

Who is our community? And how to reach them?

IAB/IESG retreat 2021 - Mirja Kühlewind

Preamble on ietf@ietf.org and scope of this presentation

- Discussion (on gendispatch) mainly focused on
 - How to remove “toxic” (and also lengthy and not very interesting) discussions from that list?
 - Proposals so far mainly recommend to separate traffic to other mailing lists
- There are other questions to ask
 - How to make that list or any other list a place for positive community building?
 - How to better moderate lists? How to better train our chairs?
 - How to make sure the right people are subscribed to the right mailing lists?
 - **How to reach the community “as a whole” when feedback is needed?**

“Reaching out to the community” is important for the IESG

- There are a cases where we need quick feedback (as last year has shown) and writing an draft is not the right approach
 - Note that we got much more replies to one of the surveys when we’ve sent it to the chairs list (requesting forwarding to wg mailing list) than only sending to ietf@
- We spend a lot of time on discussing input we get over the ietf@ mailing list while the rest of the community might prefer us to spend our time on other things
 - Yes, we cannot ignore what happens on ietf@ but having this as the only input makes it easy to overrate its importance

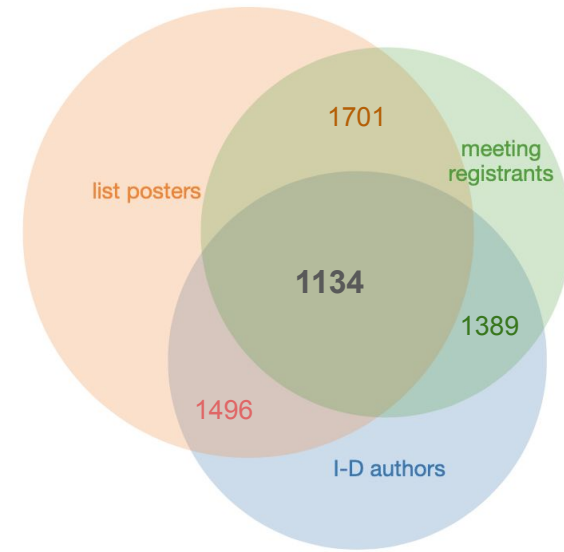
Who is our community?

- 45'000-52'000 subscribed mail addresses over all (active) mailing lists
 - Jay is about to send a community survey to learn more about them
- 13000 followers of @ietf on Twitter
- 5100+ followers of the IETF YouTube channel
- 6670 datatracker user records (of which 8 are inactive)
- 6336 number of unique email addresses across I-D authors, I-D submitters, posters to ietf.org email lists, and IETF meeting registrants in **2020**

Who is our **active** community?

Datatracker

- **2546** users logged in since 2020-04-22
- **2413** unique registrants for IETF-107/108/109 (2020)
- **2542** draft authors in 2020
 - 879 submitted a draft (9 submitted a draft but are not an author)



Mailing Lists (see <https://sodestream.github.io/analysis-of-ietf-mailing-lists-in-2020.html>)

- **2088** people posted on a mailing list in 2020 (3616 unique addresses)
 - People are assigned based on mapping addresses to datatracker account
 - 80% of addresses were active in 3 or fewer mailing lists
 - 80% of people are active (i.e., send at least one e-mail) on 5 or fewer mailing lists

What's about ietf@ and ietf-announce@? (1)

- 1760 subscribers to ietf@ and 2959 subscribers to ietf-announce@ in March 2021

(see <https://www.ietf.org/status-report/ietf-progress-report.html>)

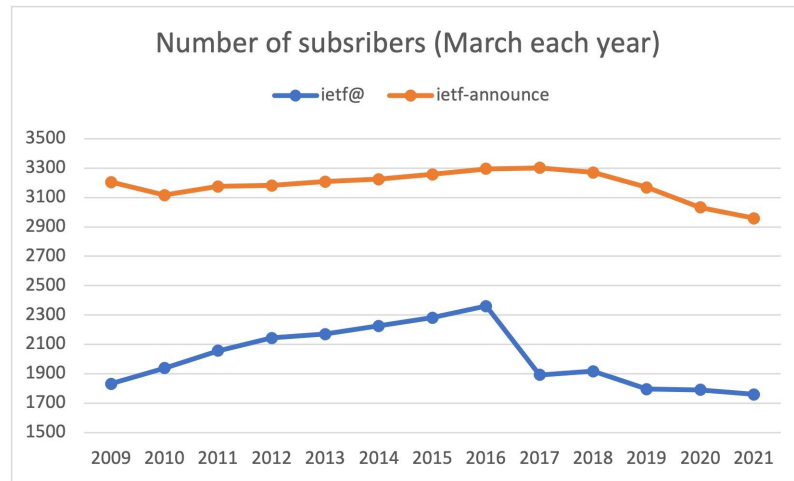
- 322 people actively posted at least one mail on ietf@ in 2020 (392 unique addresses)

