Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF)
Request for Comments: 6433
Updates: 6292
Category: Informational
ISSN: 2070-1721

P. Hoffman
VPN Consortium

November 2011

Requirements for a Working Group Milestones Tool

Abstract

The IETF intends to provide a new tool to Working Group chairs and Area Directors for the creation and updating of milestones for Working Group charters. This document describes the requirements for the proposed new tool, and it is intended as input to a later activity for the design and development of such a tool. This document updates RFC 6292.

Status of This Memo

This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is published for informational purposes.

This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). It represents the consensus of the IETF community. It has received public review and has been approved for publication by the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Not all documents approved by the IESG are a candidate for any level of Internet Standard; see Section 2 of RFC 5741.

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6433.

1. Introduction

[RFC2418] describes the guidelines and procedures for operation of IETF Working Groups (WGs). Every WG has milestones that the WG is supposed to meet, such as the publication of a particular Internet-Draft or the beginning of discussion on a particular topic. A WG's charter has several parts; one of those parts is the milestones. Changing milestones currently requires Area Director (AD) approval, but changing the charter text requires IESG approval.

Today, the tasks associated with creating and updating WG milestones are performed manually by the Secretariat. Normally, WG chairs send email to their AD requesting that milestones be created or updated. They send mail to the their AD, or directly to the Secretariat, when one or more milestone has been met. Apart from during WG creation, these updates will be made through a separate tool after the requirements in this document and in [RFC6292] are met.

In early 2011, the IETF approved a set of requirements for a tool that helps ADs with the WG chartering and rechartering process [RFC6292]. During the IESG discussion of that document, it became clear that everyone wanted more automation to the milestones process. This document is intended to bring that discussion to a general consensus for the requirements for the eventual tool.

Note that this document only discusses updating milestones that an active WG is working against. As described in [RFC6292], when a WG is rechartering, the new charter might also include new milestones. The tool described here must not change the milestones that are proposed for a WG recharter. That is, there must be two sets of milestones kept by the Datatracker, one for the current WG charter and one for a proposed recharter; the tool described here must only affect the first of these two sets.

The IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) would like to create a better tool for the tasks of WG milestone creation and updating, and this document lists the requirements for such a tool. When complete, this document may be used to issue an request for proposals for the design and development of the tool. This document was prepared at the request of the IAOC.

2. Users of the Tool

This tool can only be used by WG chairs and ADs, not by other members of the IETF community. The tool will use the login and access control features that will already be in place from the outcome of

the tool created by [RFC6292]. It is important to note that some people are chairs for more than one WG, and everyone must be able to use the tool for all of the WGs that they chair.

Any AD can add or update any milestone for any WG. Normally, an AD would only add or update milestones in the WGs for which they are the responsible AD, but ADs are not bound by such a limitation. (This is the same model used in the Datatracker for other actions: it allows one AD to carry the load for an AD who is temporarily unable to perform such tasks.) WG chairs can only add or update milestones for WGs of which they are chairs.

The IETF Secretariat needs to be able to perform the same tasks as the ADs in order to fix problems or to make emergency changes.

The database will record the date and person who initiates any addition of, or change to, a milestone. The contents of the database will be visible to the IETF community so that anyone can see who made a particular change to a milestone.

3. Updating, Adding, and Deleting Milestones

A WG chair needs to see all of the milestones for that chair's WG in the tool. The chair needs to be able to change any milestone record for that chair's WG. In each existing record, the chair needs to be able to change the due date, the finished date, the associated Internet-Drafts, and the description of the milestone. The chair also needs to be able to delete existing milestones.

A WG chair needs to be able to add one or more milestone records to the database for their WG. The chair needs to be able to specify the due date, zero or more associated Internet-Drafts, and the description of the record that he or she is adding.

4. Acceptance of Milestone Additions and Changes

There are six actions associated with adding and changing milestones:

- create new milestones
- delete milestones
- change milestone descriptions
- change milestone due dates

- change which Internet-Drafts are associated with a milestone
- assert that a milestone is no longer due

In addition to the above six actions, the tool must support reordering of the list of milestones.

WG chairs can change milestone due dates, change which Internet-Drafts are associated with a milestone, can assert that a milestone is no longer due, for their WG, and reorder the list. When any of these three actions are taken in the Datatracker, an email notification is sent to the AD for the WG as well as to the WG's chairs; the changes are reflected immediately in the Datatracker without any need for approval from an AD.

WG chairs can also create new milestones, delete milestones, and change milestone descriptions; however, any of these action are not reflected in the Datatracker until the action is approved by an AD. When a WG chair makes the proposed change, an email notification is sent to the AD for the WG as well as to the WG's chairs.

When creating a milestone, it must be possible to set a due date. It must also be to change the due date at any time.

