Making Less Work for Area Directors
draft-rsalz-less-ad-work

Request for Dispatch

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The Problem

- IESG document processing workload is high
  - Hard to fill the positions
    - ADs are stressed
    - ADs need to devote more time to the role
    - Diversity of AD candidates is limited by time/funding
  - IETF document throughput and quality are harmed
    - Delays to publication
    - Frustration and disillusionment
    - Reputational damage
  - Other IESG tasks are neglected
    - Things get missed or left on one side
    - Not enough attention is paid to strategy and planning
    - No time spent building the leadership pipeline
- Need constructive approaches to reducing IESG workload

Some History

- This is not a new problem
- Many suggestions have been made over the years
  - The IESG has generally been left to self-organise
  - Changes in operation have been neglected by the IESG
    - Too busy to make changes
    - Reluctant to delegate or lose control
- The IESG job descriptions are written by the IESG
  - Not a lot has changed in recent years
  - The description of time commitment *has* changed
    - 2013 : 15-40 hours per week
    - 2017 : A few ADs who can only do 15 hours per week is OK
    - 2018 : Many ADs allocate 15 hours or more per week
  - 2018
    - 10 to 15 working groups
    - 500 pages every two weeks ~ 16 pages per hour on a 15 hour week ~ 2½ minutes per page

Rationale

- We want the best possible people on the IESG
  - Job must not be daunting
  - People need to stay in touch with the real world while being an AD
  - Employers need to be able/willing to release/fund people
    - Enough hours per week
    - For a planned four-year appointment (subject to NomCom)
- IESG must not be single point of failure or bottleneck to progress
- We want the best possible documents in a reasonable timeframe
  - Documents do need careful review and consideration
  - We do not want to break the Internet
  - The IESG should enable rather than hinder progress of work

The Approach

- No blame, no finger-pointing, just making things better
- Ideally the IESG would adopt good working practices
  - It hasn't worked to guide the IESG
- Therefore, this draft is asking the IETF to make changes to the IESG working practices
  - We still want the IESG to self-organise and do the right thing
  - Some steps need to be taken to enforce reduced IESG load
- Solving the problem in one big change is impractical
  - It must be done in workable chunks
  - Each change makes things a bit better
  - Other changes (not in this draft) may be practical and desirable
  - Each change should be taken on its merits and in its own time

Some Point Solutions

- This document proposes some solutions for community consideration
  - Could be taken together or individually
  - These may be the wrong solutions
  - Other solutions may exist
- Solutions are not for discussion in this forum!
  1. Change the understanding of the IESG ballot
     - Only one AD per Area needs to ballot (change the ballot thresholds)
     - Better understanding of "No objection"
  2. Handle IESG transition better
     - Ballots cast before change-over should stand
     - AD terms have planned carry-over time to resolve in-flight Discusses
  3. Change the focus of the IESG to be more document-oriented
     - Remove certain time-consuming tasks from the IESG
     - Prioritise the IESG work to be "WGs and documents first"
     - Rely more heavily on the professional staff for administrative tasks with only oversight from IESG
  4. Stop the focus on nittery
     - Continue to reject documents with significantly bad grammar (to the extent of being hard to comprehend)
     - Do not use IESG time to fix language issues (use other reviewers and/or professional staff)
  5. Do all ADs need to come to all physical meetings?

Dispatch?

- The problem has persisted for long enough
  - Current approaches to managing change have not delivered
- There may be more and better point solutions than we have suggested
  - See also draft-nottingham-iesg-review-workload
- Options
  1. Drive this document with its small number of solutions to completion
     - Review might add or remove solutions, but not boil the ocean
     - Could easily split this document into separate solution documents
     - Approach would be AD-sponsorship
     - Need widescale IETF debate and review
  2. Make a space to discuss the problem and document multiple solutions
     - Produce a number of small documents to introduce changes
     - Have space for debate and review
     - Need a mailing list and forum – feels like a working group