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Definition of an Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) Document Stream

Abstract

This memo defines the publication stream for RFCs from the Internet Research Task Force. Most documents undergoing this process will come from IRTF Research Groups, and it is expected that they will be published as Informational or Experimental RFCs by the RFC Editor.

Status of this Memo

This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is published for informational purposes.

This document is a product of the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF). The IRTF publishes the results of Internet-related research and development activities. These results might not be suitable for deployment. Documents approved for publication by the IRSG are not a candidate for any level of Internet Standard; see Section 2 of RFC 5741.

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5743.

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1. Introduction

From time to time the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) [RFC2014] will wish to publish a document in the Internet RFC series. This memo defines the steps required to publish a document in the IRTF RFC stream. Document streams are described in Section 5 of [RFC4844]. Most documents undergoing this process will come from IRTF Research Groups and it is expected that they will be published as Informational or Experimental RFCs by the RFC Editor.

The IRTF RFC stream provides an avenue for research groups to publish their findings with an IRTF label. Pre-publication editorial review by the Internet Research Steering Group (IRSG) increases the readability of documents and ensures proper caveats (described in Section 2.1) are applied.

The IRTF RFC approval process may be summarized as:

- The Research Group (RG) performs a thorough technical and editorial review of the document and agrees it should be published.

- The Internet Research Steering Group (IRSG) reviews the document and approves it for publication.

- The Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) reviews the document to assure that there are no conflicts with current or expected standardization activities.

- The document is submitted to the RFC Editor for publication.

This document has been updated based on over a year of experience and processing of roughly a dozen documents. The IRTF concludes that there has been sufficient experience to justify that the benefits and process are sound.

2. Approval Process

The following sections describe the steps for IRTF-stream document review and publication process. There are fundamentally two steps: IRSG review and IESG review. The document shepherd is responsible for making sure reviews are responded to and documented and that the process moves along.

2.1. Research Group Preparation

If an IRTF Research Group desires to publish a document as an IRTF RFC, the process in this document must be followed. First, the RG must review the document for editorial and technical quality.

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- There must be a statement in the abstract identifying it as the product of the RG.
- There must be a paragraph near the beginning (for example, in the introduction) describing the level of support for publication. Example text might read: "this document represents the consensus of the FOOBAR RG" or "the views in this document were considered controversial by the FOOBAR RG but the RG reached a consensus that the document should still be published".
- The breadth of review the document has received must also be noted. For example, was this document read by all the active research group members, only three people, or folks who are not "in" the RG but are expert in the area?
- It must also be very clear throughout the document that it is not an IETF product and is not a standard.
- If an experimental protocol is described, appropriate usage caveats must be present.
- If the protocol has been considered in an IETF working group in the past, this must be noted in the introduction as well.
- There should be citations and references to relevant research publications.

The Research Group identifies a document shepherd whose responsibility is to track and facilitate document progression through RFC publication. The shepherd should be copied on all correspondence relating to the document.

2.2. IRSG Review and Approval

The IRSG functions similar to an editorial review board. It is the IRSG's responsibility to ensure high technical and editorial quality. The IRSG will review and approve all documents intended for RFC publication from the IRTF stream.

The purpose of the IRSG review is to ensure consistent technical clarity and editorial quality for IRTF publications. The IRSG review is not a deep technical review (this should take place within the RG). At least one IRSG member who is not a chair of that research group must review the document and the RG's editorial process.

IRSG reviewers should look for clear, cogent, and consistent writing. An important aspect of the review is to gain a critical reading from reviewers who are not subject matter experts and, in the process, assure the document will be accessible to those beyond the authoring research group. Also, reviewers should assess whether sufficient editorial and technical review has been conducted within the RG and the requirements of this process document have been met, for example, reviewers should evaluate whether the breadth of review the document has received is adequate for the material at hand. Finally, reviewers should check that appropriate citations to related research literature have been made.