(see <https://sodestream.github.io/analysis-of-ietf-mailing-lists-in-2020.html>)

- 187 posted 5 or less message; 109 only one
- 50% of the e-mails sent to the *ietf@ietf.org* were sent by the top 25 contributors (incl. Jay)
- 32 (10%) people only contributed to ietf@ but no other mailing list in 2020 (69 unique addresses)

- 77 (3.5%) draft authors have posted on ietf@ in 2021 and 2151 (96.5%) have not

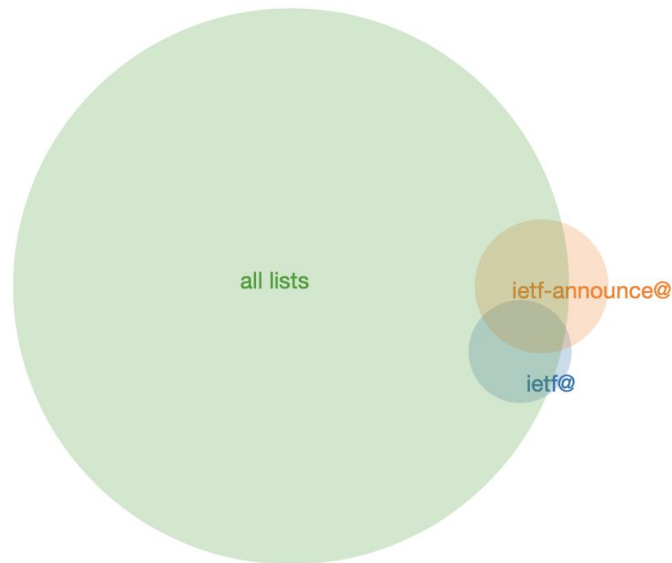
(see <https://www.arkko.com/tools/allstats/maillsanddrafts.html>)



What's about ietf@ and ietf-announce@? (2)

- August 2020: (from draft-nottingham-discussion-recharter)
 - 352 unique author addresses of 167 draft in the RFC Editor queue (on 11. Aug)
 - 83 (23.6%) are subscribed to ietf@
- July 2020: 1799 ietf@; 3038 ietf-announce@
 - 703 are on both lists
 - 127 people are subscribed to ietf@ and not subscribed to any other list
 - 816 are subscribed to ietf-announce@ and no other list

Number of list subscription (July 2020)



ietf-announce@ only reaches a small portion of the community
ietf@ does not represent the community



We need a different way to reach the community & collect community feedback

How to reach our community?

Goal

Ensure we have a way to reach everybody from the ***active community*** & make selecting information and providing feedback ***easy***

- By exploring other ways to share information
 - twitter, direct mails, chairs mailing list,...
- By making other ways to collect feedback more common
 - Direct mails to the IESG or anonymous feedback
 - Webforms and surveys, maybe even links in the mail for simple yes/no replies?

Where to send which announcements?

1. Make sure everybody who should be is subscribed to ietf-announce@
 - Goal is at least all **active** participants
 - Better promote the existence of this list, e.g. when people registered for a meeting...?
 - Reduce load of that mailing list to actual interesting announcements
 - no automatically generated mails like about interims or RFC publication; these could go on separate lists or be selected in the datatracker for each user separately, maybe even per area or wg (see next slide)
2. We should make sure that our announcements reach the whole community when needed, or depending on the announcement the “right” part of the community
 - Make use of the wg-chair mailing list more often?
 - Select target audience based on datatracker information (instead of relying on people to subscribe to way to many mailing lists), e.g for meetings, chairs, active authors...?
 - Use other channels more/more systematically (like twitter...?)

