Requirements for a Working Group Charter Tool

Abstract

   The IETF intends to provide a new tool to Area Directors for the
   creation, re-chartering, and closing of Working Groups. The tool
   will also allow the IETF community to view the status of the
   chartering process. This document describes the requirements for the
   proposed new tool, and it is intended as input to a later activity
   for the design and development of such a tool.

Status of This Memo

   This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is
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1. Introduction

   [RFC2418] describes the guidelines and procedures for formation and
   operation of IETF Working Groups (WGs). Since the publication of RFC
   2418 in 1998, the IETF has started many dozen new WGs, and has shut
   down many dozen. In that time, many WGs have had some (often dozens)
   changes to their charters.

   Today, virtually all of the tasks associated with creating,
   rechartering, and closing a WG are performed manually. An Area
   Director (AD) requests one of these actions by manually sending a
   message to the Secretariat's ticket system. A member of the
   Secretariat staff manually updates the internal Secretariat database
   and the IETF Datatracker, manually places the WG on the IESG
   teleconference agenda (when appropriate), and manually sends out all
   of the required messages and announcements.

   The IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) would like to
   create a better tool for those tasks, and this document lists the
   requirements for such a tool. When complete, this document may be
   used to issue an RFP for the design and development of the tool.
   This document was prepared at the request of the IAOC.

1.1. WG Charter Process Overview

   As described in [RFC2418], a key responsibility of the IESG is the
   creation, re-chartering, and closing of WGs. Creation and
   rechartering of WGs is a multi-step process that involves internal
   review of a draft charter by the IESG and IAB, an external review of
   the draft charter by the IETF community and by other standards
   bodies, and (likely) approval of a final charter by the IESG. The
   internal review by the IESG and IAB, and the external review by the
   IETF community, often result in revisions to the draft charter.

   Closing of a WG does not require review or approval by the IESG.
   Rather, a WG may be closed at the request of an AD, normally the Area
   Advisor for the WG.

   Note that the charter and recharter processes do not involve changing
   of WG milestones. A tool that handles milestone updates will likely
   be created in the future.

2. General Requirements

   The tool described here holds records for new WGs that are being
   considered as well as for all WGs whose charter are under review.

2.1. WG Records

A WG record contains the following fields:

o name of the WG

o the WG's acronym

o names of the WG chairs (if known)

o names of the WG secretary (if any)

o names of the WG technical advisors (if any)

o shepherding AD

o IETF area

o charter text

o mailing list address and archive location

o previous mailing list (if any)

o other web sites (such as wikis, trackers, and/or project sites, if
   any) including web sites existing prior to the WG formation

o earlier acronyms for the WG

o explanation for why the WG is being chartered or rechartered (if
   any)

In addition, a WG record contains the state of the WG in the review
process. That state has one annotation: whether or not the state is
for a proposed WG or for an existing WG undergoing rechartering.
Some changes in state cause messages to be sent to the Secretariat so
that the Secretariat can perform additional steps, such as sending
out mail to various parties about the latest version of the charter
text, deadlines for an upcoming decision, and so on.

When a WG record is displayed, that display should also reflect
whether the WG currently exists or has been closed; that data comes
from a different part of the Datatracker database.

Any AD can modify fields in an existing WG record. Any AD can use
the tool to change the review state of a WG record. The normal order
for steps is shown in this document, but an AD can set the state to
any valid value at any time.

2.2. Comments

   During the reviews for WG creation and rechartering, ADs can comment
   on the reviews. Any AD can add a comment to the record of a WG that
   is under review. Each comment can be flagged as either "blocking"
   (meaning blocking forward movement until it is resolved) and "non-
   blocking" (meaning that it is only informative or editorial).

2.3. Naming of Charter Text Proposals

   Charter text proposals are to be kept for historical purposes. They
   are kept in files with a specific naming pattern. The pattern for
   charters before a WG is formed is:

   charter-ietf-wgacronym-nn[-mm]

   o "wgacronym" is the acronym of the proposed WG.

   o "nn" is a two-digit charter number assigned in sequence. It
      starts at "00" for before the WG is first chartered; the first
      finished charter has a value of "01".

   o "mm" is a two-digit proposal number assigned in sequence. It
      starts at "00" for the first proposal for a particular version of
      charter. It is omitted in the actual charter file.

   For instance, if the "example" WG is chartered and then rechartered
   twice, you might have the following sequence of files:

   charter-ietf-example-00-00.txt (first proposal)
   charter-ietf-example-00-01.txt (second proposal)
   charter-ietf-example-00-02.txt (third proposal)
   charter-ietf-example-01.txt (first charter)
   charter-ietf-example-01-00.txt (first recharter proposal)
   charter-ietf-example-01-01.txt (second recharter proposal)
   charter-ietf-example-01-02.txt (third recharter proposal)
   charter-ietf-example-02.txt (second charter)
   charter-ietf-example-02-00.txt (next recharter proposal)
   . . .
   charter-ietf-example-03.txt (third charter)

2.4. Wording of Announcements

   An AD can view and edit the standard "WG Review" and "WG Action"
   announcements before they are sent out during the WG creation,
   rechartering, and closing processes. If the AD edits the message,
   the Secretariat is alerted to that fact when they receive the
   request.

