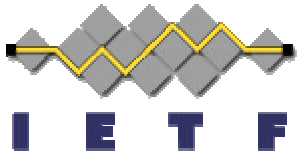
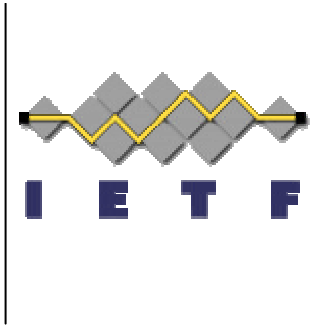
Evolutionizing the IETF

Status and plans

Harald Alvestrand



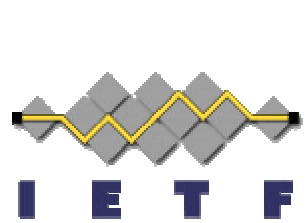
The IETF Is Working



- Standards are being produced
- Some of our output is timely.
- Some of our output is relevant.
- Some of our output is high quality.
- Some of our output is getting used.

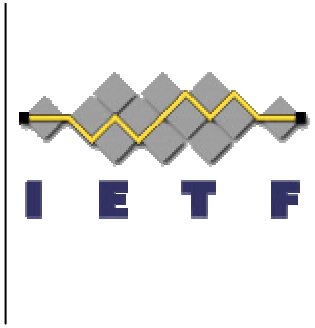
BUT.....

We Need To Work Better



- Symptoms of Trouble
  - Work frustrates enough to cause anger
    - sometimes the cause of problems are not obvious
    - and small problems can turn into bigger problems
  - Arguments turn circular and vicious
    - With resolution taking too much time
  - Some good contributors are leaving the IETF
- Quality and timeliness suffer
- We can do better!

Do What's Obvious At Once



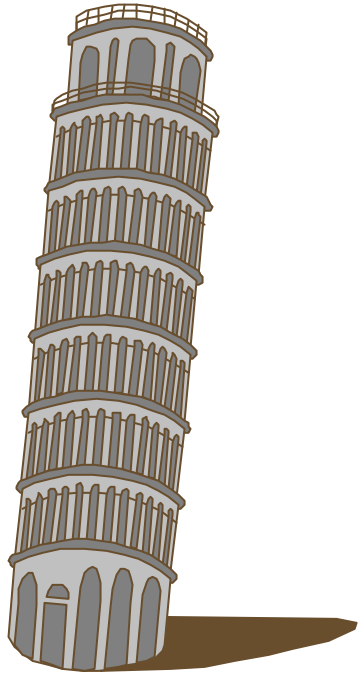
- IESG losing documents: Track them.
- Milestones irrelevant: Remind them.
- Charters outdated and unclear: Revise them.
- Documents stalled: Hunt them down.
- Conflicts unresolved: Surface and resolve.
- IESG guidelines unknown: Document them.
- IESG role unclear: Write charter.
- Open review. Open comments. Open process.

These are all things IESG has done, and will continue doing. It's our job. But it's not all that's needed.

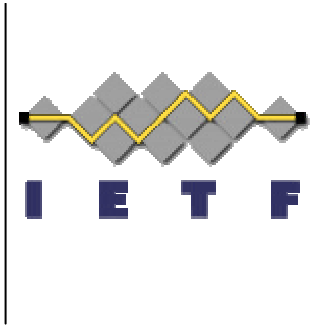
Change Needed

- Some things are easy
- Some things just require work
- Some things require us to work differently
- Some things require changing the IETF

- We MUST address our problems. We will do what it takes.



Structural Change in the IETF



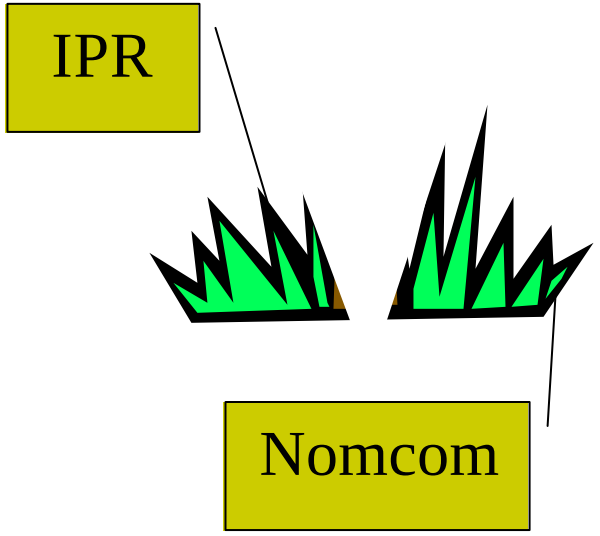
- The IETF is a consensus organization
- The IESG CANNOT change the basic nature of the IETF by fiat
- When the community realizes change is needed, the community MUST speak
- This process is neither easy nor painless. But there’s no way around it.

