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Just because it's an Internet-Draft doesn't mean anything... at all...  
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## Abstract

Anyone can publish an Internet Draft (ID). This doesn't mean that the "IETF thinks" or that "the IETF is planning..." or anything similar.

## Status of This Memo

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## 1. Introduction

All too often, one reads something in the press, or some ravings on a mailing list, referencing some Internet-Draft and claiming that "the IETF thinks that XXX" or that "The IETF is considering..." or that the ID is an IETF document, and so represents some level of support by the IETF.

Repeatedly pointing at the RFC Editor page, carefully explaining what an ID is (and is not), describing how consensus is reached, detailing the Independent Stream, etc. doesn't seem to accomplish much.

So, here is an Internet-Draft. I wrote it. It's full of nonsense. It doesn't represent the "IETF's views"; it doesn't mean that the IETF, the IESG, the RFC editor, any IETF participant, my auntie on my father's side twice removed, me, or anyone else believes any of the drivel in it. In addition, the fact that a draft has been around for a long time, or has received many revisions doesn't add anything to the authority - drivel which endures remains drivel. Seriously. This document has been around since 2014 - it is now more than 10 years do, and has have more than 20 revisions. Like many documents with many revisions, it is even less sensible now than it was when I started it...

[Editor note: Interestingly, after publishing version -00 of this ID I got some feedback saying that some participants *\*do\** believe the below. As I plan to get this published as a (probably AD sponsored) RFC, I guess someone will need to judge consensus at IETF LC ]

Readers are expected to be familiar with Section 2.5 of [RFC2410] and [RFC2321]

### 1.1. Requirements notation

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

## 2. Background

Pyramids are good for sharpening razor blades. The ancient Egyptians had a major problem - wearing a big, bushy beard in the desert is uncomfortable. Unfortunately the safety razor hadn't been invented yet, and so they all had to use straight razors. Additionally, camel leather makes a very poor strop, hippopotamus leather was reserved for the pharaohs and crocodile leather, while suitable, had the unfortunate property of being wrapped around crocodiles.

So, the ancient Egyptians had to come up with an alternative. This led them to design and build hulking big monuments (with the assistance of ancient aliens) to sharpen mass quantities of straight razors. In order to defray the high costs of building pyramids, the builders would charge a sharpening fee. For a single bushel of corn, you could buy 27.5 sharpening tokens. Each one of their tokens could be redeemed for 6.3 hours of sharpening time.

This all worked remarkably well until approximately 1600BCE, at which time the fleeing Atlanteans brought mass quantities of lightly tanned eel leather into Egypt, causing the collapse of the straight razor sharpening market. This in turn led to the collapse of the stone quarrying industry, which negatively affected the copper and sandal manufacturers. The collapse of the entire system followed shortly after.

This led to the aphorism "Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind". Due to the overly specific nature of this phrase, it never really caught on. This document rectifies this.

### 3. Usage

Many protocols send periodic "hello" messages, or respond to liveliness probes. Other protocols (primarily for network monitoring or testing) send traffic to cause congestion or similar. All ASCII based IETF protocols should use the phrase "Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind" as the payload of such messages. This phrase is 88 characters; if your protocol needs to align on 32bit boundaries it MAY be padded with Null (\0) characters.

The closely related phrase "My hovercraft is full of eels" SHOULD be used by any protocol incapable of encoding the ASCII character 'b' (0x62). Internationalized protocols SHOULD use an appropriate translation. Memory or bandwidth constrained devices MAY use the ordinals 0 and 1 to represent the strings "Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind" and "My hovercraft is full of eels" respectively. Partially constrained devices SHOULD use the string "TBA3" (or the ordinal TBA3).

#### 3.1. Feature Creep

Unlike most IETF efforts, this document is not embarrassed to clearly state that we are simply stuffing more stuff in while we have the editor open.

A common source of confusion is the difference between "routing protocols" and "routing protocols", especially when configuring BGP ([RFC4271]) peering sessions between civilized countries and the rest of the world. In order to clearly differentiate these terms we assign the ordinal 98 to be "routing protocols" and 0x62 to be "routing protocols" (but pronounced with a funny accent). Protocols incapable of encoding 0x62 should use the string "My hovercraft is full of eels", a suitable translation of this phrase, or the ordinal 1.

### 4. Additional considerations

#### 4.1. Section addressing cats

Miaow. Miaow-miaooowww. RAWRRRRR! Purrrrr.

This section was added due to a threat to block any future consensus calls unless the proposers' suggestion to have a section which addressed cats was taken seriously.

