

Network Working Group
Request for Comments: 1718
Obsoletes: 1539, 1391
FYI: 17
Category: Informational

IETF Secretariat
CNRI
G. Malkin
Xylogics, Inc.
November 1994

The Tao of IETF A Guide for New Attendees of the Internet Engineering Task Force

Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Internet community. It does not specify an Internet standard. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

Abstract

Over the last two years, the attendance at Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) plenary meetings has grown phenomenally. Approximately one third of the attendees are new to the IETF at each meeting, and many of those go on to become regular attendees. When the meetings were smaller, it wasn't very difficult for a newcomer to get into the swing of things. Today, however, a newcomer meets many more new people, some previously known only as the authors of documents or thought provoking e-mail messages.

The purpose of this For Your Information (FYI) RFC is to explain to the newcomers how the IETF works. This will give them a warm, fuzzy feeling and enable them to make the meeting more productive for everyone. This FYI will also provide the mundane bits of information which everyone who attends an IETF meeting should know.

On-line Availability

Due to the nature of this document, it can become outdated quite quickly. To overcome this problem, a WorldWide Web version has been created that is constantly maintained (the URL is listed below). If you have a WWW client (such as Mosaic), it is suggested that you view the on-line version in lieu of this document. This document will be republished as an FYI RFC every year to year-and-a-half to help those who do not have access to the WorldWide Web.

URL for this document: <<http://www.ietf.cnri.reston.va.us/tao.html>>.
URL for IETF: <<http://www.ietf.cnri.reston.va.us/home.html>>.

Table of Contents

Section 1 - The "Fun" Stuff

What is the IETF?	2
Humble Beginnings	3
The Hierarchy	4
IETF Mailing Lists	5
Registration	6
Newcomers' Orientation	6
Dress Code	7
Seeing Spots Before Your Eyes	7
Terminal Room	8
Social Event	8
Agenda	9
Other General Things	9

Section 2 - The "You've got to know it" Stuff

Registration Bullets	10
Mailing Lists and Archives	11
Important E-mail Addresses	12
IETF Proceedings	13
InterNIC Archives	14
Be Prepared	15
RFCs and Internet-Drafts	16
Frequently Asked Questions (and Their Answers)	17
Pointers to Useful Documents and Files	18

Section 3 - The "Reference" Stuff

Tao	20
IETF Area Abbreviations	20
Acronyms	21
Acknowledgements	22
References	22
Security Considerations	23
Authors' Addresses	23

What is the IETF?

The Internet Engineering Task Force is a loosely self-organized group of people who make technical and other contributions to the engineering and evolution of the Internet and its technologies. It is the principal body engaged in the development of new Internet standard specifications. Its mission includes:

- o Identifying, and proposing solutions to, pressing operational and technical problems in the Internet;

- o Specifying the development or usage of protocols and the near-term architecture to solve such technical problems for the Internet;
- o Making recommendations to the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) regarding the standardization of protocols and protocol usage in the Internet;
- o Facilitating technology transfer from the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) to the wider Internet community; and
- o Providing a forum for the exchange of information within the Internet community between vendors, users, researchers, agency contractors and network managers.

The IETF meeting is not a conference, although there are technical presentations. The IETF is not a traditional standards organization, although many specifications are produced that become standards. The IETF is made up of volunteers who meet three times a year to fulfill the IETF mission.

There is no membership in the IETF. Anyone may register for and attend any meeting. The closest thing there is to being an IETF member is being on the IETF or working group mailing lists (see the IETF Mailing Lists section). This is where the best information about current IETF activities and focus can be found.

Humble Beginnings

The 1st IETF meeting was held in January, 1986 at Linkabit in San Diego with 15 attendees. The 4th IETF, held at SRI in Menlo Park in October, 1986, was the first at which non-government vendors attended. The concept of working groups was introduced at the 5th IETF meeting at the NASA Ames Research Center in California in February, 1987. The 7th IETF, held at MITRE in McLean, Virginia in July, 1987, was the first meeting with over 100 attendees.

The 14th IETF meeting was held at Stanford University in July, 1989. It marked a major change in the structure of the IETF universe. The IAB (then Internet Activities Board, now Internet Architecture Board), which until that time oversaw many "task forces," changed its structure to leave only two: the IETF and the IRTF. The IRTF is tasked to consider the long-term research problems in the Internet. The IETF also changed at that time.

