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S. Dawkins
Huawei (USA)
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IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process:
Revision of the Nominating and Recall Committees Timeline

Status of This Memo

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

Abstract

RFC 3777 defines the Nominations and Recall Committee's (NomCom's) operation, and includes a sample timeline for major steps in the NomCom process that meets the minimum normative requirements for the process. Recent NomComs have been scheduling based on the sample timeline, and the chairs of the last three NomComs -- Danny McPherson (2004-2005), Ralph Droms (2005-2006), and Andrew Lange (2006-2007) -- have all reported that this timeline is very aggressive and suggested starting earlier. This document restructures the sample timeline, but makes no normative process changes.

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1. Introduction

RFC 3777 ([RFC3777]) is a complete specification of the process by which members of the IAB and IESG are selected, confirmed, and recalled as of the date of its approval. [RFC3777] includes normative requirements for timing allowed for the various steps, and also includes an informative appendix, Appendix B, that contains a timeline based on the normative text.

The normative time requirements in [RFC3777] are end-of-task, so adjusting the informative timeline to get an earlier start does not require changes to the normative text in [RFC3777].

In IETF 68, IETF 65, and IETF 62 plenary reports, NomCom chairs suggested starting the NomCom cycle earlier. This document describes a timeline that meets this need, replacing RFC 3777, Appendix B, and makes no other changes to [RFC3777].

2. The Problem

There are several reasons that have been cited for the schedule pressures reported by recent NomComs.

- o A few common practices are not accounted for in the Appendix B timeline [RFC3777]. For example, it is common to allow a week for notifying unsuccessful nominees before the formal announcement is made. This is not included in the timeline.
- o Some tasks just seem to take longer than the minimum interval. For example, a public "call for volunteers" must be open for 30 days, but the list of voting NomCom participants probably isn't announced at midnight on the 30th day. Anecdotal evidence is that allowing about 6 weeks is more consistent with recent experience.
- o The NomCom, and the community it serves, tends to celebrate a variety of holidays between the third IETF and the first IETF of the next year, so people may be out of the office, may wait to respond, etc.
- o The Appendix B timeline does not provide flexibility in case of problems. For example, the NomCom chair "reset" the random selection of volunteers for the 2006-2007 NomCom, requiring another seven-day delay for the announcement of the date of random selection.

All of these reasons can be accommodated by simply starting earlier than is absolutely required.

3. Interaction with IETF Face-to-Face Meeting Schedule

In addition to these reasons for schedule pressure, it's worth noting that the NomCom schedule and the IETF face-to-face meeting cycle don't complement each other.

- o When the NomCom volunteers are selected after the second IETF, they don't have an opportunity to meet face-to-face and "get organized" until the third IETF, when they should be winding up their deliberations. This missed opportunity forces them to use teleconferences and other less efficient means of communications to get organized.
- o The NomCom volunteers don't have a chance to conduct interviews with the community, or with nominees, until the third IETF, during the height of the NomCom effort. If the NomCom effort took place before the third IETF, the NomCom could work on difficult nominations, and meet face-to-face with nominees under consideration.
- o If the NomCom is able to start interviews during the second IETF meeting, starting earlier than is absolutely required may also help NomCom be more effective.

4. Proposed Solution

The high-level description of the proposal is, of course, "start earlier", but more precision would be helpful.

A sample, hypothetical timeline that meets these guidelines is shown in Section 5. Please note that, like Appendix B in [RFC3777], this timeline is not normative, but it meets the normative requirements stated in [RFC3777].

Other timelines are certainly possible, including timelines that allow the NomCom to report its results more than one month before the first IETF, where the slate of nominees is announced. Finishing early may be a good thing.

It's worth noting that the first step in the timeline is "ISOC president appoints NomCom chair". This doesn't happen as an IETF responsibility, but the reality is that the ISOC president needs to identify NomCom chair candidates around the time of the first IETF; she needs to have a shortlist 3 or 4 weeks after the first IETF. This document suggests (but does not add a normative requirement to [RFC3777]) that the outgoing NomCom Chair should verify that this process is triggered during the first IETF.

1. One week is allowed for the NomCom chair to publish milestones.
2. Six weeks are allowed for solicitation of NomCom participants.
3. One week is allowed for confirmation of the selection of voting members -- to allow at least some time for resolution if there is a problem.
4. The recommended time for NomCom self-organization is increased to six weeks.
5. One week is allowed for NomCom establishing milestones.
6. In the sample timeline (Table 1), an additional five weeks is allowed for the nominating bodies to select candidates.
7. The timeline is adjusted to allow one week at the end of the process for notification of unsuccessful candidates.

This significantly increases the amount of time available for NomCom to select candidates while still meeting the normative requirements of [RFC3777].

5. Sample Timeline for 2008-2009 NomCom Schedule

The following table shows a sample timeline for the 2008-2009 NomCom schedule, based on the IETF dates for the second IETF (72nd IETF, held July 27 - August 1, 2008), third IETF (73rd IETF, held November 16-21, 2008), and first IETF (74 IETF, held March 22-27, 2009).