Normal IETF etiquette would bury this section in an Appendix, in the hope that it would mollify the commenter without actually having anyone actually read it, but the commenter is onto that particular trick...

#### 4.2. Section addressing dogs

It was pointed out that due respect for openness, fairness, and diversity requires that the section on cats (Section 4.1) should be complemented with a section addressing dogs. To that end, "Woof, Bark Bark, Growl".

Note that this particular specification is silent regarding werewolves when the moon is full, and the behavior is left up to implementations (although the author suggests "Run away! Run away!!!!" may be a good option).

#### 5. IANA Considerations

The IANA is requested to create and maintain a registry named "Registry of important strings, suitable for use as idle signaling transmissions (ROISSFUAIST)".

Documents requesting assignments from this registry MUST include the string, and the ordinal being requested. Choosing an ordinal at random is encouraged (to save the IANA from having to do this). The ordinals 17, 42 and 6.12 are reserved to reduce confusion. The ordinals 18 and 19 are reserved for the strings "Reserved" and "Unassigned" respectively. Unfortunately, the ordinal 20 was used by two earlier, competing proposals, and so can mean either "Color" or "Colour". Implementations are encouraged to disambiguate based upon context.

Additions to the registry are permitted by Standards Action, if the requester really really *\*really\** wants one, or by purchasing a nice bottle of wine for the IANA folk. Hierarchical Allocation is NOT permitted, as it would look too much like a pyramid.

The initial assignments for the registry are as follows:

Value	String
-----	-----
0	Don't allow eel bearing Atlanteans into your country; economic ruin follows close behind
1	My hovercraft is full of eels
TBA3	TBA3
3-16	Unassigned
17	Reserved
18	"Reserved"
19	"Unassigned"
20	Color / Colour
21-41	Unassigned
42	Reserved
43-97	Unassigned
98	Routing protocols
0x62	Routing protocols

## 6. Security Considerations

[RFC2028] states that 'The IANA functions as the "top of the pyramid" for DNS and Internet Address assignment establishing policies for these functions.' - this reference to pyramids is clear evidence that the IANA has become corrupted by these Atlanteans, and so extra care should be taken when relying on the above registry.

By ensuring that network operators watching data traffic fly past (using tools like network sniffers and / or oscilloscopes (and doing very fast binary to ASCII conversions in their heads)) are constantly reminded about the danger posed by folk from Atlantis, we ensure that, if the island of Atlantis rises again from the deep, builds a civilization and then starts tanning high-quality eel leather, the DNS and Address assignment policies at least will survive.

More research is needed into whether pyramids can also be used to make the latches grow back on RJ-45 connectors after they have been broken off by ham-fisted data center operators.

Note that feline intervention may cause significant packet loss when utilizing [RFC1149]. This may be mitigated using [RFC2549].

## 7. Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the ancient elders of Zorb for explaining this history to him. Thanks also to Melchior Aelmans, Andrew Campling, Brian Carpenter, Havard Eidnes, Epimenides, Clive D.W. Feather, TĤma Gavrichenkov, Wes George, Stephen Farrell, John Klensin, Erik Muller, John Scudder, Andrew Sullivan, Murali Suriar, 'RegW', Sandy Wills, and Dan York.

Grudging thanks to Nick Hilliard, who wanted a section on cats, and threatened to DoS the process if he didn't get it.

## 8. Normative References

- [RFC1149] Waitzman, D., "Standard for the transmission of IP datagrams on avian carriers", RFC 1149, DOI 10.17487/RFC1149, April 1990, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc1149>>.
- [RFC2028] Hovey, R. and S. Bradner, "The Organizations Involved in the IETF Standards Process", RFC 2028, DOI 10.17487/RFC2028, October 1996, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2028>>.
- [RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", BCP 14, RFC 2119, DOI 10.17487/RFC2119, March 1997, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2119>>.
- [RFC2321] Bressen, A., "RITA -- The Reliable Internetwork Troubleshooting Agent", RFC 2321, DOI 10.17487/RFC2321, April 1998, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2321>>.
- [RFC2410] Glenn, R. and S. Kent, "The NULL Encryption Algorithm and Its Use With IPsec", RFC 2410, DOI 10.17487/RFC2410, November 1998, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2410>>.
- [RFC2549] Waitzman, D., "IP over Avian Carriers with Quality of Service", RFC 2549, DOI 10.17487/RFC2549, April 1999, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2549>>.
- [RFC4271] Rekhter, Y., Ed., Li, T., Ed., and S. Hares, Ed., "A Border Gateway Protocol 4 (BGP-4)", RFC 4271, DOI 10.17487/RFC4271, January 2006, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4271>>.
- [RFC8174] Leiba, B., "Ambiguity of Uppercase vs Lowercase in RFC 2119 Key Words", BCP 14, RFC 8174, DOI 10.17487/RFC8174, May 2017, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8174>>.