After the Internet Society (ISOC) was formed in January, 1992, the IAB proposed to ISOC that the IAB's activities should take place under the auspices of the Internet Society. During INET92 in Kobe, Japan, the ISOC Trustees approved a new charter for the IAB to reflect the proposed relationship.

The IETF met in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in July, 1993. This was the first IETF meeting held in Europe, and the US/non-US attendee split was nearly 50/50. A second European meeting is scheduled for July 1995 in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Hierarchy

To completely understand the structure of the IETF, it is useful to understand the overall structure in which the IETF resides. There are four groups in the structure: the ISOC and its Board of Trustees, the IAB, the IESG and the IETF itself.

The Internet Society is a professional society that is concerned with the growth and evolution of the worldwide Internet, with the way in which the Internet is and can be used, and with the social, political, and technical issues which arise as a result. The ISOC Trustees are responsible for approving appointments to the IAB from among the nominees submitted by the IETF nominating committee.

The IAB is a technical advisory group of the ISOC. It is chartered to provide oversight of the architecture of the Internet and its protocols, and to serve, in the context of the Internet standards process, as a body to which the decisions of the IESG may be appealed. The IAB is responsible for approving appointments to the IESG from among the nominees submitted by the IETF nominations committee.

The IESG is responsible for technical management of IETF activities and the Internet standards process. As part of the ISOC, it administers the process according to the rules and procedures which have been ratified by the ISOC Trustees. The IESG is directly responsible for the actions associated with entry into and movement along the Internet "standards track," including final approval of specifications as Internet Standards.

The IETF is divided into eight functional areas. They are: Applications, Internet, Network Management, Operational Requirements, Routing, Security, Transport and User Services. Each area has one or two area directors. The area directors, along with the IETF/IESG Chair, form the IESG. Paul Mockepetris is the current IETF/IESG Chair.

Each area has several working groups. A working group is a group of people who work under a charter to achieve a certain goal. That goal may be the creation of an Informational document, the creation of a protocol specification, or the resolution of problems in the Internet. Most working groups have a finite lifetime. That is, once a working group has achieved its goal, it disbands. As in the IETF, there is no official membership for a working group. Unofficially, a working group member is somebody who is on that working group's mailing list; however, anyone may attend a working group meeting (see the Be Prepared section below).

Areas may also have Birds of a Feather (BOF) sessions. They generally have the same goals as working groups, except that they have no charter and usually only meet once or twice. BOFs are often held to determine if there is enough interest to form a working group.

IETF Mailing Lists

Anyone who plans to attend an IETF meeting should join the IETF announcement mailing list. This is where all of the meeting information, Internet-Draft and RFC announcements, and IESG Protocol Actions and Last Calls are posted. People who would like to "get technical" may also join the IETF discussion list, "ietf@cnri.reston.va.us". This is where discussions of cosmic significance are held (most working groups have their own mailing lists for discussions related to their work). To join the IETF announcement list, send a request to:

ietf-announce-request@cnri.reston.va.us

To join the IETF discussion list, send a request to:

ietf-request@cnri.reston.va.us

To join both of the lists, simply send a single message, to either "-request" address, and indicate that you'd like to join both lists.

Do not, ever, under any circumstances, for any reason, send a request to join a list to the list itself! The thousands of people on the list don't need, or want, to know when a new person joins. Similarly, when changing e-mail addresses or leaving a list, send your request only to the "-request" address, not to the main list. This means you!!

The IETF discussion list is unmoderated. This means that anyone can express their opinions about issues affecting the Internet. However, it is not a place for companies or individuals to solicit or advertise. Only the Secretariat can send messages to the announcement list.

Even though the IETF mailing lists "represent" the IETF membership at large, it is important to note that attending an IETF meeting does not automatically include addition to either mailing list.

Registration

As previously mentioned, all meeting announcements are sent to the IETF announcement list. Within the IETF meeting announcement is a registration form and complete instructions for registering, including, of course, the cost. The Secretariat highly recommends that attendees preregister. Early registration, which ends about one month before the meeting, carries a lower registration fee. As the size of the meetings has grown, so has the length of the lines at the registration desk. There are two lines: "paid" (which moves very quickly), and "not paid" (which moves slowly).

Registration is open all week. However, the Secretariat highly recommends that attendees arrive for early registration, beginning at 18:00 (meeting local time), on the Sunday before the opening plenary. Not only will there be fewer people, but there will also be a reception at which people can get a bite to eat. If the registration lines are long, one can eat first and try again when the lines are shorter.

