

Evolutionizing the IETF

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Subversive

The IETF is a success

- Producing relevant, high quality standards for the Internet
- Allowing open participation and fair sharing of ideas
- Increasing participation of relevant groups
- The leadership is providing an unified vision of the Internet that guides the standardization effort
- Using the Internet to create the Internet

The IETF is a failure

- Work is slow, output mediocre and irrelevant to the real problems facing the Internet
- Decisions are taken by backroom deals, intimidation and mob psychology
- The IESG imposes random mandates that are irrelevant to the problems at hand
- People leaving in disgust in droves
- Technically, the IETF is the most retrograde organization on the Internet

Core values of the IETF

- Cares for the Internet
 - Technically competent
 - Open process
 - Volunteer core
- ” We reject kings, presidents and voting. We believe in rough consensus and running code ”

Not core values

- The division into WGs and Areas
- The three-step standards process
- The ASCII format for RFCs and I-Ds
- The format of IETF meetings
- The shape of WG mailing lists
- The power of the IESG

Recent changes in the world

- The dot-com boom has ended. With a bang.
- The Internet is still growing, but turning into "part of basic plumbing"
- ICANN is reforming itself to do "Internet coordination" (whatever that means)
- ITU wants to take a more active role on the Internet (if it can afford it)
- Governments are interested (and worried)

Recent changes in the IETF

- Increasing cooperation across the IETF
 - Areas working together, trying to achieve commonality
- Increasing the quality of the IESG process
 - The "tracker", installed this spring, has been a boon for making sure IESG items remain visible
- Increasing the transparency of IESG evaluation
 - Opened the tracker to the public on November 1
- Trying to get more people talking
 - Technology directorates, evaluation teams

Recent non-changes

- No change to IESG personnel
- No change in the BOF procedures
- No change in how WGs are started
- No change in how WGs are managed
- No change in operator of secretariat, RFC Editor, IANA or ISOC relationship

All of these have been suggested. All of these should be thought about. We won't do them all.

So what is the problem?

- People perceive a problem.
- Perception is reality.
- We must know what the problems are before we can address them
- The leadership is not the right persons to identify the problems.
- Over to the community.....

The Voices of Others

The Four Ugly Things

(not written about the IETF)

- Putting men to death without having taught them Right – that is called savagery
- Expecting the completion of tasks without giving due warning – that is called oppression
- To be dilatory about giving orders, but to expect absolute punctuality – that is called being a tormentor
- And similarly, though meaning to let a man have something, to be grudging about bringing it out – that is called behaving like a petty functionary.

Confucius, 500 BC

Where do we go from here????

- What problem do we want to solve?
 - Creating relevant, high quality standards for the Internet
- How do we want to solve it?
 - Identify the problems that hurt
 - Find ways that work better
 - Do it!

Who is supposed to do this?

- Once we (who are we?) agree what "this" is, of course
- Backrooms DO NOT WORK. The IETF works in the open.
- Huge groups alone DO NOT WORK. We know how to critique and fine-tune; we do not know how to create in the large.
- *What next step?*

A Strawman Process

- Charter a working group to define a problem statement (timeline – Spring 2002)
- Charter a working group to revise the IETF to address the problems raised
- Call on expertise within and outside the IETF to contribute
- Conduct public review of the process
- Accept the result through the public IETF process
- Find a method to evaluate the result later on

Strawman: Targets of the process

- Retain the openness
- Re-engage the community in the IETF process
- Retain the technical competence
- Decrease the saturation on managers
- Increase the ability to act rapidly and correctly
- Make the IETF a fun place to work!

Who has the token?

- The I* is working on this (this expression matches IESG, IAB and IETF)
- We need to make the IETF work while we're working on this
- The management team cannot function effectively while critiquing itself
- The process must be rooted outside the leadership
- A person must be named – soon!

Conclusions

- The IETF is valuable
- The IETF has problems
- The IETF community is responsible for fixing those problems
- There's lots of work ahead of us
- Now we would like to hear what you think the problem is.....

A parting thought.....

We trained hard, but it seemed that everytime we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization.

Petronius Arbiter (210 B.C.)