

**RFC Editor Services RFI
Questions and Answers**
February 13, 2009

Introduction

Questions concerning the RFC Editor Services RFI were due by 6 February 2009. The questions received are listed here, together with responses.

Additionally, the RFC Editor at ISI has published a document containing historic information about the recent past of the Series as well as "useful information for the future RFC Editor organization(s)." This document can be found at: <http://www.rfc-editor.org/RFCeditor.at.ISI.pdf>

A. General Questions

1. Can you tell us more about the mission of the RFC series?
 - a. The mission of the RFC Series is to provide the archival publication series for technical and organizational documents about the Internet, including the technical specifications and policy documents produced by the Internet Engineering Task Force, research documents from the Internet Research Task Force, and independent submissions with Internet-relevant content, in a professional, qualitative, consistent and timely manner. See also RFC 4844.
 2. Who measures the quality of deliverables of the four functions of the RFC Series? Please let us know if anyone outside the teams of these four RFC functions measures it.
 - a. The four functions include the RFC Production Center, the RFC Publisher, the Independent Submissions Editor, and the RFC Series Editor.
 - b. The RFC Production Center deliverables include ready-to-publish RFCs whose quality and processes are measured by the RFC Series Editor for quality and consistency with the RFC Style Manual and the Series; and by the IAOC/IAD for compliance with the contract SOW and Work Standards.
 - c. The RFC Publisher deliverables include published RFCs, archives and an Errata processing system, whose processes are measured by the RFC Series Editor and the quality for which is measured by the IAOC/IAD for compliance with the contract SOW.
 - d. The Independent Submissions Editor deliverables include ready-to-edit Independent Submissions whose quality and processes are measured by the RFC Series Editor for quality and consistency with the RFC Style Manual and the Series.

e. The RFC Series Editor deliverables include the RFC Style Manual and oversight of the quality, consistency and processes of the Series whose evaluation is performed by the IAB, and for contract compliance by the IAOC/IAD.

3. How is the quality of the four functions of the RFC Series measured?

a. See 2. above. However, ultimately the issue is whether RFC authors, RFC producing organizations and RFC readers are happy with the quality of results. If not, they'll provide feedback to the IAB.

4. If the four functions handle change requests beyond straightforward submissions, how are these change requests handled?

The following assumes a change request is a request for handling outside routine processing.

a. RFC Production Center

Stream Managers may issue change requests as to the RFC Production Center as an exception to the normal edit processing of a ready-to-edit document. The process includes a request for a change to the RPC by email from the Stream Manager.

Stream Managers may also request the RPC to participate in experiments to test improvements in the processing of documents.

b. RFC Publisher may be requested to participate in experiments to test improvements in the processing of documents.

c. Independent Submissions Editor

The IESG may issue requests to the ISE to delay publication or to not publish as part of the RFC Series. See SOW at A.5.

d. RFC Series Editor

e. The RFC Series Editor may be asked by Stream Managers to participate in experiments to test improvements in the processing of documents.

5. What are the acceptance criteria of the four significant functions of the RFC Series?

a. See 2 and 3 above.

6. Is it possible for you to share with us, how the current RFC Series Editor Function and the RFC Production Center are integrated? Is there a document management system that is currently being used by you? If yes, can you share with us what that is?

a. The RFC Editor has been operated by a single group for many years. The new model reflected in this RFI breaks out the RFC Series Editor as an individual entity. There is a document tracking system that has been developed by the incumbent.

7. Beyond a document management system that you may already be using, is there any other automation mechanisms that you are using to integrate the four functions of the RFC series?

a. No.