Registered attendees (and there isn't any other kind) receive a registration packet. It contains a general orientation sheet, the at-a-glance sheet, a list of working group acronyms, the most recent agenda and a name tag. The at-a-glance is a very important reference and is used throughout the week. It contains working group and BOF room assignments and a map of room locations. Attendees who prepaid will also find their receipt in their packet.

Newcomers' Orientation

Newcomers are encouraged to attend the IETF Newcomers' Orientation. As the name implies, it is an orientation for first-time attendees to IETF meetings. The orientation is organized and conducted by the IETF Secretariat and is intended to provide useful introductory information. The IETF Secretariat is made up of Cynthia Clark, Steve Coya, Debra Legare, John Stewart and Megan Walnut.

The orientation is typically about an hour long and covers a number of topics: what's in the attendee packets, what all the dots on name tags mean and how to read the at-a-glance. There is also discussion about the structure of the IETF and the Internet standards process. There is ample time at the end for questions. The Secretariat also provides handouts which include an overview of the IETF, a list of important files available on-line and hard copies of the slides of the "structure and standards" presentation.

The orientation is held on Sunday afternoon before the registration reception. However, attending the orientation does NOT mean you can go to the reception early!

Dress Code

Since attendees must wear their name tags, they must also wear shirts or blouses. Pants or skirts are also highly recommended. Seriously though, many newcomers are often embarrassed when they show up Monday morning in suits, to discover that everybody else is wearing t-shirts, jeans (shorts, if weather permits) and sandals. There are those in the IETF who refuse to wear anything other than suits. Fortunately, they are well known (for other reasons) so they are forgiven this particular idiosyncrasy. The general rule is "dress for the weather" (unless you plan to work so hard that you won't go outside, in which case, "dress for comfort" is the rule!).

Seeing Spots Before Your Eyes

Some of the people at the IETF will have a little colored dot on their name tag. A few people have more than one. These dots identify people who are silly enough to volunteer to do a lot of extra work. The colors have the following meanings:

- blue - working group/BOF chair
- green - local Host
- red - IAB member
- yellow - IESG member

Local hosts are the people who can answer questions about the terminal room, restaurants and points of interest in the area.

Some people have gold stars on their name tags. The stars indicate that those people chaired working groups or BOFs in the IETF area which submitted all of its working group/BOF minutes and area report from the previous meeting first. The stars are the Secretariat's way of saying "thank you" for providing the necessary information quickly.

It is important that newcomers to the IETF not be afraid to strike up conversations with people who wear these dots. If the IAB and IESG members and working group and BOF chairs didn't want to talk to anybody, they wouldn't be wearing the dots in the first place.

In addition, members of the Secretariat wear blue tinted name badges so they can be spotted at a distance.

To make life simpler for the Secretariat, registration packets are also coded with little colored dots. These are only for Secretariat use, so nobody else needs to worry about them. Please, don't peel them off your packet and put them on your name tag.

Terminal Room

One of the most important (depending on your point of view) things the local host does is provide Internet access to the meeting attendees. In general, the connectivity is excellent. This is entirely due to the Olympian efforts of the local hosts, and their ability to beg, borrow and steal. The people and companies who donate their equipment, services and time are to be heartily congratulated and thanked.

While preparation far in advance of the meeting is encouraged, there may be some unavoidable "last minute" things which can be accomplished in the terminal room. It may also be useful to people who need to make trip reports or status reports while things are still fresh in their minds.

Social Event

Another of the most important things organized and managed by the local hosts is the IETF social event. The social event has become something of a tradition at the IETF meetings. It has been immortalized by Marshal T. Rose with his reference to "many fine lunches and dinners" [ROSE], and by Claudio and Julia Topolcic with their rendition of "Nerds in Paradise" on a pink T-shirt.

Sometimes, the social event is a computer or high-tech related event. At the Boston IETF, for example, the social was dinner at the Computer Museum. Other times, the social might be a dinner cruise or a trip to an art gallery.

Newcomers to the IETF are encouraged to attend the social event. Everyone is encouraged to wear their name tags. The social event is designed to give people a chance to meet on a social, rather than technical, level.

Agenda

The agenda for the IETF meetings is a very fluid thing. It is sent, in various forms, to the IETF announcement list three times prior to the meeting. The final agenda is included in the registration packets. Of course, "final" in the IETF doesn't mean the same thing as it does elsewhere in the world. The final agenda is simply the version that went to the printers.