History: POISED and friends

- In 1992, the POISED WG redefined the IETF process
- In 1995, POISED95 continued, into POISSON
- The ongoing process worked for a while
- By 2001, it did not work very well
- Try something different

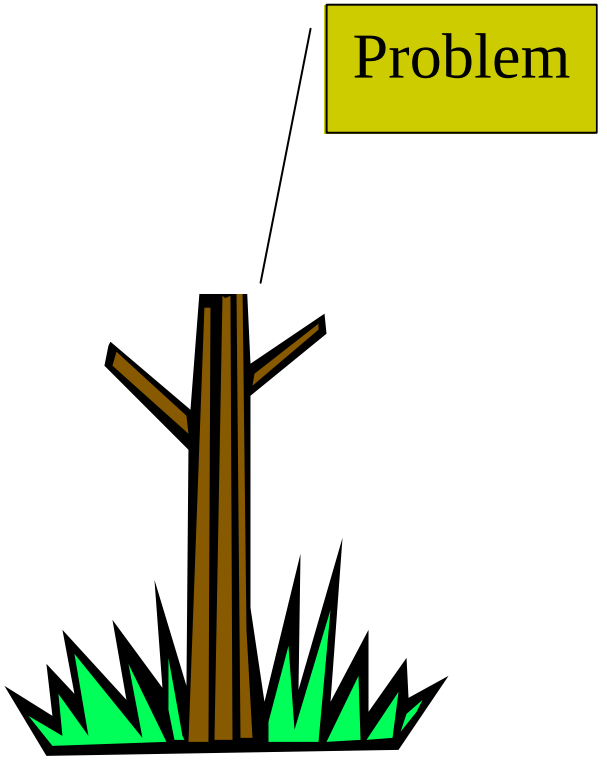
Early 2002: Redefining procedure work

- Small, sharp tools
- WGs trying to address single problems
  - IPR
  - NOMCOM
- Mostly clarification of existing procedure



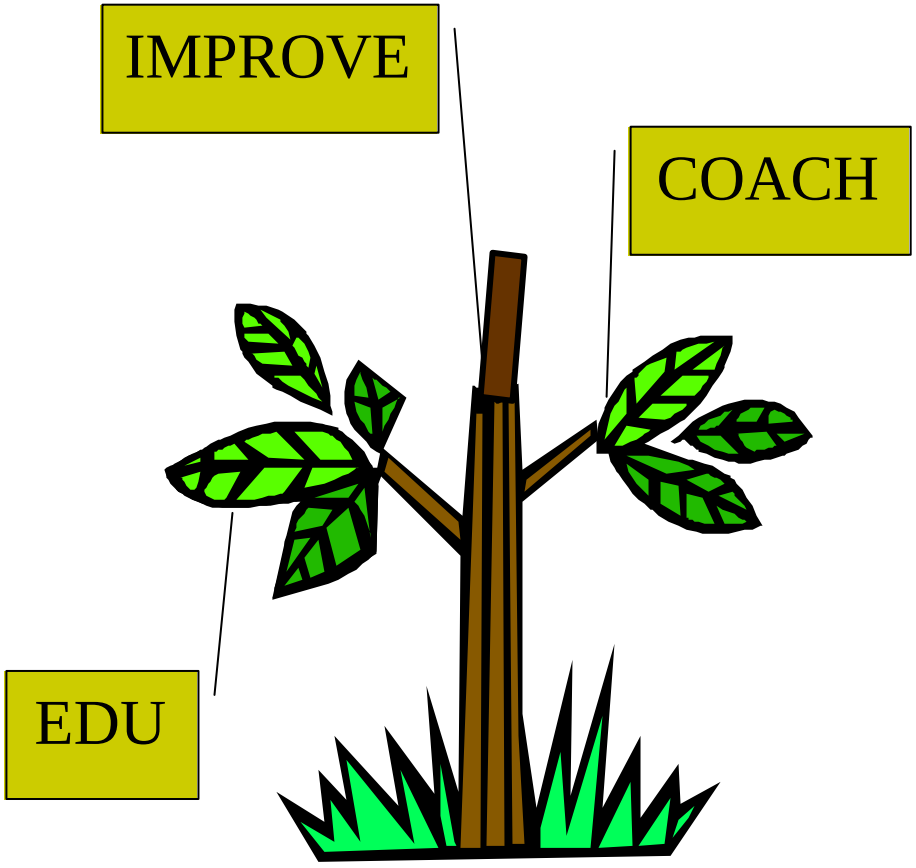
Fall 2002: Growing the understanding

- Dissatisfaction in community was clear
- Not clear exactly what the problem was
- Status Quo is not an answer
- Hasty action will cause damage
- The PROBLEM WG: Understand