A closer look at ietf-announce@

- Usually about 100 mails per month
 - Rank 19 of 335 in 2020 (1. quic-issues; 2. dmarc-report; 3. i-d-announce; 4. letf; 5. ipv6; 6. last-call)
- March 2021: 92 messages
- 81 auto-generated by datatracker (or semi-automated by secretariat?)
 - Interim meetings 26
 - LAST call: 16
 - RFC announcement 14 (from RFC editor)
 - Document/protocol action: 13 (from IESG)
 - WG Review/Action: 4
 - Conflict review: 2
 - New non-wg mailing list: 1
 - Meeting/Retreat Details (IESG/LLC Board): 4 (manually posted by secretariat?)
- 11 (mostly?) manual posted
 - 3 IETF Executive Director: "IETF 111 will be an online meeting"; "Possible data breach of IETF t-shirt system", "IETF 110 post-meeting survey results"
 - 3 LLC: "Proposed Process to Conduct Assessment Activity of IETF Administrative Support Activity", "IETF Annual Report 2020", "IETF LLC Statement on OFAC Compliance Questions"
 - 3 IAB: "IAB Adoption of draft-X", "Contract with Temporary RFC Series Project Manager has been extended to March 2022", "Call for Comment"
 - 1 IESG Secretary: "Update of IESG statement" (auto-generated?)
 - 1 IETF chair: "Two verified errata for BCP79"

Email list subscriptions and Announcements

- There is a plan to add mailing list subscription management to the datatracker
- We should also make it easy to manage announcements
 - E.g. datatracker users can select individual which email datatracker-generated to receive
 - Should we separate different kind of announcements to different lists, so people can choose more selectively?

How to collect feedback?

1. Make sure we have always multiple options on how to provide feedback (where discussion on the ietf@ is only one of them)
 - Add a preamble to every announcement to encourage direct feedback to iesg@ & offer a link to provide anonymous feedback
 - For feedback on text proposals maybe make more use of GitHub and issues there?

Current announcement mailing lists

- ietf-announce@
 - “The IETF Announce list receives announcements about IETF meetings, the activities and actions of the IESG, the RFC Editor, the NomCom, and other announcements of interest to the IETF community. This is for authorized posters only. No discussions. Announcements only.”
- i-d-announce@
 - “This list is only for the distribution of Internet-Draft announcements. No other usage is permitted.”
- ipr-announce@
 - “This mailing list is for anyone who wants to be notified when new IPR disclosures are uploaded to the IETF website. This is an announcement list only, and no discussion is permitted on this list.”

Clean up ietf-announce@

- New mailing list rfc-announce@ for new RFCs
- Send last calls only to last-call@
- Send interim meeting announcements only to respective wg mailing list
 - Optionally: provide (by default unticked) box to request to also send to ietf-announce@ when requesting the interim scheduling + text box for text to be added to announcement mail about why IETF-wide participation is important (e.g. rechartering discussion)
 - Optionally: provide field to rest to also send announcement to other wgs lists
- Sent document actions from IESG only to respective wg (only to ietf-announce@ for AD sponsored drafts)
- Conflict reviews, new non-wg mailing lists, and LLC/IESG meeting details can stay? Or don't send meeting details at all (it's in the public calendar)?

Get people subscribed to ietf-announce@

- One-time action: send email to all people with a datatracker account
 - Either: recommend subscription
 - Or: auto subscribe all and just explain how to unsubscribe...
- Add textbox (ticked by default?) when creating a datatracker account

Getting more feedback

- Add preamble to all announcement mails like
“Please send feedback directly to the iesg@ietf.org or the IETF chair [<ietf-chair@ietf.org>](mailto:ietf-chair@ietf.org). Brief notes about positive or negative feedback as well as any questions or additional input are very welcome. Topics for broader community discussion should go to <X>ietf.org”
 - Where X can be ietf@, or e.g. gendispatch@, or rfc-interest@, or admin-discuss@, or architecture-discuss@ or something else
 - Similar message for IAB and LLC Board
- As an experiment: Put most messages or respective documents on github and share the github link with an explicit request to open issues
- As an experiment: Make polls on doodle, twitter, or poll-maker.com (and add link to announcement mail)? Or host own polls on ietf.org?
 - Doodle from Uni Dresden is on github and can be selfhosted: <https://github.com/kellerben/doodle>