Proposed RFC Editor Structure

Note: Discussion of this proposal should take place on the rfc-interest@rfc-editor.nospam.org mailing list.

Introduction

The IAB, on behalf of the Internet technical community, is concerned with ensuring the continuity of the RFC Series, orderly RFC Editor succession, maintaining RFC quality, and RFC document accessibility. The IAB is also sensitive to the concerns of the IAOC about providing the necessary services in a cost effective and efficient manner.

The definition of the RFC series is described in RFC 4844.
Section 3.1 defines "RFC Editor":

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3.1. RFC Editor

Originally, there was a single person acting as editor of the
RFC
Series (the RFC Editor).  The task has grown, and the work
now
requires the organized activity of several experts, so there
are RFC
Editors, or an RFC Editor organization.  In time, there may
be
multiple organizations working together to undertake the work
required by the RFC Series.  For simplicity's sake, and
without
attempting to predict how the role might be subdivided among
them,
this document refers to this collection of experts and
organizations
as the "RFC Editor".

The RFC Editor is an expert technical editor and series
editor,
acting to support the mission of the RFC Series.  As such,
the RFC
Editor is the implementer handling the editorial management
of the
RFC Series, in accordance with the defined processes.  In
addition,
the RFC Editor is expected to be the expert and prime mover
in
discussions about policies for editing, publishing, and
archiving
RFCs.
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RFC 4844 envisions changes in the RFC Editor organizational structure. The IAB is considering a change to increase flexibility and operational support options, provide for the orderly

succession of the RFC Editor, and ensure the continuity of the RFC series, while maintaining RFC quality, maintaining timely processing, ensuring document accessibility, reducing costs, and increasing cost transparency. The IAB and the IAOC want to know if the Internet community agrees that the proposed RFC Editor structure will meet the needs of the entire Internet community.

Expenses for the RFC Editor

The expenses discussed in this document are not new expenses. They arepart of the IASA budget. Today, these expenses are part of the RFC Editor contract with ISI.

The model is constructed in such a way that it allows for all these functions to be implemented jointly or under different contracts. In fact, a bidder could put together a proposal that includes one or more subcontractors. Since the reporting structure would depend on how the manner that the contracts are awarded, they are subject to change over time. As a result, the model does only describe responsibilities, procedures, and process. The exact implementation is a responsibility of the IAOC.
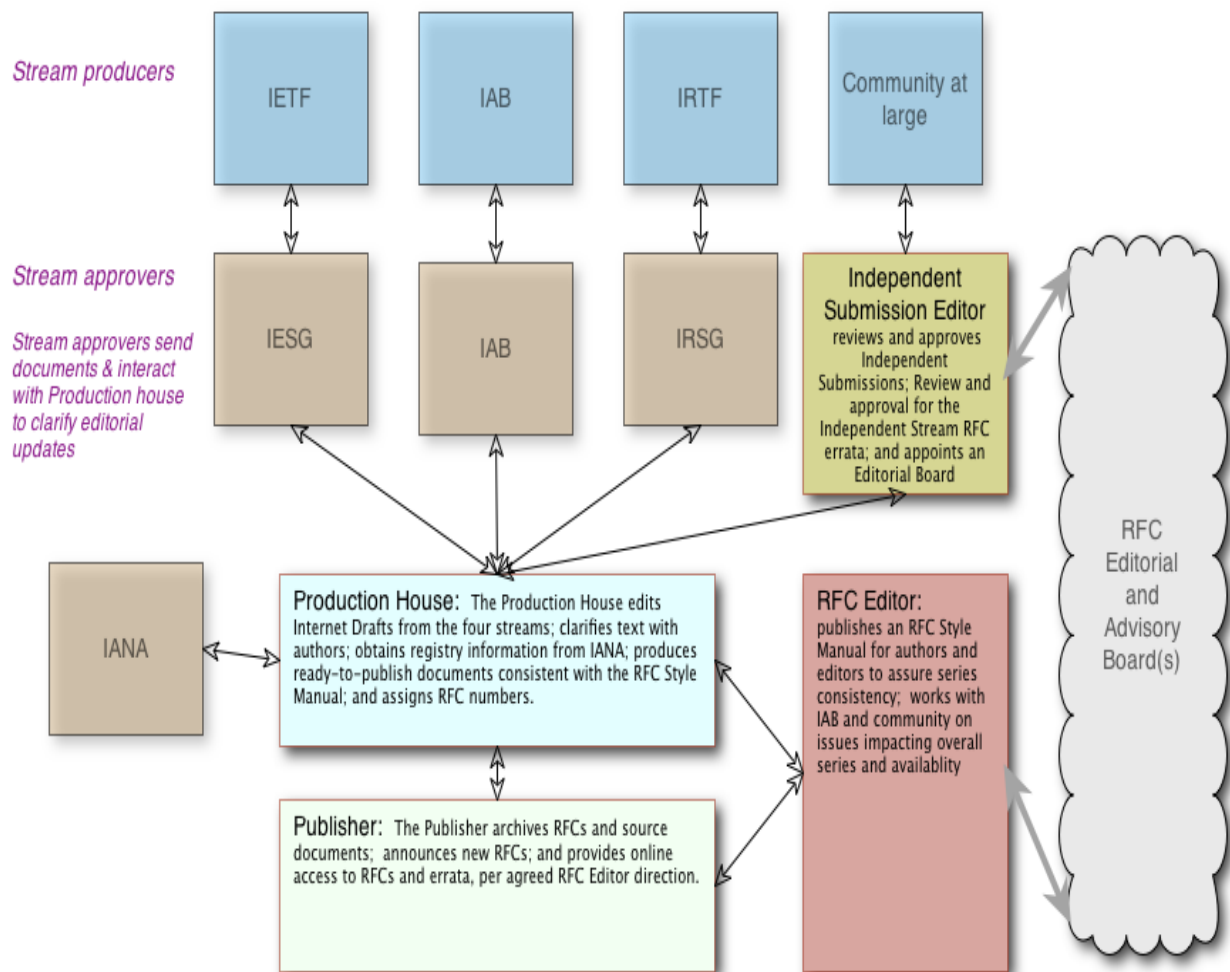
Proposed RFC Editor Model

The proposed RFC Editor model divides the responsibilities for the RFC Series into the following:

1. RFC Editor
2. Independent Stream Supervisor
3. RFC Production
4. RFC Publisher

The RFC Series Production and Process under this structure is schematically represented by the figure below.