8. Besides the document management system, are there other tools that you use? If yes, please let us know about them. (For example, XML editors, utilities that runs nroff, any graphic tools, etc.)

a. Here is a list of tools from the incumbent:

- Work Flow application (document management tool, an internal web application)

- various scripts for queue statistics (includes draftstat)

- various scripts for publication/announcement process

- errata system (public side and verification side)

- External/Public Tools

xml2rfc

<http://xml.resource.org>

xml2rfc validator

<http://rtg.ietf.org/~fenner/ietf/xml2rfc-valid/>

rfcdiff

<http://tools.ietf.org/tools/rfcdiff/rfcdiff.pyht>

ABNF Parser

<http://tools.ietf.org/tools/bap/abnf.cgi>

ABNF extractor

<http://tools.ietf.org/abnf/>

Online rfc-what-i-mean processor

<http://www.isi.edu/touch/tools/>

xmllint to check XML

SMICng to check MIBs (local copy)

- various scripts for editorial checks

AUTH48post
ckText
dotblank
dupewords
fix.pl
htmlwdiff
make-rfc
maketocbv
matchref
printable
rfcstrip
tab8
tkdiff
wdiff
urltest.pl

9. What percentage of your documents contains graphics? How would you classify them in terms of their complexity—simple, moderate, or complex?

a. Currently, graphics consist of ascii art. There is considerable interest in adding pdf graphics as separate files to be published with the ascii .txt files

10. Should our company be your chosen vendor for this activity, is the incumbent willing to give us a knowledge transition of the process and responsibilities involved?

a. Yes.

11. Should the incumbent not be willing to give us a knowledge transition about the process and responsibilities of the four RFC series functions, do you have in mind the timelines within which you would like the new vendor to ramp up, considering there is no impact to the work load? Can you share that with us, please?

a. It is expected that contracts will be awarded and negotiated by 1 October 2009 to permit a transition period of 1 October to 1 January 2010.

12. What are the common challenges that the four functions of the RFC Series encounter during the course of their normal operations? How are these challenges overcome?

a. The four functions do not share common challenges.

B. RFC Production Center SOW-specific Questions

1. What formal languages are you referring to, in your point about "Validation of formal languages?"

a. Currently-supported formal languages include: ASN.1 variant used in MIBs, ABNF, and XML for example.

2. We understand that documents are published in English. However, are there documents that need a translation from other languages? What are these languages?

a. No.

3. What is the overall percentage of translations involved from the submissions received?

a. 0%.

4. How is the productivity and performance of the staff being currently measured?

a. Monthly reports reflect the productivity and performance of the staff.

C. RFC Publisher SOW-specific Questions

1. Regarding website support for publications, how many sites are there currently? If you have two already, can you share with us where these are located?

a. One, rfc-editor.org.

2. How are the Security Services being currently handled in IETF?

a. The Secretariat handles security services for ietf.org.

D. Independent Submissions Editor SOW-specific Questions

1. Who validates the evaluation made by the Independent Submissions, before they move to the Publication Function? Is it the RFC Production Center itself, or is there anyone else?

a. The evaluation of the independent stream documents as to their technical merits is left solely to the judgment of the Independent Stream Editor on a document-by-document basis.

2. Is there a norm, or a defined limit to the number of document iterations, as well as number of reviews and evaluation cycles an Independent Submission can have?

a. There is no defined limit to the number of document iterations there may be. The number of reviews and evaluation cycles an Independent Submission has depends on the complexity of the document.

E. RFC Series Editor SOW-specific Questions

1. You have mentioned that the RFC Editor will perform periodic reviews of the RFC Production Center, and the RFC Publisher. Is there an existing norm for the frequency in which these reviews are conducted? Also, what is the kind of finding that the review is expected to reveal? In other words, what is the purpose of the review?

a. Currently the RFC Editor, Production Center and Publisher are all the same entity, so there is no periodic 'review' per se by the Editor. However, there are a number of reports that the Editor produces - monthly for the IAOC; Plenary reports for IETF meetings; and Contract period reports. These can be found at http://iaoc.ietf.org/rfc_editor_performance.html. They also produce a weekly email report to the IESG, IAB, IANA with an update on every document in the queue. The report is expected to focus on the production process, and the quality and consistency with the RFC Series. These reports will provide a means for continuous tracking of the process and the participants' role therein.

2. Along similar lines, what is the purpose of the annual assessments of the RFC process?

a. The purpose of assessing the RFC process is to identify barriers to efficient and qualitative processing of RFCs, to make recommendations for their correction and to evaluate whether the RFC process is serving the needs of the Internet community.