

Terminology, Power, and Inclusive Language in Internet-Drafts and RFCs

draft-knodel-terminology-03

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Main objective

Increase readability and readership of RFCs and I-Ds

Non-objectives

- Change the wording of existing RFCs and I-Ds
- Forbid the usage of words
- Do anything else then: suggest alternatives to I-D and RFC authors and the RFC editor, and provide a mechanism for the RFC editor to bring this up with draft authors.

Basic info

- RFCs should be readable, understandable, and useful for as many people as possible
- Inclusive language helps with this, because it makes text relevant for more people
- Draft is cited by Codespell, which treats exclusionary words as typos (and provides tooling!)
- Many others in our communities have come to this conclusion as well (GitHub, Linux Foundation, Django, Python, IEEE-SA 802.1 TGmd, etc)
- Many in our community have come to this conclusion as well:
 - RFC 8499 replaced Master/Slave
 - RFC8783, RFC8782 and RFC8612 use accept-list and drop-list instead of black-list

Changes in -03

- Clarification of the main goal:
 - **We propose nothing more than additional care in the choice of language just as care is taken in defining standards and protocols themselves.**
- Moved our own terminology thusly (the meta-meta-meta),
 - Positive framing with the primary term "Inclusive terminology"
 - Offensive -> exclusionary
- More alternatives.
- Better recommendations informed by editor and author feedback.
- Nits:
 - Removed the bit about robot's meaning.
 - Removed uncited implementations.
 - Whole slew of spelling mistakes.

Steps forward

- We are hoping for draft sponsorship by the gen area AD
- Potential reference to RFC7704 (diversity and professionalism)
- Addition of the following terms
 - Balkanization (fragmentation)
 - Third world countries (not a useful category)
- Subsequent clean up, tighten draft further for publication as an RFC.