                  Characterization of Proposed Standards

Abstract

   RFC 2026 describes the review performed by the Internet Engineering
   Steering Group (IESG) on IETF Proposed Standard RFCs and
   characterizes the maturity level of those documents. This document
   updates RFC 2026 by providing a current and more accurate
   characterization of Proposed Standards.

Status of This Memo

   This memo documents an Internet Best Current Practice.

   This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force
   (IETF). It has been approved for publication by the Internet
   Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Further information on BCPs is
   available in 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/rfc7127.

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1. Introduction

   In the two decades after publication of RFC 2026 [RFC2026], the IETF
   has evolved its review processes of Proposed Standard RFCs, and thus
   Section 4.1.1 of RFC 2026 no longer accurately describes IETF
   Proposed Standards.

   This document only updates the characterization of Proposed Standards
   from Section 4.1.1 of RFC 2026 and does not speak to or alter the
   procedures for the maintenance of Standards Track documents from RFC
   2026 and RFC 6410 [RFC6410]. For complete understanding of the
   requirements for standardization, those documents should be read in
   conjunction with this document.

2. IETF Review of Proposed Standards

   The entry-level maturity for the standards track is "Proposed
   Standard". A specific action by the IESG is required to move a
   specification onto the Standards Track at the "Proposed Standard"
   level.

   Initially it was intended that most IETF technical specifications
   would progress through a series of maturity stages starting with
   Proposed Standard, then progressing to Draft Standard, then finally
   to Internet Standard (see Section 6 of RFC 2026). For a number of
   reasons this progression is not common. Many Proposed Standards are
   actually deployed on the Internet and used extensively, as stable
   protocols. This proves the point that the community often deems it
   unnecessary to upgrade a specification to Internet Standard. Actual
   practice has been that full progression through the sequence of
   standards levels is typically quite rare, and most popular IETF
   protocols remain at Proposed Standard. Over time, the IETF has
   developed a more extensive review process.

IETF Proposed Standards documents have been subject to open
development and review by the Internet technical community, generally
including a number of formal cross-discipline reviews and,
specifically, a security review. This is further strengthened in
many cases by implementations and even the presence of interoperable
code. Hence, IETF Proposed Standards are of such quality that they
are ready for the usual market-based product development and
deployment efforts into the Internet.

3. Characterization of Specifications

The text in the following section replaces Section 4.1.1 of RFC 2026.
Section 3.2 is a verbatim copy of the characterization of Internet
Standards from Section 4.1.3 of RFC 2026 and is provided for
convenient reference. The text only provides the characterization;
process issues for Draft and Internet Standards are described in RFC
2026 and its updates, specifically RFC 6410.

3.1. Characterization of IETF Proposed Standard Specifications

The entry-level maturity for the standards track is "Proposed
Standard". A specific action by the IESG is required to move a
specification onto the standards track at the "Proposed Standard"
level.

A Proposed Standard specification is stable, has resolved known
design choices, has received significant community review, and
appears to enjoy enough community interest to be considered valuable.

Usually, neither implementation nor operational experience is
required for the designation of a specification as a Proposed
Standard. However, such experience is highly desirable and will
usually represent a strong argument in favor of a Proposed Standard
designation.

The IESG may require implementation and/or operational experience
prior to granting Proposed Standard status to a specification that
materially affects the core Internet protocols or that specifies
behavior that may have significant operational impact on the
Internet.

A Proposed Standard will have no known technical omissions with
respect to the requirements placed upon it. Proposed Standards are
of such quality that implementations can be deployed in the Internet.
However, as with all technical specifications, Proposed Standards may
be revised if problems are found or better solutions are identified,
when experiences with deploying implementations of such technologies
at scale is gathered.

3.2. Characteristics of Internet Standards

A specification for which significant implementation and successful operational experience has been obtained may be elevated to the Internet Standard level. An Internet Standard (which may simply be referred to as a Standard) is characterized by a high degree of technical maturity and by a generally held belief that the specified protocol or service provides significant benefit to the Internet community.

4. Further Considerations

Occasionally, the IETF may choose to publish as Proposed Standard a document that contains areas of known limitations or challenges. In such cases, any known issues with the document will be clearly and prominently communicated in the document, for example, in the abstract, the introduction, or a separate section or statement.

5. Security Considerations

This document does not directly affect the security of the Internet.

6. Normative References

[RFC2026]   Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", BCP 9, RFC 2026, October 1996.

[RFC6410]   Housley, R., Crocker, D., and E. Burger, "Reducing the Standards Track to Two Maturity Levels", BCP 9, RFC 6410, October 2011.

Appendix A. Acknowledgements

   This document is inspired by a discussion at the open microphone
   session during the technical plenary at IETF 87. Thanks to, in
   alphabetical order, Jari Arkko, Carsten Bormann, Scott Brim, Randy
   Bush, Benoit Claise, Dave Cridland, Spencer Dawkins, Adrian Farrel,
   Stephen Farrell, Subramanian Moonesamy, and Pete Resnick for
   motivation, input, and review.

   John Klensin and Dave Crocker have provided significant
   contributions.

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