RFC Series Production and Process

Stream producers

IETF | IAB | IRTF | Community at large

Stream approvers

Stream approvers send documents & interact with Production house to clarify editorial updates

IESG | IAB | IRSG | Independent Submission Editor reviews and approves Independent Submissions; Review and approval for the Independent Stream RFC errata; and appoints an Editorial Board

IANA

Production House: The Production House edits Internet Drafts from the four streams; clarifies text with authors; obtains registry information from IANA; produces ready-to-publish documents consistent with the RFC Style Manual; and assigns RFC numbers.

RFC Editor: publishes an RFC Style Manual for authors and editors to assure series consistency; works with IAB and community on issues impacting overall series and availablity

RFC Editorial and Advisory Board(s)

Publisher: The Publisher archives RFCs and source documents; announces new RFCs; and provides online access to RFCs and errata, per agreed RFC Editor direction.

RFC Editor

The RFC Editor is a single person, and this person is responsible for:

1. RFC Series continuity
2. RFC Style Manual publication for use by authors and editors
3. RFC errata process management
4. Liaison with the IAB

The RFC Editor is a senior managerial position with a strong understanding of the IETF process and seasoned management skills.

The IAB is considering possible models for filling this position in the future. The IAB is seeking input on the two possible models outlined
below, and the IAB is interested in other potential models.

The first alternative for the selection of the RFC Editor is through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process run by the IAOC. As in the first alternative, the IAOC would seek a person with the listed qualifications in a broadly distributed RFP. The winner would be selected by the IAOC in consultation with the IAB, and then, the IAOC would contract for the services. Contract terms, including length of contract, extensions and renewals, shall be as defined in an RFP. The

opportunity to bid shall be broadly available. Expenses to support the administrative operation of the RFC Editor would be part of the awarded contract and be part of the IASA budget.

The second alternative is an individual with the listed qualifications selected by the community and confirmed by the IAB. An approach similar to the one used by the IAB to select an IAOC member every other year as described in RFC 4333 could be used. Expenses to support the administrative operation of the RFC Editor selected in this manner would be part of the IASA budget.

Independent Stream Supervisor

The Independent Stream Supervisor is a single person, and this person is responsible for:

1. Independent Submissions approval and processing
2. Forwarding RFCs in the independent stream to the RFC Publisher
3. Independent Submissions RFC errata review and approval

The Independent Stream Supervisor is a senior position for which the following qualifications are desired:

1. Technical competence
2. An understanding of the IETF process
3. An ability to assess the technical competence of potential Editorial Board members
4. Good standing in the technical community in and beyond the IETF

The IAB is considering possible models for filling this position in the future. The IAB is seeking input on a possible model outlined below, and the IAB is interested in other potential models.

The proposal is an individual with the listed qualifications selected by the community and confirmed by the IAB. An approach similar to the one used by the IAB to select an IAOC member every other year as described in RFC 4333 could be used. Expenses to support the administrative operation of the Independent Stream Supervisor selected in this manner would be part of the IASA budget.

Today, the RFC Editor when acting in the Independent Stream Supervisor role is supported by an Editorial Board, and no changes to the Editorial Board are being proposed.

RFC Production

In the proposed split of activities, RFC Production is performed by a paid contractor, and the contractor responsibilities include:

1. Editing inputs from all RFC streams to comply with the RFC Style Manual
2. Creating records of edits performed on documents
3. Engaging in dialogue with authors when clarification is needed
4. Creating records of dialogue with documents authors
5. Requesting advice from the RFC Editor as needed
6. Provide suggestions to the RFC Editor as needed
7. Coordinating with IANA to obtain registry information
8. RFC number assignment

9. Forwarding ready-to-publish documents to the RFC Publisher
10. Forwarding records of edits and author dialogue to RFC Publisher
11. Liaison with IESG and IAB

The RFC Production contractor is expected to be selected by the IAOC through an RFP process, perhaps as part of the same contract as the RFC Editor. The IAOC would seek a bidder who, among other things, is able to provide a timely and cost effective service against the established style and production guidelines. Contract terms, including length of contract, extensions and renewals, shall be as defined in an RFP. The opportunity to bid shall be broadly available.

RFC Publisher

In the proposed model, the RFC Publisher responsibilities include:

1. Announce and provide online access to RFCs
2. Provide online system to submit RFC Errata
3. Provide online access to approved RFC Errata
4. Provide backups
5. Provide storage and preservation of records
6. Authenticate RFCs for legal proceedings

The IAOC is considering two possibilities for selection of the RFC Publisher. The IAOC is seeking input on the two alternatives outlined below, and the IAOC is interested in other potential alternatives.

The first alternative is to extend the IETF Secretariat contract to include these services. Expenses to support these services would be part of the revised contract. The second alternative is a separate vendor selected by the IAOC through an RFP process. Expenses to support service would be part of the awarded contract.