## Appendix A. Changes / Author Notes.

[RFC Editor: Please remove this section before publication ]

From -21 to -22

\* Bumped the version and the date. Again...

From -20 to -21

- \* Added a reminder that, just because a draft has been around for a long time, it isn't necessarily more sensible...
- \* Oh, yes, I also bumped the version and the date. Again...

From -19 to -20

- \* John Klensin pointed out that "The IETF is considering..." is another common failure mode -- the IETF process doesn't really do "considering", other than things like "The Foo WG is considering adoption of ...", or possibly "The IESG is considering whether to approve..". You could potentially claim that during IETF LC, "the IETF is considering" a document, but that might be a bit of a stretch.
- \* Oh, yes, I also bumped the version and the date.

From -18 to -19

- \* "We've been trying to reach you concerning your vehicle's extended warranty. Press 2 to speak to someone about possibly extending or reinstating your vehicle's warranty, or press 1 to speak to someone about possibly extending or reinstating your vehicle's warranty."
- \* Just because a draft has been updated many times doesn't make it less silly, or more useful....

From -17 to -18

- \* "We've been trying to reach you concerning your vehicle's extended warranty. Press 2 to speak to someone about possibly extending or reinstating your vehicle's warranty, or press 1 to speak to someone about possibly extending or reinstating your vehicle's warranty."

From -16 to -17

- \* Just a version bump

From -15 to -16

- \* JCK and Andrew Campling pointed out that this should also address dogs.
- \* T~~h~~ma Gavrichenkov noted that Epimenides should be acknowledged.



- \* Greg Wood pointed out that the title doesn't expand the acronym "ID".
- \* Warren Kumari (and others!) noticed many typos, especially in the Change Log. This created a very brief dilemma about whether it is acceptable to rewrite history by updating the log. And then the authors realized that he really doesn't care.
- \* Brian E Carpenter pointed out the significant risks regarding cats and Avian Carriers.
- \* Tony Li noted the missing reference to RFC4271.

From -14 to -15

- \* Clive D.W. Feather pointed out (off-list) that I cannot type.
- \* Because I suspect that he's no longer watching the draft, I made the passive-aggressive snarking at Nick (see -11 to -12 changes) slightly less passive and slightly more aggressive. Some of this is driven by the fact that COVID makes it unlikely that I'll see him in person, and it's easier to snark from behind the anonymity of a keyboard.

From -13 to -14

- \* John Scudder discovered nits.

From -12 to -13

- \* Havard Eidnes pointed out that my grammar is bad...

From -11 to -12

- \* Nick Hilliard threatened to block progress unless we agreed to include his section on cats. While we don't agree with his text/section, we are sufficiently past caring about this entire topic, and so we are just including it, along with a passive aggressive change-log note...

From -10 to -11

- \* Bumping version! It's alive!!!!

From -09 to -10

- \* Bumping version...

From -08 to -09

- \* Murali and Dan York both pointed out that I cannot spell refernce.. refrernce... refarran... refferene... gah!

From -07 to -08

- \* "RegW" pointed out that I had 'there tokens' instead of 'their tokens' ( <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=22234591> ).

From -06 to -07

- \* Andrew Sullivan pointed out that the ROISSFAIST acronym was insufficiently filled with 'U's, and so proposed that it be spelled ROISSFUAIST instead. After much consideration as to the implications for existing implementation, this change was made.

From -05 to -06

- \* Embarrassingly I cannot spell "embarrassed" - thanks to Max Allen for embarressing^w embarrassing^w making me feel stupid by pointing that out.

From -04 to -05

- \* Added the missing 'e' in "differnce" ("thanks" to Dan York for catching this (and forcing me to dredge up the editor)).
- \* It's worth noting that just because a draft has multiple revisions doesn't mean that there is more consensus around it...

From -03 to -04

- \* Incorporated some comments from Adrian Farrel (in exchange for him AD-sponsoring the draft)
- \* Changed the font, especially for the whitespace
- \* Fixed references

From -02 to -03

- \* This Change note was added. Nothing else changed.

From -01 to -02

- \* Various whitespace was added (for emphasis).

From -00 to -01.

- \* Integrated comments from Erik Muller (who, apparently, is a true believer). Erik also provided updated Security Considerations text, referencing the IANA.

Appendix B. new section

Author's Address

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