RFC Image Appendices
A Very Conservative Approach

John C Klensin

IETF 84, Vancouver

Fundamentals

- Sorry wasn't in Paris
- Bunch of fundamentals in discussion
  - No time to present/review today
  - Lost in noise on the list
  - Examples
    - Problems with stability & support for input formats
    - Stability and availability of rendering engines
    - Really do need 40-50 years at least to support our own normative refs
    - Media stability ?

More Examples of Fundamentals

- The IETF works in English. Really.

- Just allow rows of little boxes or question marks

- Authoritative better-than-ASCII illustrations have been with us since 1989 (RFC 1129)

- Postscript has become fragile with updates – needs profiles

- Easier to define stability for display formats than source ones: over time, recompilation has rarely been a safe transformation.

- Multiple-file composite documents are an accident or ambiguity waiting to happen.

Proposal (updated from 2008 version): Extend the ASCII Model

- Base documents as today
  - Lousy format but
    - Time-proven
    - *Our* lousy format
- Zero or more "image" appendices
  - Called out in text
  - Anchored with comment or ASCII art
- "Image" might be pictures, drawings, or even properly-rendered author names
- Authoritative, canonical, sign-able, form of RFC is PDF/A
  - One alternate form is ASCII + PDF/A (two or more files)
  - HTML, etc., should be additional ones
- Common source language is convenient, not necessary

Getting from Here to There Requires

- Production Center ability to
  - Make one PDF document from several
  - Possibly make PDF from a few [other] image types
  - Make PDF/A from PDF
- RFC Editor to
  - Sort out headers, footers, naming (discussed in I-D)
- Does not require
  - Fundamental changes/upgrades to tools
  - Extensive profiling efforts of formats
- In other words: *this could be done quickly, even if we keep considering other long-term alternatives.*

draft-rfc-image-files