The Secretariat will announce agenda changes during the morning plenary sessions. Changes will also be posted on the bulletin board near the IETF registration desk (not the hotel registration desk).

Assignments for breakout rooms (where the working groups and BOFs meet) and a map showing the room locations make up the at-a-glance sheet (included in the registration packets). Room assignments are as flexible as the agenda. Some working groups meet multiple times during a meeting and every attempt is made to have a working group meet in the same room each session. Room assignment changes are not necessarily permanent for the week. Always check the at-a-glance first, then the bulletin board. When in doubt, check with a member of the Secretariat at the registration desk.

Other General Things

The opening plenary on Monday morning is the most heavily attended session. It is where important introductory remarks are made, so people are encouraged to attend.

The IETF Secretariat, and IETFers in general, are very approachable. Never be afraid to approach someone and introduce yourself. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions, especially when it comes to jargon and acronyms!

Hallway conversations are very important. A lot of very good work gets done by people who talk together between meetings and over lunches and dinners. Every minute of the IETF can be considered work time (much to some people's dismay).

A "bar BOF" is an unofficial get-together, usually in the late evening, during which a lot of work gets done over drinks.

It's unwise to get between a hungry IETFer (and there isn't any other kind) and coffee break brownies and cookies, no matter how interesting a hallway conversation is.

IETFers are fiercely independent. It's safe to question opinions and offer alternatives, but don't expect an IETFer to follow orders.

The IETF, and the plenary sessions in particular, are not places for vendors to try to sell their wares. People can certainly answer questions about their company and its products, but bear in mind that the IETF is not a trade show. This does not preclude people from recouping costs for IETF related t-shirts, buttons and pocket protectors.

There is always a "materials distribution table" near the registration desk. This desk is used to make appropriate information available to the attendees (e.g., copies of something discussed in a working group session, description of on-line IETF-related information, etc.). Please check with the Secretariat before placing materials on the desk; the Secretariat has the right to remove material that they feel is not appropriate.

Registration Bullets

Registration is such an important topic that it's in this RFC twice! This is the "very important registration bullets" section.

- o To attend an IETF meeting you have to register and you have to pay the registration fee.
- o All you need to do to be registered is to send in a completed registration form.
- o You may register by mail, e-mail or fax. Generally, e-mail and fax registration forms will be accepted until 13:00 US/Eastern on the Thursday before the meeting.
- o You may preregister and pay, preregister and pay later, preregister and pay on-site, or register and pay on-site.

- o To get the lower registration fee, you must register by the early registration deadline (about one month before the meeting). You can still pay later or on-site.
- o If you don't register by the early registration deadline, a late fee is added.
- o Everyone pays the same fees. There are no educational or group discounts. There are no discounts for attending only part of the week.
- o Register only ONE person per registration form. Substitutions are NOT allowed.
- o You may register then pay later, but you may not pay then register later. Payment MUST be accompanied by a completed registration form.
- o Purchase orders are NOT accepted. DD Form 1556 is accepted. Invoice for payment cannot be accepted.
- o Refunds are subject to a US\$20 service charge. Late fees will not be refunded.
- o The registration fee covers Sunday evening reception (cash bar), a daily continental breakfast and daily coffee breaks.

Mailing Lists and Archives

As previously mentioned, the IETF announcement and discussion mailing lists are the central mailing lists for IETF activities. However, there are many other mailing lists related to IETF work. For example, every working group has its own discussion list. In addition, there are some long-term technical debates which have been moved off of the IETF list onto lists created specifically for those topics. It is highly recommended that everybody follow the discussions on the mailing lists of the working groups which they wish to attend. The more work that is done on the mailing lists, the less work that will need to be done at the meeting, leaving time for cross pollination (i.e., attending working groups outside one's primary area of interest in order to broaden one's perspective).

The mailing lists also provide a forum for those who wish to follow, or contribute to, the working groups' efforts, but cannot attend the IETF meetings.

All IETF discussion lists have a "-request" address which handles the administrative details of joining and leaving the list. It is generally frowned upon when such administrivia appears on the discussion mailing list.

Most IETF discussion lists are archived. That is, all of the messages sent to the list are automatically stored on a host for anonymous FTP access. To find out where a particular list is archived, send a message to the list's "-request" address, NOT to the list itself.

