Liaison Statement  
To: ITU SG 16 Q8, 9, 10/16  
For Information  
Source: IETF CODEC Working Group, Real-Time Applications and Infrastructure Area (RAI)  
Date: May 5, 2010

Speech and Audio Coding Standardization

The IETF would like to thank the ITU for liaison statement COM 16 – LS 124 – E, which was received November 2009. This statement calls attention to the mature codec development process within the ITU, and discusses the role of royalty free codecs. In particular, it indicates that several royalty free codecs have been standardized by the ITU, but that such criteria cannot be included in the terms of reference for codec standardization. The liaison also points out that elimination of third-party IPR is almost impossible, and warns that including royalty-free as an upfront goal will result in wasted time if IPR is later brought to light on the codec that has been produced.

Firstly, the IETF would like to give an update on the status of codec activities within the IETF. On 26 January 2010, the IETF formally approved the formation of the Internet Wideband Codec (CODEC) working group. Its charter called for three documents to be produced – a guidelines draft which discusses the work process for the group, a requirements document which defines requirements for the codec, and a specification of the codec itself. The charter can be found at <http://datatracker.ietf.org/wg/codec/charter/>. The initial chairs of this group were Michael Knappe ([mknappe@juniper.net](mailto:mknappe@juniper.net)) and Peter St. Andre ([stpeter@stpeter.im](mailto:stpeter@stpeter.im)). However, the subsequent election of Peter to the IESG caused him to step down, replaced by Jonathan Rosenberg ([jdrosen@jdrosen.net](mailto:jdrosen@jdrosen.net)) and Cullen Jennings ([fluffy@cisco.com](mailto:fluffy@cisco.com)).

The group met for the first time as a formal working group from March 21-26 in Anaheim. The focus of activities at this meeting was around the requirements and codec process. There was also discussion on candidate codecs. Minutes can be found at <http://www.ietf.org/proceedings/10mar/minutes/codec.html>. The group has also adopted a requirements document as a working group item. The current draft can be found at <http://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-ietf-codec-requirements/>.

The IETF is very much aware of the mature development process within the ITU around codec standardization. Indeed, one of the first deliverables of the IETF CODEC group will be a definition of our work process. The IETF would like to solicit input from the ITU on this document and the process it outlines, and invites any and all ITU experts to directly participate in the IETF process in order to leverage their expertise. We remain hopeful that a collaborative process will produce an excellent codec through combination of technical ideas, rather than going through a selection process. ITU experts are invited to join the discussions on the public mailing list, [codec@ietf.org](mailto:codec@ietf.org). Information on joining this list can be found at <https://www.ietf.org/mailman//listinfo/codec>. The IETF looks forward to your participation.

As you can see by the charter, selection of a codec that can be widely distributed and utilized on the Internet remains a critical goal for us. A full set of requirements are being collected and placed into the requirements document. The IETF would be quite pleased if an existing codec can be found which meets all of the requirements. In such a case (and of course based on working group consensus), we would merely reference that codec rather than specifying a new one. The IETF would very much welcome input from ITU on how its codecs map to the requirements that we are producing, and we invite you to contribute such information through participation in the discussions at [codec@ietf.org](mailto:codec@ietf.org).

We look forward to continued interaction with ITU as we move through this process.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Rosenberg

Co-Chair, CODEC Working Group