2016 Self-Review – RFC Production Center

The RFC Production Center (RPC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the service it has provided over the past year. The primary goal of the RPC staff is to produce high-quality RFCs in a timely manner. In addition, the RPC continually reviews its processes and tools for improvements in efficiency and transparency, while also supporting the goals of the RFC Series Editor (RSE) and the various streams. 2016 was mainly comprised of document production and preparation for major changes on the horizon -- namely, format, digital signatures, and infrastructure (and code base) redesign. Although some of the projects have been deprioritized, the RPC participated in discussion and prepared for these changes during CY2016.

This self-review will discuss the queue throughput rates, examine the challenges the RPC faced in 2016, and identify other areas in which the RPC has made significant progress. Let's first review the main service that the RFC Editor provides, editing and publishing RFCs.

Editing and Publishing RFCs

The new Service Level Agreement (SLA) went into effect in 2016. As a reminder, the SLA has been defined as follows:

- **Tier 1:** When there is a normal amount of input, the SLA is 67% of documents published within the period have an RFC Editor-controlled time that adds up to six weeks or fewer. Where 'normal' is defined as less than 1950 Pages gone to EDIT (PGTE).
- **Tier 2:** When there is a moderate burst in the amount of input, then the SLA shifts to 50% of documents published within the period have an RFC Editor-controlled time that adds up to 12 weeks or fewer within the given quarter or the subsequent quarter. Where a 'moderate' burst is defined as 1950 – 3072 (inclusive) Pages gone to EDIT (PGTE).
- **Tier 3:** When there is a large burst in the amount of input, then the SLA must be discussed and renegotiated. Where 'large' burst is defined as greater than 3072 Pages gone to EDIT (PGTE).

The RPC met the SLA 75% of the year (see Figure 2).

In 2016, there were 284 Internet-Drafts (I-Ds) submitted to the RPC for publication and Pages Gone to EDIT (PGTE) equaled 7824. As compared with 2015, this is a 19% decrease in the number of approved I-Ds but only a 10% decrease in the PGTE. However, on the publication side, there were 310 RFCs published (8097 pages) in 2016, which is a 3% increase in the number of RFCs published and a 1% increase in the number of pages published. In other words, the number of documents entering the queue decreased, but the RPC published a similar number of documents (and pages) as in 2015. 35% of the published RFCs were part of a cluster in both 2015 and 2016. See Figure 1 for a summary. Note that production was steady during Q2 – Q4 (see Figure 4 to view pages submitted, moved to EDIT, and published by quarter).

Even though the percentage of clustered documents remained unchanged from 2015, there was a significant increase in the number of pages in AUTH48 and AUTH48-DONE (see Figure 3) in 2016. We believe this is because clustered documents took longer to complete AUTH48, which we would expect because there are typically more authors involved and issues that affect multiple documents within the cluster.

Year	2015	2016	% difference
Sub: docs	352	284	-19%
Sub: pages	8648	7863	-9%
Sub: PGTE	8655	7824	-10%
Pub: docs	300	310	+3%
Pub: pages	7984	8097	+1%
Pub: % of cluster docs	35%	35%	-

Figure 1: Stats Summary Table

	2015				2016			
	Q1	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
Submissions								
Pages	2846	1906	2046	1884	1582	1919	2263	2008
Docs	111	74	79	88	66	75	79	64
PGTE	2904	1738	2377	1636	1577	2124	2202	1921
Publications								
Pages	2268	2217	1886	1613	1937	1953	2089	2118
Docs	71	86	74	69	91	89	72	58
Docs met SLA	71	80	73	67	15	88	72	57
SLA tier	Tier 2	Tier 2*	Tier 2	Tier 2*	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 2	Tier 2*
SLA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

Note: “Tier 2*” indicates when Tier 2 is being applied in the “subsequent quarter” as mentioned above.