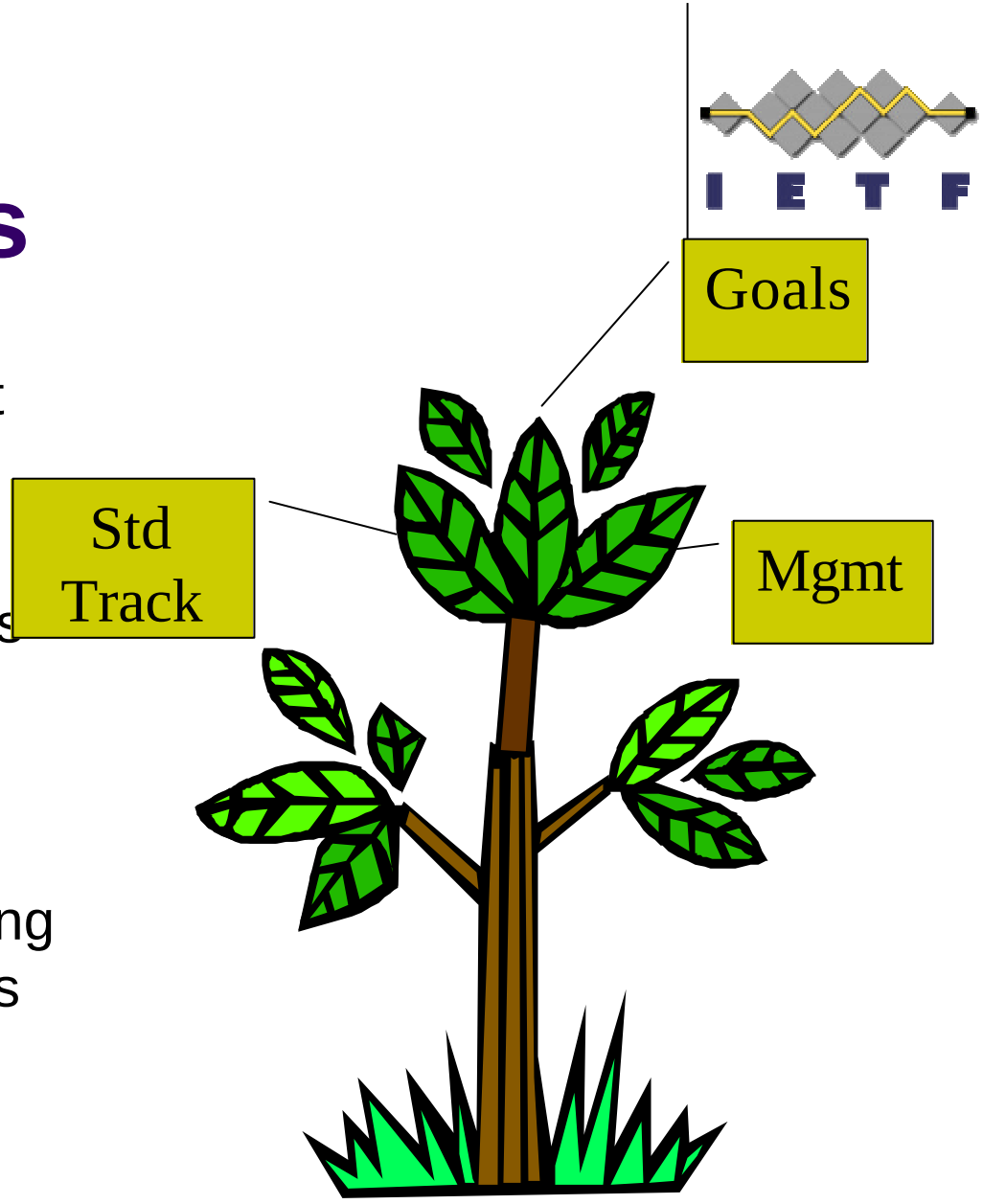
Now, Having understood, work

- We know WG process needs work - COACH
- We know people need to understand more – EDU efforts
- Just Do It
- Not clear what more
- Work on that

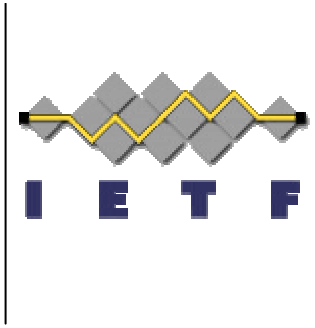


The Next Steps

- Focus on doing the Right Thing
- Identifying goals
- Changes to the standards track
- Changes to the management model
- Growing our understanding of how to solve the issues
- Carefully!