Important E-mail Addresses

There are some important IETF e-mail addresses with which everyone should be familiar. They are all located at "cnri.reston.va.us" (e.g., "ietf-info@cnri.reston.va.us"). To personalize things, the names of the Secretariat staff who currently respond to the messages are given for each address.

- o ietf-info general queries about the IETF - Cynthia Clark, Debra Legare, John Stewart, and Megan Walnut
- o ietf-rsvp queries about meeting locations and fees, e-mailed registration forms - Debra Legare
- o proceedings queries about ordering hard copies of previous proceedings, and general questions about on-line proceedings - Debra Legare and John Stewart
- o ietf-request requests to join/leave IETF lists - Cynthia Clark
- o internet-drafts Internet-Draft submissions and queries - Cynthia Clark and John Stewart
- o iesg-secretary John Stewart
- o ietf-secretariat Steve Coya

IETF Proceedings

The IETF proceedings are compiled in the two months following each IETF meeting. The proceedings usually start with a message from Steve Coya, the Executive Director of the IETF. Each contains the final (hindsight) agenda, an IETF overview, a report from the IESG, area and working group reports, network status briefings, slides from the protocol and technical presentations and the attendees list. The attendees list includes names, affiliations, work and fax phone numbers and e-mail addresses as provided on the registration form.

Folks who register and pay to attend the IETF are eligible to receive a hard copy of the proceedings. They must indicate so on the line provided on the registration form. The proceedings are sent to the mailing addresses provided on the registration forms. Please notify the Secretariat immediately if your address information changes after the meeting ends so you can be assured of receiving your copy.

For those who could not attend a meeting but would like a copy of the proceedings, send a check for US\$35 (made payable to CNRI) to:

Corporation for National Research Initiatives
Attn: Accounting Department - IETF Proceedings
1895 Preston White Drive, Suite 100
Reston, VA 22091
USA

Please indicate which meeting proceedings you would like to receive by specifying the meeting date (e.g., July 1993) or meeting number and location (e.g., 27th meeting in Amsterdam). Availability of previous meetings' proceedings is limited, so ask BEFORE sending payment.

The proceedings are also available on-line via:

- o Gopher: <gopher@ietf.cnri.reston.va.us>
- o WorldWide Web: <<http://www.ietf.cnri.reston.va.us/home.html>>
- o Anonymous FTP: <ftp.ietf.cnri.reston.va.us> in /ietf-online-proceedings

People are encouraged to use the on-line version of the proceedings to save paper and money, as well as to have the Internet community use its own technology.

InterNIC Archives

There is a tremendous amount of material available for those who follow the work of the IETF. To make it easier to know what to read to prepare for a meeting, the InterNIC has established a document archive. Beginning about one month prior to an IETF meeting, working group/BOF chairs and area directors put documents relevant to the discussions to be held into the archives. Those people who plan to attend a working group/BOF session should check the archives for documents which need to be read. The documents are left in the archives for about two months after the end of the IETF meeting.

On the host "ds.internic.net", documents are stored in the directory "/pub/current-ietf-docs" under subdirectories named for each area and then for each working group. For example, a document for the NISI Working Group, which is in the User Services Area, would be stored as "current-ietf-docs/usv/nisi/nisi-doc1.txt". Each area will also have a subdirectory called "bof", where documents to be discussed in BOF sessions will be placed. A directory called "plenary" will also be created under "/pub/current-ietf-docs" to put documents or viewgraphs related to a plenary session. Any filename conflicts will be resolved by the archive administrator working with the submitter of the document via e-mail.

It is important to note that the service is provided by the InterNIC and that the documents are submitted by the people who work on them. The IETF Secretariat does not manage or monitor the archive service.

Access via anonymous FTP:

```
Anonymous FTP to ds.internic.net
Change directory to /pub/current-ietf-docs
Browse and get the document of interest
```

Access via Gopher (from a Gopher client):

```
Point to gopher.internic.net
Select the "InterNIC Directory and Database Services ..." item
Then menu item named "Internet Documentation (RFCs FYIs, etc.)/"
Lastly menu item named "Current IETF Conference Documents (...)/"
```

If you do not have a Gopher client, use the InterNIC's public-access Gopher client. Simply telnet to "gopher.internic.net" and login as "gopher" (no password required).

Be Prepared

This topic cannot be stressed enough. As the IETF grows, it becomes more and more important for attendees to arrive prepared for the working group meetings they plan to attend. This doesn't apply only to newcomers--everybody should come prepared.