Reviews should be written to be public. Review comments should be sent to the IRSG and RG mailing lists and entered into the IRTF's document tracker. All IRSG review comments must be addressed. However, the RG need not accept every comment. It is the responsibility of the shepherd to understand the comments and ensure that the RG considers them, including adequate dialog between the reviewer and the author and/or RG.

Following resolution of the editorial review, the IRSG will make a decision as to whether to approve the document for publication. If the IRSG does not approve the document, it returns to the research group with feedback on what would need to be fixed for publication. In rare cases, the IRSG may determine that a document is not suitable for publication as an IRTF RFC. (For example, members of the RG may assert to the IRSG that there was no RG consensus to publish the document.) Other publication streams would still be available to those authors.

2.3. IESG Review

The IRTF Chair will then extend the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) an opportunity to review the document according to the process and scope described in [RFC5742]. The scope of this review is confined to that described in Section 4.2.3 of [RFC2026] for non-IETF documents, specifically it is "to ensure that the non-standards track Experimental and Informational designations are not misused to circumvent the Internet Standards Process."

The IESG (via the IETF Secretariat) is expected to provide the IRTF chair and document shepherd with a response, normally within four weeks, as to whether publication of the draft is perceived to be at odds with the Internet Standards Process.

2.4. RFC Editor Handling

The IRTF Chair will then ask the RFC Editor to publish the document, after which it will be enqueued for publication.

The document enters the RFC Editor queue at the same priority as non-standard IETF-stream and IAB-stream documents. The document shepherd is responsible for ensuring that the document authors are responsive to the RFC Editor and that the RFC editing process goes smoothly. The AUTH48 review stage of RFC publication is an area where the shepherd may be of particular assistance, ensuring a) authors respond promptly in reviewing about-to-be-published RFCs and b) authors don’t inject changes into the document at the last minute which would not be supported by the research group or other reviewers.

If not already present, the RFC Editor will insert labels and text for the "Status of this Memo" section that identify the document as the product of the IRTF. The current text is defined in [RFC5741].

3. Rules for Submission and Use of Material

The goals of the IRTF Stream are based on a desire that research within the IRTF have broad impact and the publication rights should, in general, not restrict republication (with appropriate citations). However, in uncommon cases, it may be desirable to publish a document that does not permit derivative works. This section, adapted from [RFC5744], describes rules and procedures supporting these goals. See [RFC5744] for a discussion of the background and rationale for the specific language. (From a historical perspective, the goal has been to preserve the rights that IRTF authors have previously had when publishing documents as RFC Editor Independent Submissions. [RFC5744] defines those rights.)

IRTF Stream authors will submit their material as Internet-Drafts. These drafts will be submitted to, and stored in, the IETF Internet-Drafts repository in the same fashion as IETF Internet-Drafts. During Internet-Draft submission, authors who intend to submit their document for publication in the IRTF Stream will grant rights as described in [RFC5378]. To request that the contribution be published as an RFC that permits no derivative works, an author may use the form specified for use with RFC 5378. The IETF Trust will indicate that, in cooperation with the IRTF, the Trust grants to readers and users of material from IRTF Stream RFCs the right to make unlimited derivative works, unless the RFC specifies that no derivative works are permitted. This will permit anyone to copy, extract, modify, or otherwise use material from IRTF Stream RFCs as long as suitable attribution is given. Contributors of Internet-Drafts intended for the IRTF Stream will include suitable boilerplate defined by the IETF Trust. This boilerplate shall indicate compliance with RFC 5378 and shall explicitly indicate either that no derivative works can be based on the contribution, or, as is preferred, that unlimited derivative works may be crafted from the contribution. It should be understood that the final publication decision for the IRTF Stream rests with the IRTF Chair. Compliance with these terms is not a guarantee of publication. In particular, the IRTF Chair may question the appropriateness of a "no derivative works" restriction requested by an author. The appropriateness of such usage must be negotiated among the authors and the IRTF Chair.

