WG Procedures Mini-BOF

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General Area Meeting

IETF 66 Montreal

History

* Brian sent a message to the IETF list, asking for volunteers to put together a mini-BOF on WG procedures
* Volunteers:
  * Scott Brim
  * Eric Gray
  * Lucy Lynch
  * Keith Moore
  * Margaret Wasserman

Mini-BOF Agenda

* Status of WG Procedures (RFC 2418)
  * Matches current or desired practice?
  * Matches desired structure of IETF Principles, Policies and Procedures?
  * Improvement within bounds of current BCP
* Do we need an incremental update to RFC 2418?
* Do we need more fundamental changes to the WG procedures?
  * What's working and what's not?
  * Proposed survey to collect information about the effectiveness of WG procedures

Status of WG Procedures

- Defined in RFC 2418
  - Covers BOFs, WG formation, charters, agendas, minutes, rough consensus, conflict resolution, mailing list management, roles of WG chair, WG secretary, WG facilitator, document editor, etc.
  - Eight-year-old RFC, has stood up well over time
- Many efforts could be improved by following the advice in this document!

Status of WG Procedures (2)

- Some material is outdated
  - Examples: IESG review outcomes, description of some roles, document "ownership" after IESG approval
- There has been one external update in RFC 3934 regarding mailing list management
  - Topic of next mini-BOF session

Status of WG Procedures (3)

- RFC 2418 contains a lot of procedural information that might be better maintained on a web page
  - E-mail addresses, specific submission procedures, etc.
- Does not map well to Principles, Policies and Procedures break-down discussed at last Gen Area meeting
  - Principles and IETF-wide policies in RFCs
  - Specific procedures on well-maintained web pages

Status of WG Procedures (4)

- Improvements ongoing within the scope of RFC 2418
  - PROTO Team -- WG Chair document shepherding, submission questionnaire, etc.
  - Tools Team and Secretariat -- technical infrastructure improvements
  - EDU Team -- ongoing education for WG Chairs
  - Individual WGs, Chairs and ADs -- issue tracking, minimum review requirements, explicit BOF requirements, etc.
- This group doesn't have to do anything for these efforts to continue

Incremental Update Needed?

* RFC 2418 update might include
  * Bringing outdated material up-to-date
  * Merging (and fixing) the external update
    * Mailing list management is our next discussion topic
  * Removing procedures that would be better suited for web publication
  * Other minor improvements?
* How would we control the scope of an update?
* How would we organize to do this work?
  * Design team & General Area? WG?

Substantial Change Needed?

* Some have argued that we need to make more substantial changes to our WG process, but there is no clear understanding of what changes are needed

* Proposal: Conduct a survey of WG participants to understand what is working and what isn't working

Survey Concept

* Survey would allow brainstorming by the larger IETF community
    * Providing guidance regarding what changes are (and are not) needed
* Input could be analyzed by a group of volunteers, who would produce recommendations based on the survey results
* It probably doesn't make sense to do minor updates and consider more substantial changes at the same time

Survey Concept (2)

- Some disagreement on what type of survey to conduct
  - Simple brainstorming session: What three aspects of the WG process are working the best? The worst? Etc.
  - Lengthier survey where respondents provide detailed information about the processes used in specific WGs

Discussion Questions

* Should we consider substantive changes to our WG procedures?
  * If so, is a survey a good place to start?
  * If so, what type of survey?
* Are incremental updates to RFC 2418 needed?
  * If so, what type(s) of updates?
  * What is the right venue to do this work?
* Volunteers to do any work we've decided needs doing?