2.5. Access to the Tool

   Area Directors and the IETF Secretariat currently have access to
   perform some actions in the Datatracker that other community members
   do not; this access control continues to be used in many of the
   extensions listed in this document. Further, the IETF Secretariat
   can perform all actions that can be performed by any AD in this tool.

2.6. Initializing the Tool

   Records for all WGs that are being created, or are in the process of
   charter updates, will be added before the tool is first publicly
   deployed.

   The database should also be initialized with current and historical
   data, namely as much information as is currently known about existing
   and closed WGs that can be done in a mostly-automated fashion.

3. Creating and Rechartering WGs

3.1. Chartering a New WG

   Any AD can create a new WG record using a simple web form. Creating
   a record should succeed as long as there is no other WG with the same
   name. Names must be unique, so the tool will warn the AD if the
   acronym that is being proposed has been used in earlier WG charter
   proposals and suggest against its use for a new charter. By default,
   the field in the form listing the shepherding AD will be prepopulated
   with the name of the AD who is filling in the form. The AD can fill
   in all the fields for the proposed WG. The names of the WG chairs
   can be left off during the initial chartering process.

   (Some Secretariat tools have trouble with acronyms of more than eight
   characters: they truncate the name. This will probably be fixed in
   the future. The new tool should have a configuration setting that is
   set to 8 initially, and it should be adjusted when the Secretariat
   tools are updated. There may also be problems with names that have
   hyphens in them. However, WGs that have more than eight characters
   in their names, and WGs with hyphens in their names, have existed for
   over a year.)

   Creating a new WG record causes the Datatracker state for this
   potential new WG to be "Informal IESG review". When the record is
   created, the AD proposes a length of time (in weeks) for the internal
   review time; the default is one week.

   The review states in which a WG can exist during its initial
   chartering are:

o Informal IESG review -- This is the initial state, moved into by
   the tool when an AD creates a WG record. When the WG record is
   moved to this state, a message is sent to the Secretariat. The
   normal next state is "Internal review" if the idea is accepted, or
   "Not currently under review" if the idea is abandoned. The tool
   should prompt the AD if they try to move to the next state in less
   than the minimum elapsed time set by the AD when creating the WG,
   but allow the move if the AD responds to the prompt.

o Internal review -- The IESG and IAB are reviewing the early draft
   of the charter; this is the initial IESG and IAB review. When
   moved to this state, a note is sent to the Secretariat to place
   this on the next IESG telechat and to inform the IAB. The usual
   next state is "External review" if the idea is adopted, or
   "Informal IESG review" if the IESG decides the idea needs more
   work, or "Not currently under review" if the idea is abandoned.

o External review -- The IETF community and possibly other standards
   development organizations (SDOs) are reviewing the proposed
   charter. When moved to this state, a note is sent to the
   Secretariat to send out the external review announcement to the
   appropriate lists. The external review announcement will be sent
   out to the normal IETF-related mailing lists. The AD can specify
   whether or not to send the announcement to other SDOs (with the
   default being that it should be), and the AD can also specify
   additional recipients who should receive the announcement. When
   moved to this state, a separate note is sent to the Secretariat to
   schedule discussion for the next IESG telechat. The usual next
   state is "IESG review", although it might move to "Not currently
   under review" if the idea is abandoned during the external review.

o IESG review -- The IESG is reviewing the discussion from the
   external review of the proposed charter. The usual next state is
   "WG exists", or "Not currently under review" if the idea is
   abandoned.

o WG exists -- The WG was approved by the IESG. When moved to this
   state, a note is sent to the Secretariat to publish the charter
   and send the appropriate announcements. The WG remains in this
   state until there is a request to update the charter.

o Not currently under review -- The proposed WG is not being
   considered at this time. A proposed WG charter will remain in
   this state until an AD moves it to "Informa1 IESG review".

All states above, except for "WG exists", are given the annotation
"Initial chartering".

The chartering process involves the proposed charter appearing on two
IESG telechats. The tool should allow an AD and/or the Secretariat
to select the telechat date for the approval events. When the
telechat is selected, the state determines where it appears on that
telechat's agenda.

3.2. Rechartering an Existing WG

Any AD can request that a WG be rechartered using a simple web form.
This form prompts with the current charter and allows all fields to
be edited. Asking for a recharter causes the Datatracker state for
this WG to be "Informal IESG review". When the recharter record is
created, the AD proposes a length of time (in weeks) for the internal
review time; the default is one week.