3.1. Procedures Requested of the IETF Trust

The IRTF requests that the IETF Trust and its Trustees assist in meeting the goals and procedures set forth in this document. The Trustees are requested to publicly confirm their willingness and ability to accept responsibility for the Intellectual Property Rights for the IRTF Stream. They are also requested to indicate their willingness and intent to work according to the procedures and goals defined by the IRTF. Specifically, the Trustees are asked to develop the necessary boilerplate to enable the suitable marking of documents so that the IETF Trust receives the rights as specified in RFC 5378. These procedures need to also allow documents to grant either no rights to make derivative works, or preferentially, the right to make unlimited derivative works from the documents. It is left to the Trust to specify exactly how this shall be clearly indicated in each document.

3.2. Patent and Trademark Rules for the IRTF Stream

As specified above, contributors of documents for the IRTF stream are expected to use the IETF Internet-Draft process, complying therein with the rules specified in the latest version of BCP 9, whose

version at the time of writing was [RFC2026]. This includes the disclosure of Patent and Trademark issues that are known, or can be reasonably expected to be known, to the contributor. Disclosure of license terms for patents is also requested, as specified in the most recent version of BCP 79. The version of BCP 79 at the time of this writing was RFC 3979 [RFC3979], which is updated by [RFC4879]. The IRTF Stream has chosen to use the IETF's IPR disclosure mechanism, www.ietf.org/ipr/, for this purpose. The IRTF would prefer that the most liberal terms possible be made available for specifications published as IRTF Stream documents. Terms that do not require fees or licensing are preferable. Non-discriminatory terms are strongly preferred over those which discriminate among users. However, although disclosure is required, there are no specific requirements on the licensing terms for intellectual property related to IRTF Stream publication.

4. IAB Statement

In its capacity as the body that approves the creation of document streams (see [RFC4844]), the IAB has reviewed this proposal and supports it as an operational change that is in line with the respective roles of the IRTF, IESG, and RFC Editor.

5. Security Considerations

There are no security considerations in this document.

6. Acknowledgements

This document was developed in close collaboration with the Internet Research Steering Group (IRSG), see Appendix A for membership. Useful contributions were made by Mark Allman, Bob Braden, Brian Carpenter, Leslie Daigle, Stephen Farrell, Tom Henderson, Rajeev Koodli, Danny McPherson, Allison Mankin, Craig Partridge, Juergen Schoenwaelder, Karen Sollins, and Mark Townsley who contributed to development of the process defined in this document.

7. Informative References

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[RFC5378] Bradner, S. and J. Contreras, "Rights Contributors Provide to the IETF Trust", BCP 78, RFC 5378, November 2008.

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[RFC5742] Alvestrand, H. and R. Housley, "IESG Procedures for Handling of Independent and IRTF Stream Submissions", BCP 92, RFC 5742, December 2009.

[RFC5744] Braden, R. and J. Halpern, "Procedures for Rights Handling in the RFC Independent Submission Stream", RFC 5744, December 2009.

Appendix A. Internet Research Steering Group Membership

IRSG members at the time of this writing:

Bill Arbaugh, MOBOPTS RG; Bob Braden; John Buford, SAM RG; Ran Canetti, CFRG; Leslie Daigle; Wes Eddy, ICCRG; Aaron Falk, IRTF Chair; Kevin Fall, DTN RG; Stephen Farrell, DTN RG; Sally Floyd, TMRG; Andrei Gurtov, HIPRG; Tom Henderson, HIPRG; Rajeev Koodli, MOBOPTS RG; Olaf Kolkman, IAB Chair; John Levine, ASRG; Tony Li, RRG; Dave McGrew, CFRG; Jeremy Mineweaser, SAM RG; Craig Partridge, E2E RG; Juergen Schoenwaelder, NMRG; Karen Sollins, E2E RG; Michael Welzl, ICCRG; John Wroclawski; Lixia Zhang, RRG

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