Being prepared means having read the documents which the working group or BOF chair has distributed. It means having followed the discussions on the working group's mailing list or having reviewed the archives. For the working group/BOF chairs, it means getting all of the documents out early (i.e., several weeks) to give everybody time to read them and announcing an agenda and sticking to it.

At the chair's discretion, some time may be devoted to bringing new working group attendees up to speed. In fact, long lived working groups have occasionally held entire sessions which were introductory in nature. As a rule, however, a working group is not the place to go for training. Observers are always welcome, but they must realize that the work effort cannot be delayed for education. Anyone wishing to attend a working group for the first time might seek out the chair prior to the meeting and ask for some introduction.

Another thing for everybody to consider is that working groups go through phases. In the initial phase (say, the first two meetings), all ideas are welcome. The idea is to gather all the possible solutions together for consideration. In the development phase, a solution is chosen and developed. Trying to reopen issues which were decided more than a couple of meetings back is considered bad form. The final phase (the last two meetings) is where the "spit and polish" are applied to the architected solution. This is not the time to suggest architectural changes or open design issues already resolved. It's a bad idea to wait until the last minute to speak out if a problem is discovered. This is especially true for people whose excuse is that they hadn't read the documents until the day before a comments period ended.

Time at the IETF meetings is a precious thing. Working groups are encouraged to meet between IETF meetings, either in person or by video or telephone conference. Doing as much work as possible over the mailing lists would also reduce the amount of work which must be done at the meeting.

RFCs and Internet-Drafts

Originally, RFCs were just what the name implies: requests for comments. The early RFCs were messages between the ARPANET architects about how to resolve certain problems. Over the years, RFCs became more formal. It reached the point that they were being cited as standards, even when they weren't.

To help clear up some confusion, there are now two special sub-series within the RFCs: FYIs and STDs. The For Your Information RFC sub-series was created to document overviews and topics which are introductory. Frequently, FYIs are created by groups within the IETF User Services Area. The STD RFC sub-series was created to identify those RFCs which do in fact specify Internet standards.

Every RFC, including FYIs and STDs, have an RFC number by which they are indexed and by which they can be retrieved. FYIs and STDs have FYI numbers and STD numbers, respectively, in addition to RFC numbers. This makes it easier for a new Internet user, for example, to find all of the helpful, informational documents by looking for the FYIs amongst all the RFCs. If an FYI or STD is revised, its RFC number will change, but its FYI or STD number will remain constant for ease of reference.

There is also an RTR subseries of RFCs for Reseaux Associes pour la Recherche Europeenne (RARE) Technical Reports. These are technical reports developed in the RARE community that are published as RFCs to provide easy access to the general Internet community.

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the IETF. Any group or individual may submit a document for distribution as an Internet-Draft. These documents are valid for six months, and may be updated, replaced or obsoleted at any time. Guidelines require that an expiration date appear on every page of an Internet-Draft. It is not appropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference material or to cite them, other than as "working drafts" or "works in progress."

For additional information, read the following documents:

- o Request for Comments on Request for Comments [RFC 1111]
- o F.Y.I. on F.Y.I: Introduction to the F.Y.I notes [FYI1]
- o Introduction to the STD Notes [RFC 1311]
- o Guidelines to Authors of Internet-Drafts [GAID]
- o The Internet Activities Board [RFC 1160]
- o The Internet Standards Process [RFC 1602]
- o Internet Official Protocol Standards [STD1]

Frequently Asked Questions (and Their Answers)

Q: My working group moved this morning. Where is it now?

A: Check the at-a-glance sheet and the message board for announcements.

Q: Where is room 'foo'?

A: Check the map on the at-a-glance sheet. An enlarged version is on the bulletin board.

Q: Where can I get a copy of the proceedings?

A: If you have registered and paid to attend an IETF meeting simply indicate you wish to receive a hardcopy of the proceedings and it will be mailed to you. For on-line retrieval refer to "IETF Proceedings" section which appears on page thirteen of this RFC. Both the hardcopy and on-line version of the proceedings are generally available two months after the meeting.

Q: When is on-site registration?

A: On-site registration is first possible from 18:00 to 20:00 on the Sunday night before the meeting starts. The IETF registration desk will be set up in the same room in which the reception is held. On-site registration on Monday begins at 8:00, Tuesday through Friday at 8:30, and is open until 18:00 every day but Friday.

