2013 Self Review -- RFC Editor Production Center

The RFC Production Center (RPC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on its services over the past year. As we work to produce high-quality RFCs in a timely manner, the team (Sandy, Alice, Megan, Lynne, Rebecca, Linda, Karen, Priyanka, and Glen) strives to continually improve its services and information transparency, and to develop new features that benefit of the Community and our staff. We appreciate your partnering with the RPC to continue to help us accomplish these goals. In 2013, we believe we have not only met the goals set forth in the Statement of Work (SoW) and related Work Standards, but we have also made a number of changes and created features that are beneficial to the community.

2012 was the RFC's first complete year with a long-term RFC Series Editor (RSE) in place. This was a period of learning and adjustment, as well as a time to work through issues that had not been resolved while working with the Transitional RSE or the Acting RSE.   2013 was a year of great progress, not only in terms of making progress meeting the processing times defined in the SLA (RFCed time, also known as RET), but in other areas as well. Let's first review the main service that the RFC Editor provides, editing and publishing RFCs.

Editing and Publishing RFCs

The RPC has edited and published 269 RFCs thus far in 2013. Of those published documents, there were very few issues that required escalation to the RSE. Issues escalated to the RSE primarily involved disagreements with points in the existing style guide (which will be replaced by draft-flanagan-style).

The publication rate is currently equivalent to the number of documents submitted so far this year. The RPC has consistently met the processing times as defined in the Work Standards, which indicates that 67% of published RFCs shall have an RET of 30 business days or less (i.e., 6 weeks or less). The table below shows that we have surpassed this goal 92% of the time over the last 12 months and that 75% of the published documents have had an RET of 6 weeks or less. This is a significant improvement over 2012, in which we met this goal only 33% of the time.

	2012	2013											12mo Avg
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Met SLA Target (67% RET or better)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	**92%**
% of docs pub <= 6 wks	87%	76%	92%	73%	74%	52%	88%	90%	93%	91%	82%	73%	**75%**
# of docs pub <=6 wks	13	29	23	19	26	11	7	18	14	21	14	22	18
total # of docs pub	15	38	25	26	35	21	8	20	15	23	17	30	**23**
total # of docs sub	18	34	22	25	21	20	17	24	15	31	26	15	**22**
67th percentile (wks)	5.5	5.2	3.8	5.7	5.2	6.4	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.5	5.1	6	5.375

Figure 1. Performance for the Past 12 Months

Other Improvements

It's important to note that the submission and publication rates have decreased almost 100 documents since their peak in 2011. The RPC is taking advantage of this lull in publication approvals to make significant progress in a number of other areas. In 2013, the RFC Editor did the following:

- updated our stats reporting

  The new reporting is shown in Table 1 above, which offers a summary and shows whether the SLA target was met each month.

- completed the Datatracker extensions project

  Phase I of the project was completed earlier this year. The outcome is that the RFC Editor automatically sends notifications to the Datatracker so that the information in the Datatracker is updated more instantaneously than it was in the past.

  Phase II of the project was completed in July of this year. The outcome is that the RFC Editor automatically receives data from the Datatracker when a draft is approved for publication, thus significantly reducing the amount of manual data entry.

- released a new search engine with improved search capabilities <http://www.rfc-editor.org/search>

- switched to using xml2rfc v2

  The switch required intense testing and bug reporting throughout the year. The team used both v1 and v2 as needed throughout the year, learning the unique issues associated with each version of the tool. In the last two months, the Tools Team has addressed several v2 tickets that we reported; the fixes make v2 more useful to the RPC. The RPC has provided input and adapted to the tool as updates were released. In anticipation of the transition from v1 to v2, the RPC drafted a transition plan and is preparing to initiate the 6-month timer in the new year.

- set up citations@rfc-editor.org, which replaces webmaster@xml.resource.org, with the goal of improving the citation library over time.

