A Proposal to Improve IETF Productivity

Geoff Huston

Marshall Rose

Essential Qualities of the IETF Standards Process

- **P**redictability
  - IETF efforts must most waste time and energy
- **A**ccountability
  - Management actions are accountable to the community
- **C**ompetency
  - Technical competent output is the objective
- **T**imeliness
  - Work to real-time world needs

Problem Statement

- Growth in size and diversity challenges our ability to generate useful specifications
  - Working Group efforts take extended periods of time with ambiguous outcomes
  - IESG procedures can add further delay and ambiguity to the outcome

Working Group Focus

- An IETF working group is for engineering, rather than research or general discussion.
  - A WG must understand what problem it is solving, who will use the solution and how it will be used
  - A WG must make near-term progress towards that solution.

IESG Accountability

- The IESG undertakes technical oversight and process management
- There is a balance between these roles
- The PACT approach proposes that:
  - whenever the IESG makes any decisions, all ADs get a voice, but no one AD gets a veto
  - Area ADs are presumed to be expert in the area's work under IESG review. They should have a greater voice in the IESG in progressing a document.
  - IESG rejection of a WG document should be accompanied by a timely report of reasons
  - Last call review of WG documents should be focussed on overall document viability, not reopening consideration of design choices made by the WG

The PACT Proposal

1. A WG charter must explicitly state:
   - problems to be addressed or benefits to be generated
   - the intended beneficiaries
   - areas of potential difficulty

2. A WG gets no more than 18 months to have their first I-D approved by the IESG, and no more than 12 months to have each succeeding document approved by the IESG.

The Proposal (2)

3. Once a document is submitted to the IESG for approval, requests for further IESG discussion may delay the document no later than the next IESG meeting.

4. All IESG votes require a minimum of 55% of those voting "yes" to pass; further, the votes of the responsible ADs are weighted to 45% of all votes, with the remaining ADs combining to 55% of all votes.

5. If an IESG vote rejects a WG document, then the IESG must publish an explanation prior to the next IESG meeting. If no report is published in that timeframe, then the document is automatically approved.

The Proposal (3)

6. The IESG must publish regular reports identifying those actions they have not yet addressed and explaining why. The IESG must publish these reports no later than one month prior to each face-to-face IETF meeting.

7. When evaluating a document, the IESG should heed comments that identify fundamental engineering problems and should ignore comments that suggest better ways of solving the same problem.