When asserting that a milestone is no longer due, it must be possible to provide an arbitrary short description phrase. Often this phrase will be "Done", but other phrases such as "On hold" are also allowed. When the Datatracker presents a milestone, the only information that is expected to be associated with the provided phrase is that the milestone is no longer due. The Datatracker will present the list of milestones in the order given in the tool.

As noted in Section 2, any AD can take any of these six actions, as well as reordering the list. After this tool is launched, the IETF Secretariat will no longer need to post a change to the database because the tool will do this without intervention by the Secretariat; however, the Secretariat can take any of these six actions as well.

When adding or editing a milestone, the AD or WG Chair must be able to review and change the proposed change before committing the change to the Datatracker. This will help prevent errors and reduce the number of fixes that need to be made.

Once a day, the Datatracker will look for changes to the milestones for a WG. If changes to milestones have been made in the past 24 hours, the Datatracker will send one message to the WG listing all the changes from that period.

The Datatracker needs to have a method for ADs and the Secretariat to see all the milestones that are pending approval. This list should be sorted by the responsible AD.

5. Mapping Milestones to Internet-Drafts

There is currently no mechanism to map WG milestones to Internet-Drafts. While most milestones map one-to-one with Internet-Drafts, some milestones do not map to any Internet-Draft (such as those that say when a general discussion will begin or finish), and other milestones map to multiple Internet-Drafts (such as a milestone that covers a topic that has multiple related Internet-Drafts). Some Internet-Drafts are part of more than one milestone.

The new tool is required to make mappings between milestones and Internet-Drafts explicit, and those drafts must be listed in views of the milestone. This change will require a change to the Datatracker database to make such an association.

When an Internet-Draft that is mapped to a milestone changes its state to "Submitted to IESG for Publication" as described in [RFC6174], the tool will send a message to the WG chairs to remind them that they might want to update the milestone. Note that this message will not apply to all Internet-Drafts that are mapped to a milestone, so it is up to the WG chairs to decide what to do when such a message is received.

6. Reminders for WG Chairs and ADs

Milestone changes that do not require AD approval are made immediately. Requested changes that require AD approval are tracked by the tool. If the AD has not approved or rejected the change within a week, email listing the request and the request date is sent to the WG chairs and AD. That email is sent every week until the AD has approved or rejected the request; the WG chairs are CC’d on this mail.

The tool will also send WG chairs reminders about pending milestones. A message is sent when a milestone is one month from being due, at the time a milestone is due, and every month in which a milestone is overdue.

The tool will also send WG chairs reminders about Internet-Drafts that are mapped to milestones. A message is sent when such a draft is one month from expiring, and at the time that a draft expires. If a milestone is mapped to a draft that is expired, mail reminding the chairs of this will be sent weekly.

When a WG chair makes an Internet-Draft a WG work item, the Datatracker will remind them that they may want to also add that document to a milestone.

7. Viewing Changes in Milestones

[RFC6292] describes an extension to the Datatracker to allow the IETF community to view, search, and track changes to WG charters. This document updates those requirements to allow the IETF community to view, search, and track changes to WG milestones.

Section 5.1 of [RFC6292] is updated to allow searching for any text in a milestone's description, as well as for the name of any Internet-Draft name that is mapped to any milestone.

A new capability will be added to the Datatracker that is similar to that described in Section 5.2 of [RFC6292], but instead of showing differences between charters, it shows differences between the full set of milestones. Any time a milestone is added, deleted, or any of its fields changed, or the list is reordered, the full set of milestones is considered changed. A user should be able to easily compare two full sets of milestones with the differences highlighted. The tool should show who made each change when changes are viewed. These features should be found in the same place as the features described in Section 5.2 of [RFC6292].

The tool needs to provide an Atom feed [RFC4287] for the changes in the milestones for a WG. The contents of the feed are the full WG record, plus an indication of what changed since the last entry in the feed and who made the change. This feed is different than the feed described in Section 5.3 of [RFC6292], but it should be offered to users in the same places as that feed is offered.

When a milestone is marked as no longer due, the Datatracker will display the month and year that this change was made and will display the status (such as "Done" or "On hold").

8. Security Considerations

Creating a new tool for updating the milestones of WGs does not affect the security of the Internet in any significant fashion.

9. Acknowledgements

This document draws heavily on ideas from various WG chairs and ADs on the wgchairs@ietf.org mailing list.

10. References

10.1. Normative References

[RFC2418] Bradner, S., "IETF Working Group Guidelines and Procedures", BCP 25, RFC 2418, September 1998.

[RFC6174] Juskevicius, E., "Definition of IETF Working Group Document States", RFC 6174, March 2011.

[RFC6292] Hoffman, P., "Requirements for a Working Group Charter Tool", RFC 6292, June 2011.

10.2. Informative References

[RFC4287] Nottingham, M., Ed. and R. Sayre, Ed., "The Atom Syndication Format", RFC 4287, December 2005.

Author’s Address

Paul Hoffman
VPN Consortium

EMail: paul.hoffman@vpnc.org