Note that the duration of each milestone step is adjusted as necessary for each NomCom, since the scheduled dates for IETF meetings vary from year to year. This timeline allows the NomCom to begin self organizing at the Second IETF (this is what "on time" means in the table).

RFC 3777 Appendix B reference	What happens	new duration (weeks)	start date (YYYY/MM/DD)	old duration (weeks)
1	ISOC president appoints NomCom chair	0	2008/05/25	0
2	NomCom chair publishes milestones	1	2008/05/25	0
3	Solicitation of NomCom participants	6	2008/06/01	30 days
4	Announce date of random selection	1	2008/07/13	1
5	Announce NomCom membership, challenge period	1	2008/07/20	1
6	Verify NomCom membership during challenge period	0	2008/07/27	0
7	Confirm NomCom membership	1	2008/07/27	0
8	NomCom self organizes (on time)	6	2008/08/03	4
9	END organization, BEGIN selection	0	2008/09/14	0
10	NomCom establishes milestones	1	2008/09/14	0
11	Nominating bodies select candidates	17	2008/09/21	12
12	END selection, BEGIN confirmation of candidates	0	2009/01/18	0
13	Present slate of candidates to confirming bodies	0	2009/01/18	0

14	Confirming bodies accept or reject	4	2009/01/18	4
(added step)	Notify unsuccessful nominees	1	2009/02/15	
15	Slate announced 1 month before 1st IETF 1st IETF	4	2009/02/22	4
			2009/03/22	

New Step 1 Date: 2008/05/25, Old Step 1 Date: 2008/08/29

Table 1

6. Some Observations from the 2007-2008 NomCom Experience

Since the timeline described in this specification makes no normative changes to [RFC3777], the 2007-2008 NomCom process started using the new timeline to gain experience and shake out unexpected consequences. We discovered the following things:

1. It is worth pointing out that the [RFC3777] requirement for eligibility, "Members of the IETF community must have attended at least 3 of the last 5 IETF meetings in order to volunteer.", is affected when the NomCom chair issues an earlier call for volunteers. For example, using the 2008-2009 NomCom example in the doc: under the old schedule, a prospective member would need to have attended three of IETF meetings 68-72. Under the new schedule, that becomes three of IETF meetings 67-71.
2. It's worth noting that when NomCom uses the earlier timeline, incumbents under review who were appointed to one-year terms have only one IETF meeting cycle to establish a track record before NomCom begins considering whether they should be retained. This situation is rare but not unknown. The recent split of the RAI area out of TSV created two one-year terms (one in RAI, and one in TSV), and this can also happen if an IESG or IAB member resigns with more than one year remaining in the member's term.

7. Out-of-Scope Suggestions Requiring Normative Text Changes

While there are very few avoidable serialized delays in [RFC3777], we note that the minimum 30-day delay for volunteers is serialized after the NomCom chair is named. This delay accounts for more than half the elapsed time between the NomCom chair being named and the NomCom itself forming. If a future normative revision to [RFC3777] changed

the mechanics for this call for volunteers, this call could be issued while the NomCom chair is still being selected. This would allow the new NomCom chair to begin work by announcing the date of random selection, instead of just waiting for the volunteers to volunteer.

One possible trigger would be to have the outgoing NomCom chair issue the call for volunteers on behalf of the successor NomCom chair, who may not yet be identified, at the first IETF meeting each year.

8. Security Considerations

The NomCom timeline changes suggested in this document do not directly affect the security of the Internet.

9. Acknowledgements

This draft is based on conversations with the chairs of the last three NomComs: Danny McPherson (2004-2005), Ralph Droms (2005-2006), and Andrew Lange (2006-2007), and on their corresponding plenary NomCom Report presentations at IETF 62, IETF 65, and IETF 68, respectively.

The 2007 IESG discussed Andrew Lange's report at their face-to-face retreat and requested a proposal that adjusted the informative timeline with no normative changes.

Thanks to Russ Housley, current General Area director, for reviewing an early version of this draft.

Thanks to Brian Carpenter, who pointed out that the IETF NomCom portion of the timeline depends on the ISOC president appointing the NomCom chair soon after the first IETF ("NomCom chairs don't appear magically"), and provided a suggestion for ensuring that this happens in a timeframe that allows NomCom to begin self organizing at the Second IETF meeting each year.

Thanks to Sam Weiler, who pointed out the shift in meeting attendance requirements described in Section 6.

We should also thank the editors of previous NomCom procedures for developing a specification that we could "speed up" without changing normative text.

10. Normative References

- [RFC3777] Galvin, J., "IAB and IESG Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", BCP 10, RFC 3777, June 2004.

Author's Address

Spencer Dawkins
Huawei Technologies (USA)
1547 Rivercrest Blvd.
Allen, TX 75002
USA

Phone: +1 469 229 5397
EMail: spencer@mcsr-labs.org

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