The review states in which a WG can exist during rechartering are:

o WG exists; Informal IESG recharter review -- This is the initial
   state, moved into by the tool when an AD asks for a WG to be
   rechartered. When the WG record is moved to this state, a message
   is sent to the Secretariat. The normal next state is "WG exists;
   Internal review" if the idea is accepted, or "WG exists" if this
   attempt to recharter is abandoned. The tool should prompt the AD
   if they try to move to the next state in less than the minimum
   elapsed time set by the AD when asking to recharter the WG.

o WG exists; Internal recharter review -- The IESG and IAB are
   reviewing the proposed new charter; this is the initial IESG and
   IAB review of the new charter. When moved to this state, a note
   is sent to the Secretariat to place this on the next IESG telechat
   and to inform the IAB. The usual next state is "WG exists;
   External review" if the idea is adopted, or "WG exists; Informal
   IESG review" if the IESG decides the idea needs more work, or "WG
   exists" if the current rechartering is abandoned or if the new
   charter is approved during internal review.

o WG exists; External recharter review -- The IETF community and
   possibly other SDOs are reviewing the proposed new charter. When
   moved to this state, a note is sent to the Secretariat to send out
   the external review announcement to the appropriate lists. The
   external review announcement will be sent to the normal IETF-
   related mailing lists. The AD can specify whether or not to send
   the announcement to other SDOs (with the default being that it
   should be), and the AD can also specify additional recipients who
   should receive the announcement. The usual next state is "WG
   exists; IESG review", although it might move to "WG exists" if the
   current rechartering is abandoned during the external review.

   o WG exists; IESG recharter review -- The IESG is reviewing the
      discussion from the external review of the recharter. When moved
      to this state, a note is sent to the Secretariat to schedule
      discussion for the next IESG telechat. The usual next state is
      "WG exists".

   All states above are given the annotation "Rechartering".

   When rechartering existing WGs, the IESG decides whether or not the
   recharter needs an external review; many do not.

   The rechartering process involves the proposed charter appearing on
   one or two IESG telechats. The tool should allow an AD and/or the
   Secretariat to select the telechat date for the approval events.
   When the telechat is selected, the state determines where it appears
   on that telechat's agenda.

3.3. Ballots for Charter Approval

   The current Datatracker has facilities for ballots on adoption of
   Internet-Drafts to become RFCs. A separate facility needs to be
   created to allow balloting for initial chartering or rechartering
   during IESG review. The balloting for charter and rechartering will
   allow ADs to express "yes", "no", and "abstain" positions, and will
   allow ADs to change their positions over time.

   As described in Section 2.2, comments can be added to the record for
   a WG. It is expected that such comments will be added during the
   balloting process.

4. Requesting the Closing of a WG

   An AD can use the tool to request that the Secretariat close an
   existing WG. The request action will prompt the AD to provide
   instructions regarding the disposition of each active Internet-Draft
   (such as to withdraw the draft, move it to another WG, convert it to
   an individual submission, and so on), wording for the closure
   announcement, and the status of the WG mailing list (will it remain
   open or should it be closed).

5. Searching, Comparing, and Tracking Charters

5.1. Viewing and Searching the Charter Database

   All members of the IETF community can view the public portions of the
   charter database. This public view should have an explanation of the
   states given in this document. They can also search for a WG record
   in the tool based on one or more of the following criteria:

   o WG name (full or partial)

   o WG acronym

   o WG charter state

   o Shepherding AD

   o Area

   o Text in any of the fields

   o Earlier acronyms for the WG

   Further, all users can view all snapshots of earlier versions of a
   WG's charter. Snapshots include the Area, AD, WG name, WG acronym,
   chairs, and charter text.

5.2. Seeing Differences between Versions of Pre-Approval Wordings

   It needs to be easy to compare differences between different versions
   of proposed charter language, up to and including the approved
   version. Using the naming formats given in Section 2, this means
   that it must be easy to compare wgacronym-charter-ss (for the highest
   value of "ss") with wgacronym-recharter-ss-nn. It must also be
   possible to compare any two versions of approved charters (that is,
   of two values for "ss" in wgacronym-charter-ss). It also must be
   easy to compare two versions that have different acronyms in the case
   that the acronym changes during the chartering process.

5.3. Tracking Charters with an Atom Feed

   The tool needs to provide an Atom feed [RFC4287] for the changes in a
   charter. The contents of the feed are the full WG record, plus an
   indication of what changed since the last entry in the feed.

6. Security Considerations

   Creating a new tool for tracking the charter of WGs does not affect
   the security of the Internet in any significant fashion.

7. Acknowledgements

   This document draws heavily on earlier work done on this topic by
   other writers, such as previous IESG and IAB members. Various
   members of the IESG contributed many suggestions to this document.
   In particular David Harrington, Robert Sparks, and Russ Housley
   contributed a great deal of wording and many ideas.

8. References

8.1. Normative References

   [RFC2418] Bradner, S., "IETF Working Group Guidelines and
              Procedures", BCP 25, RFC 2418, September 1998.

8.2. Informative References

   [RFC4287] Nottingham, M., Ed. and R. Sayre, Ed., "The Atom
              Syndication Format", RFC 4287, December 2005.

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