Q: Where is lunch served?

A: The meeting does not include lunch or dinner. Ask a local host (somebody with a green dotted badge) for a recommendation.

Q: Where are the receipts for the social event?

A: The social is not managed by the IETF Secretariat. Ask a local host.

Pointers to Useful Documents and Files

This is a list of documents and files that provide useful information about the IETF meetings, working groups and documentation. These files reside in the "ietf" directory on the anonymous FTP sites listed below. File names beginning with "0" (zero) pertain to IETF meetings; these may refer to a recently held meeting if the first announcement of the next meeting has not yet been sent to the IETF mailing list. File names beginning with "1" (one) contain general IETF information. This is only a partial list of the available files. (The 'yymm' below refers to the year and month.)

- o 0mtg-agenda.txt Agenda for the meeting
- o 0mtg-at-a-glance-yymm.txt Logistics information for the meeting
- o 0mtg-rsvp.txt Meeting registration form
- o 0mtg-sites.txt Future meeting sites and dates
- o 0mtg-multicast-guide-yymm.txt Schedule for Mbone-multicast sessions
- o 0mtg-traveldirections-yymm.txt Directions to the meeting site
- o 0tao.txt This document

- o 1directories.txt IETF shadow directory locations and contents
- o 1id-guidelines.txt Guidelines to authors of Internet-Drafts
- o 1ietf-description.txt Short description of the IETF and IESG, including a list of area directors
- o 1nonwg-discuss.txt A list of mailing lists relevant to the IETF, but not associated with working groups
- o 1proceedings-request.txt A proceedings order form
- o 1wg-summary.txt List of all working groups, by area, including the chair(s) and mailing list
- o 1wg-summary-by-acronym.txt Same as above, but sorted by acronym
- o 1wg-charter.txt Abbreviated versions of all current working group charters
- o 1wg-charters-by-acronym.txt Same as above, but sorted by acronym

Additionally, the full charters and minutes of the working groups and BOFs are archived under the "ietf" directory (see 1directories.txt for a complete explanation).

All of these documents are available by anonymous FTP from the following primary sites (there may be closer shadow sites, so check with your network administrator):

- o Europe: nic.nordu.net (192.36.148.17)
- o Pacific Rim: munnari.oz.au (128.250.1.21)
- o US/East Coast: ds.internic.net (198.49.45.10)
- o US/West Coast: ftp.isi.edu (128.9.0.32)

These files are also available through the Internet Gopher on host "gopher.ietf.cnri.reston.va.us" and the WorldWide Web server at URL <<http://www.ietf.cnri.reston.va.us/home.html>>.

Residing on the same archive sites are the RFCs and Internet-Drafts. They are in the "rfc" and "internet-drafts" directories, respectively. The file "lrfc_index.txt" contains the latest information about the RFCs (e.g., which have been obsoleted by which). In general, only the newest version of an Internet-Draft is available.

All of the files, RFCs and Internet-Drafts are also available via e-mail from various mail servers. To get the IETF agenda, Internet-Draft abstracts and RFC 1150 from the mail server at the InterNIC, for example, you would send the following message:

To: mailserv@ds.internic.net	Message header
Subject: anything you want	
FILE /ietf/0mtg-agenda.txt	Body of the message
FILE /internet-drafts/lid-abstracts.txt	
FILE /rfc/rfc1150.txt	
PATH jdoe@anywhere.edu	

Where FILE specifies the name of a file to be returned and PATH is an optional command that specifies the e-mail address to which the file(s) should be sent. The file(s) can be returned in one or more MIME messages by adding the command "ENCODING mime" to the top of the message.

RFCs may also be retrieved via e-mail from ISI's RFC-Info server at "rfc-info@isi.edu". To get a specific RFC, include the following in the body of the message:

```
Retrieve: RFC
Doc-ID: RFC0951
```

This example would cause a copy of RFC 951 (the leading zero in the Doc-ID is required) to be e-mailed to the requestor. To get a list of available RFCs which match certain criteria, include the following in the body of the message:

```
LIST: RFC
Keywords: gateway
```

This example would e-mail a list of all RFCs with "gateway" in the title or as an assigned keyword. To get information on other ways to get RFCs:

```
HELP: ways_to_get_rfcs
```

Tao

Pronounced "dow", Tao means "the way." It is the basic principle behind the teachings of Lao-tse, a Chinese master. Its familiar symbol is the black and white Yin-Yang circle.