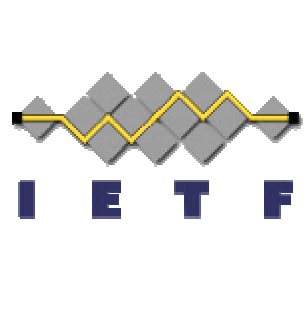


Listen to others



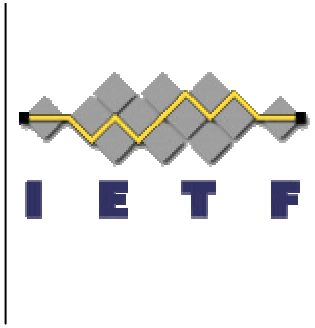
- Avri Doria: NOMCOM
- Steve Bellovin: IPR
- Melinda Shore: PROBLEM
- Margaret Wasserman: EDU
- John Loughney: COACH
- Margaret Wasserman: IMPROVE

Nomcom WG



- Chartered to make incremental changes to current process; Not to change that process in any radical way
- Has taken a year longer then original charter
  - Not just clarifications but rules to compensate for stress in the trust model
- Just finished 1st WG last call
- After issues fixed, doc to be reissued and a 2nd WG last call to occur.

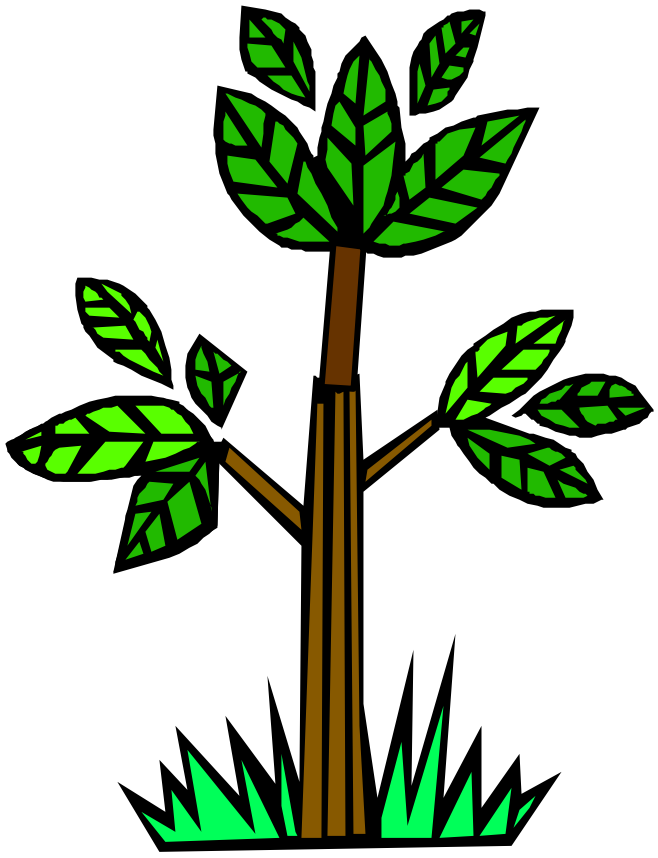
IPR WG



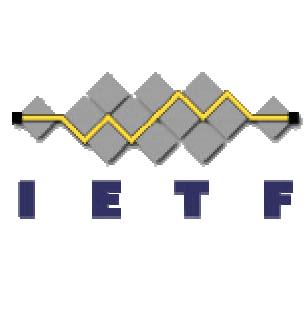
- Chartered to make incremental changes to current process; Not to change that process in any radical way
  - Patented technology acceptable but culturally discouraged
- Has taken a year longer then original charter
  - Precise definitions took a lot of work
- Produced a “Guidelines” document to help people understand how to apply the rules.
- Just finished WG last call
- About to go to IETF Last Call

Summary

- This will be written after looking at the others' presentations.....

