the author. See [Section 5.1](#) for more detail.

Once a document is assigned an RFC number and published, that RFC is never revised or re-issued with the same number. There is never a question of having the most recent version of a particular RFC. However, a protocol (such as File Transfer Protocol (FTP)) may be improved and re-documented many times in several different RFCs. It is important to verify that you have the most recent RFC on a particular protocol. This "Internet Official Protocol Standards"

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