Figure 2: SLA Summary

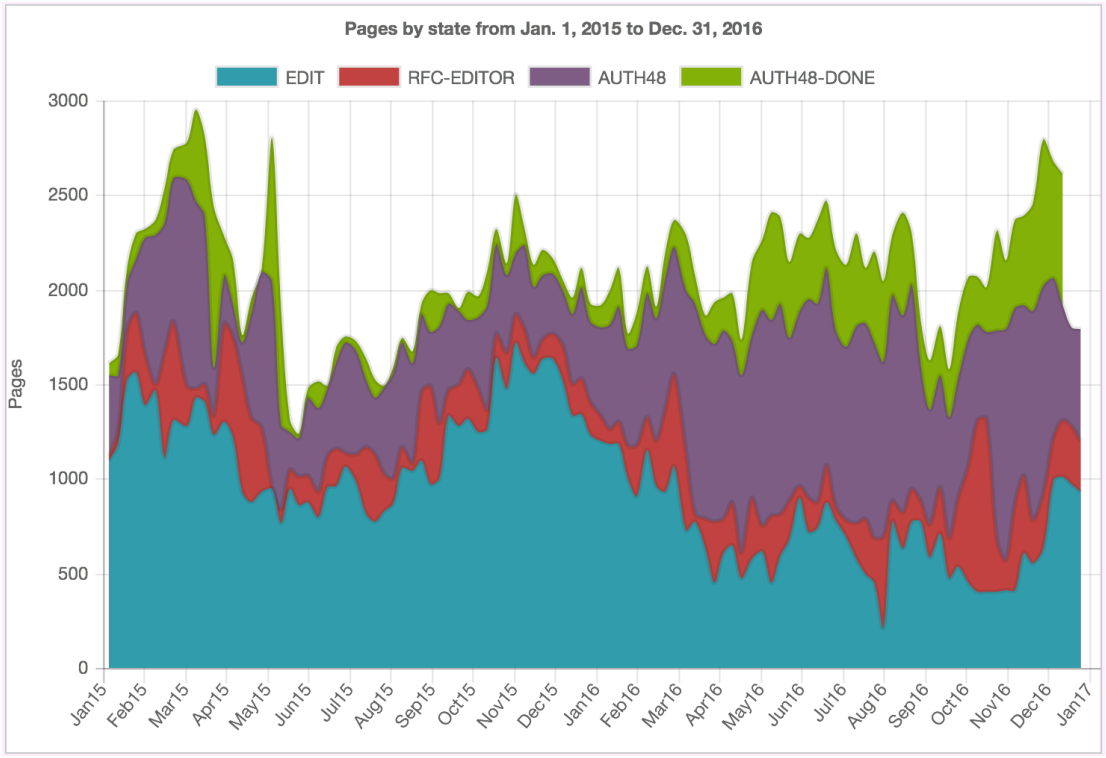

Figure 3: Number of Pages in Primary Processing States (i.e., no third-party holds)

