What are RFC's?

Asked 16 years, 2 months ago   Modified 1 year, 9 months ago

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47

I think there are a lot of people out there unaware of RFC's (Request for Comments). I know what they are at a logical level, but can anybody give a good description for a new developer? Also, sharing some resources on how to use and read them would be nice.

standards   rfc

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edited Jul 9, 2014 at 6:08

latonz
1,750 ● 10 ● 21

asked Sep 30, 2008 at 16:03

Loki Astari
264k ● 86 ● 342 ● 571

6 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default)   ⬍

43

The term comes from the days of ARPANET, the predecessor to the internet, where the researchers would basically just throw ideas out there to, well, make a request for comments from the other researchers on the

project. They could be about pretty much anything and were not very formal at the time. If you go read them, it's pretty comical how informal they were.
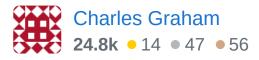
Now, there are more standards about what goes in RFC's and you can't get an RFC published until you have met strict guidelines and have done extensive research. They are pretty much reserved for well researched network standards that have been approved by the IETF.

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edited Sep 30, 2008 at 21:01

answered Sep 30, 2008 at 16:25

Charles Graham
24.8k ● 14 ● 47 ● 56

2   Googled 'funny RFC's' - can confirm - 70's people were funny. – Kyle Vassella Sep 27, 2018 at 17:17 ✎

▲

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From
http://linux.about.com/cs/linux101/g/rfclparrequestf.htm

> The name of the result and the process for creating a standard on the Internet. New standards are proposed and published on the Internet, as a Request For Comments. The proposal is reviewed by the Internet Engineering Task Force (http://www.ietf.org/), a consensus-building body that facilitates discussion, and

> eventually a new standard is established, but the reference number/name for the standard retains the acronym RFC, e.g. the official standard for e-mail message formats is RFC 822.

See also: RFC Wikipedia Article

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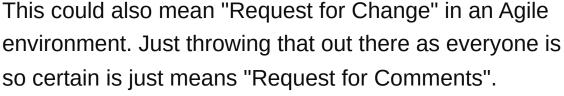
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answered Sep 30, 2008 at 16:11

xsl
17.4k ● 19 ● 73 ● 112

This could also mean "Request for Change" in an Agile environment. Just throwing that out there as everyone is so certain is just means "Request for Comments".

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answered Nov 21, 2016 at 23:14

IamBatman
1,005 ● 13 ● 18

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2   That's how it is used in my current place of work, even though they're not really agile, they pretend to be :) – J86 Nov 8, 2017 at 11:50

I've always heard them called Change Requests probably because of the ambiguity – Alex W Feb 16, 2021 at 16:30

Wikipedia gives a good description of what [RFC] is about but in a nutshell it is a set of recommendation from the Internet Engineering Task Force applicable to the working

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of the Internet and Internet-connected systems. They are used as the standards.

So if you're looking for a definitive source of the information about the implementation of FTP, LDAP, IMAP, POP etc you don't have to look further than the appropriate RFC documents.

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answered Sep 30, 2008 at 16:14

Ilya Kochetov
18.4k ● 6 ● 47 ● 62

2   I really wouldn't read the IMAP one unless you have some good sedatives to hand :) – Gordon Thompson Sep 30, 2008 at 16:20

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It's a Request For Comments. That title is a little misleading though, as it's often used as a name for standards, mostly those by the IETF. See Wikipedia

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answered Sep 30, 2008 at 16:06

Matthias Winkelmann
16.4k ● 8 ● 68 ● 77

1

As others have said, RFC is a term that was introduced by Arpanet. They are often used by standards bodies to invite stakeholders to provide feedback on proposals. They are also used internally in organizations of all

shapes and sizes as part of the software development process. Here is a good resource to learn more: https://www.designdocs.dev/

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