- updated information to help authors with AUTH48
    - created an AUTH48 process page <http://www.rfc-editor.org/auth48-process.html>
    - added an FAQ section specific to AUTH48 <http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfcfaq.html#auth48>

- added an RSS feed of the newly published RFCs <http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfcrss.xml>, which includes links to the RFC info pages

- implemented community suggestions, for example:
    - updated the RFC info pages to include links to IETF IPR disclosures
    - improved the flow of the errata verification system
    - improved the search capabilities

- added links to the preformatted text and xml citations for given RFCs to the RFC info pages

- created the "RFC Status Changes" page <http://www.rfc-editor.org/status_changes.php>

  This page lists RFCs whose statuses have changed since publication. The page includes a link to the RFC or the Protocol Action that requested the status change (where applicable).

- updated the RFC info pages and search engine results to include the "RFC Status Changes"

- reviewed and provided input to the RSE about the pending revised Style Guide

- participated in the Document Editing Session at IETF 87 led by Ted Lemon and Joel Jaeggli

- completed a declaration and deposition regarding "Certain Devices with Secure Communication Capabilities, Components thereof, and Products Containing the Same"

- participated in discussion related to RFC Format updates

  In addition to the team keeping track of the discussion and providing input where possible, one of our team members was more tightly involved in the discussion/process as a member of the RFC Design committee.

  The RPC team participated in an introduction to internationalization session provided by Peter Saint-Andre to prepare for the pending transition that will allow non-ASCII characters in RFCs.

- written documentation to retire outdated procedures
  - xx99 – **summary of abstracts** (authored draft-rfced-rfcxx99-retired-00)
  - xx00 - **list of Official Internet Protocol Standards** (authored draft-rfced-rfcxx00-retired, which was published as RFC 7101)

- helped to update the RPC and Publisher SoWs

  The RPC has been contributing to the ongoing effort to implement the RFC Editor Model, i.e., splitting the function into its components and better defining those components, since version one of the model was described in draft-iab-rfc-editor-model-00. As part of this, the RPC

  - reviewed the RFC Editor Models described in RFCs 5620 and 6635
  - provided extensive comments regarding how the RPC and Publisher split might work in practice
  - provided extensive comments to align the related SoWs with the model and the split in practice

What's on the Horizon

In 2014, while continuing to edit and publish high-quality RFCs within the defined processing times, we will also tackle the following projects:

- updating the look and feel of the RFC Editor site, as well as reorganizing the content to be more intuitive and user friendly
- implementing digital signatures of RFCs as they are published once the process issues have been resolved and testing confirms that the digital signatures are valid.
- ensuring that our process and tools are current with industry standards

- improving and condensing our stats reporting, and automating where possible
- preparing for the influx of documents expected over the next couple of years (the IESG anticipates output of newly created working groups to impact the submission rates in 2014)
- continuing to improve our communication, processes, and follow-through internally and externally. In particular, we'd like to find better ways to improve
    - our communication and process for issues that involve multiple streams so they are more streamlined
    - our timing for following through with decisions made amongst the stream managers
    - our timing to respond to community suggestions for tool and information display enhancements
    - ways to help authors having trouble with the language in their documents or having formatting issues
- preparing for the new format era, which we expect to take a significant amount of time in 2014 , as this requires reviewing and participating in the format discussion, identifying processes and tools that will be impacted, participating in tool testing and identifying bugs, creating a transition plan, training editors on the new processes and tooling, etc.

AMS and the RPC staff are dedicated to continuing to provide the Internet Community with first-rate editorial and publication services as well as excellent customer service. 2014 is going to be another year of significant change for the RFC Editor as the new RFC format approaches. The RPC is preparing, in advance, for transition as much as possible to minimize the impact on the community and document queue times. We are committed to outputting high-quality RFCs in a timely manner and providing additional services to the community to make the job of the author easier. We appreciate your support of our services and we look forward to continuing in the new year.