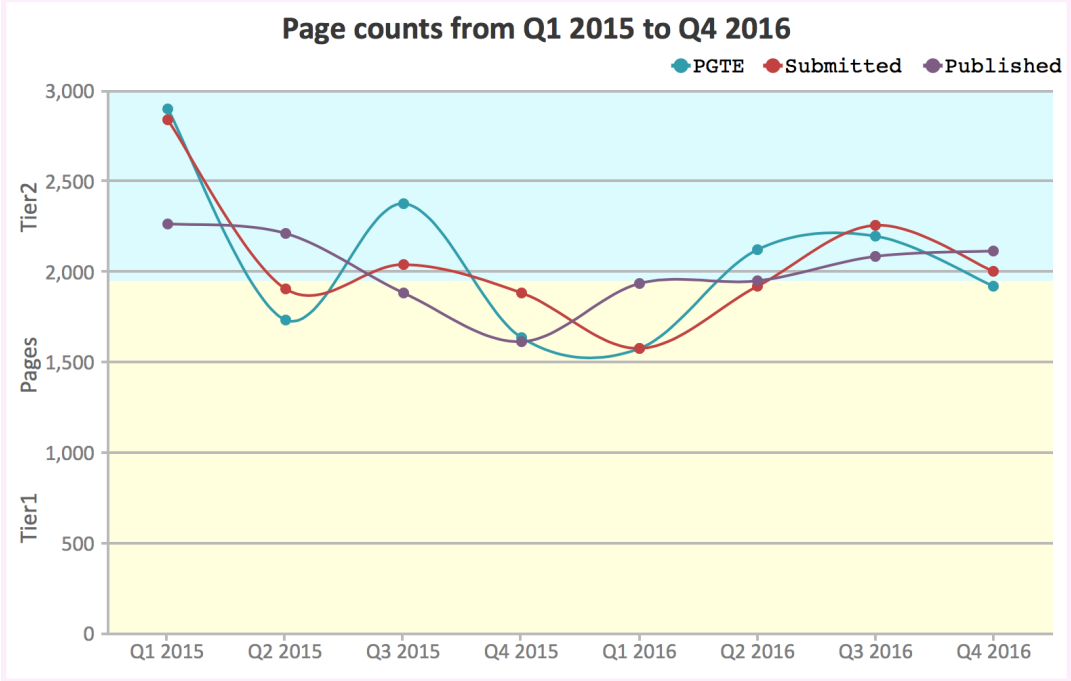

Figure 4: Page Counts Submitted, Moved to EDIT, and Published by Quarter

While handling the high volume of documents in the last year, there were very few issues that required escalation to the RSE. A few noteworthy items are described here.

The majority of our interaction with the RSE regarding documents involved working with Heather Flanagan as an author of the v3 format-related documents. As part of this work, the IAB Chair raised an issue whereby the Chair did not want to (by default) be responsible for reviewing non-editorial changes to IAB documents. As a result, the RPC will work with an IAB-designated individual to ensure non-editorial changes are properly vetted and will continue to adjust the policy as needed.

A policy related to IANA text was called into question by an author that wanted to leave an "empty" IANA Considerations section in the document. The longstanding practice of the RFC Editor has been to remove these empty sections per RFC 5226, which states that "it may be considered of no value once the document has been approved, and may be removed before archival publication." The author requested that we leave the empty section in the RFC per draft-leiba-cotton-iana-5226bis. An exception was made after discussion with the RSE. A greater policy change was also discussed. In speaking with the RSE and the IANA Service Operator, we will change our policy once the language in draft-leiba-cotton-iana-5226bis is more stable (regarding the proper use of "IANA" per their agreement with the Trust).

In addition to discussing items with the RSE, we sought guidance from the IETF legal committee a handful of times to ensure copyright text was not in conflict with the Trust License Provisions.

The RPC also received praise regarding the quality of editorial work performed and/or the process. Below are a few examples of the messages we've received from authors during 2016:

[Redacted]

Other Areas of Advancement

In addition to managing the editing queue, the editors were faced with a busy year that required their attention and participation in a number of areas. In 2016, the RPC did the following:

- Continued to review of the format-related documents, eventually editing and publishing them in Dec 2016.
- Provided an overview for the editors related to the coming format changes.
- Participated in the Format Design team.
- Continued discussion about the implementation of digital signatures; completed a review of the documentation with an eye toward updating the existing publication process.
- Responded to a handful of legal requests and worked with relevant people regarding invoicing.
- Participated in the EDU team.
- Tested and deployed Stats & Metrics code provided by John Levine; also improved some functionality (e.g., added total document counts to some pages) and usability.
- Revamped the reports page to account for the new SLA.
- Added submission page count to the database in order to improve PGTE calculation for the SLA.
- Reviewed and discussed “refactoring” (infrastructure and code) project.
- Improved the usefulness of the cluster page making it easier to check on the status of NOT-RECEIVED documents holding up a given cluster.
- Added “Discuss this RFC” to the RFC info pages (pages point to WG mailing list, where applicable).
- Internally, completed development environment for website and added features for staff.
- Expedited draft-ietf-netmod-routing-cfg; the request was received one week before the desired publication time (before IETF 97). The RFC was moved to AUTH48 within days and was published within the requested timeline.
- Changed the display of DOI on info page, HTML index, and in publication announcement per request from the RSE.
- Regularly communicated with IANA leadership to improve the RPC's documentation for updating the IANA-relevant text in RFCs.

Areas for Improvement

The RPC will continue to look for areas that can be improved to increase efficiency and transparency.

What's on the Horizon

In 2017, while continuing to edit and publish high-quality RFCs, we will also be working hard to learn the xml2rfc v3 vocabulary, become more familiar with UTF-8 encodings, test the v3 format tools, report and track bugs, devise a transition plan, and implement processes that ensure easy AUTH48 reviews and efficient turn-around times. We expect the workload related to the format transition to xml2rfcv3 to be significant in 2017.

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. 2017 is going to be a 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.