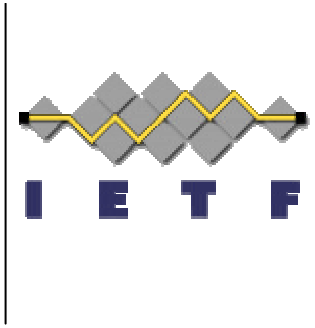
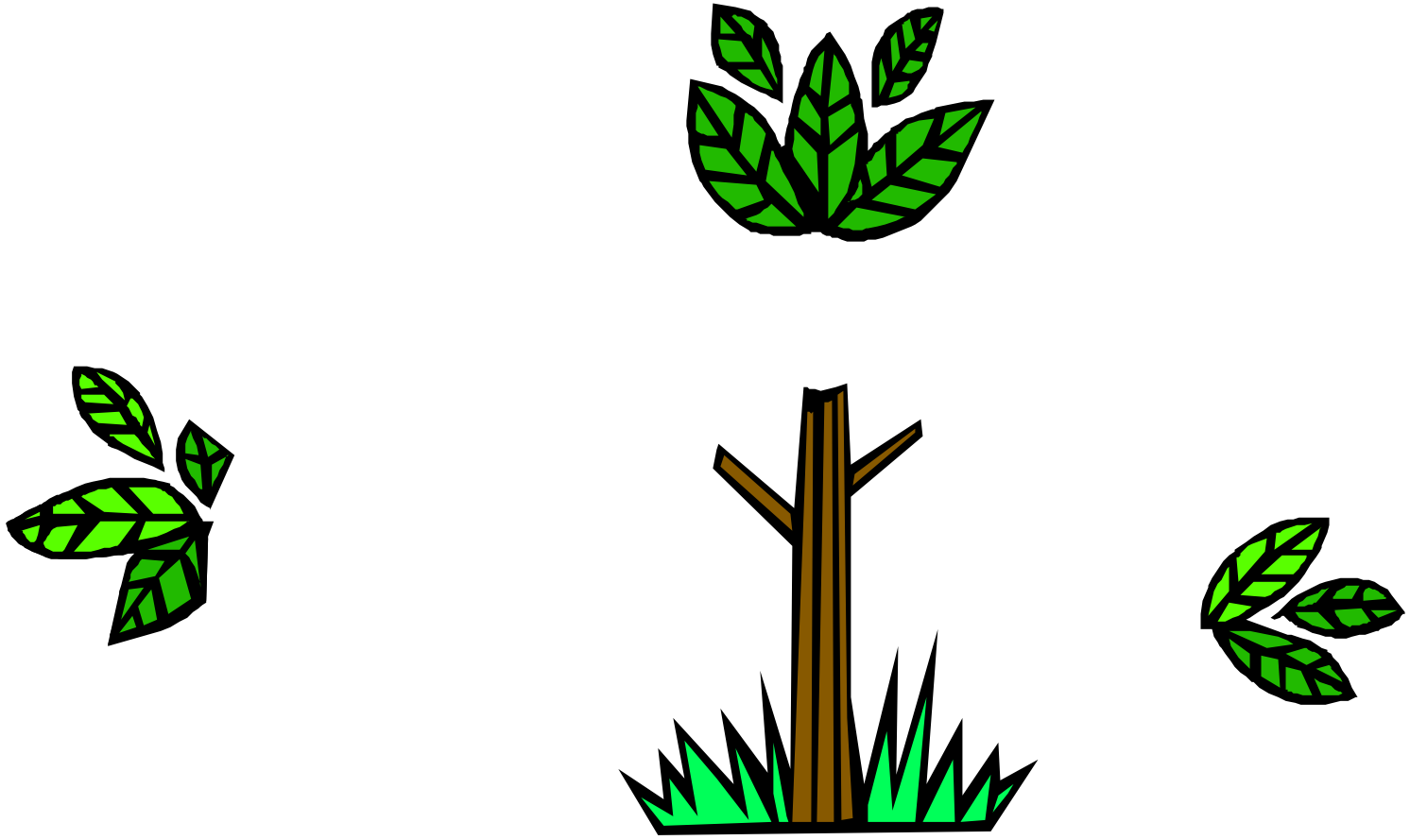


Questions to the floor



- Do we agree that the core problems have been identified?
- Do we agree that relevant, high quality standards for the Internet is a shared goal?
- Do we think this process can help achieve that goal?
- Is an IMPROVE working group a good approach?
- Is a design team approach a good idea?
- Should we pick someone to decide?

Next Steps



- Ideas for what the end result should be
  - Solutions@alvestrand.no
  - Subscribe: solutions-reuqest@alvestrand.no
  - Should talk about what end state we want
- Ideas for how to get there
  - Problem WG and mailing list
- In the end, we have to act.