IETF Area Abbreviations

APP	Applications
INT	Internet Services
IPNG	IP: Next Generation
MGT	Network Management
OPS	Operational Requirements
RTG	Routing
SEC	Security
TSV	Transport
USV	User Services

Acronyms

:-)	Smiley face
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
ARPA	Advanced Research Projects Agency
ARPANET	Advanced Research Projects Agency Network
AS	Autonomous System
ATM	Asynchronous Transfer Mode
BGP	Border Gateway Protocol
BOF	Birds Of a Feather
BSD	Berkeley Software Distribution
BTW	By The Way
CCIRN	Coordinating Committee for Intercontinental Research Networks
CCITT	International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee
CIDR	Classless Inter-Domain Routing
CIX	Commercial Information Exchange
CNI	Coalition for Networked Information
CREN	The Corporation for Research and Educational Networking
DARPA	US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (now ARPA)
DDN	US Defense Data Network
DISA	US Defense Information Systems Agency
EGP	Exterior Gateway Protocol
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
FARNET	Federation of American Research NETWORKs
FIX	US Federal Information Exchange
FNC	US Federal Networking Council
FQDN	Fully Qualified Domain Name
FYI	For Your Information (RFC)
GOSIP	US Government OSI Profile
IAB	Internet Architecture Board
IANA	Internet Assigned Numbers Authority
I-D	Internet-Draft
IEN	Internet Experiment Note
IESG	Internet Engineering Steering Group
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force
IGP	Interior Gateway Protocol
IMHO	In My Humble Opinion
IMR	Internet Monthly Report
InterNIC	Internet Network Information Center
IPng	IP: Next Generation
IR	Internet Registry
IRSG	Internet Research Steering Group
IRTF	Internet Research Task Force
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISOC	Internet Society
ISODE	ISO Development Environment
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MIB	Management Information Base

MIME	Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions
NIC	Network Information Center
NIS	Network Information Services
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
NOC	Network Operations Center
NREN	National Research and Education Network
NSF	National Science Foundation
OSI	Open Systems Interconnection
PEM	Privacy Enhanced Mail
PTT	Postal, Telegraph and Telephone
RARE	Reseaux Associes pour la Recherche Europeenne
RFC	Request For Comments
RIPE	Reseaux IP Europeenne
SIG	Special Interest Group
STD	Standard (RFC)
TLA	Three Letter Acronym
TTFN	Ta-Ta For Now
UTC	Universal Time Coordinated
WG	Working Group
WRT	With Respect To
WYSIWYG	What You See is What You Get

Acknowledgments

The IETF Secretariat would like to acknowledge the time and efforts of Gary Malkin who prepared the first version of this document (RFC 1391), and coordinated all the changes in the first revision (RFC 1539). Without his help, this document might still be "in progress."

References

- FYI1 Malkin, G., and J. Reynolds, "F.Y.I. on F.Y.I.", FYI 1, RFC 1150, Proteon, USC/Information Sciences Institute, March 1990.
- GAID "Guidelines to Authors of Internet Drafts", lid-guidelines.txt.
- ROSE Rose, M., "The Open Book: A Practical Perspective on OSI", Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1989.
- RFC1543 Postel, J., "Request for Comments on Request for Comments", RFC 1543, USC/Information Sciences Institute, August 1989.
- RFC1160 Cerf, V., "The Internet Activities Board", RFC 1160, NRI, May 1990.

RFC1602 Chapin, L., Chair, "The Internet Standards Process", RFC 1602, Internet Activities Board, March 1992.

RFC1311 Postel, J., Editor, "Introduction to the STD Notes", RFC 1311, USC/Information Sciences Institute, March 1992.

STD1 Postel, J., Editor, "Internet Official Protocol Standards", STD 1, RFC 1720, Internet Architecture Board, November 1994.

Security Considerations

Security issues are not discussed in this memo.

Authors' Addresses

The IETF Secretariat
c/o Corporation for National Research Initiatives
1895 Preston White Drive
Suite 100
Reston, VA 22091

Phone: +1 703 620 8990
Fax: +1 703 620 0913
EMail: ietf-info@cnri.reston.va.us

Gary Scott Malkin
Xylogics, Inc.
53 Third Avenue
Burlington, MA 01803

Phone: +1 617 272 8140
EMail: gmalkin@Xylogics.COM

