PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNET ENGINEERING TASK FORCE

HTTP://WWW.IETF.ORG

THE INTERNET ENGINEERING TASK FORCE (IETF) IS THE INTERNET'S PREMIER TECHNICAL STANDARDS BODY. IT GATHERS A LARGE OPEN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF NETWORK DESIGNERS, OPERATORS, VENDORS, AND RESEARCHERS CONCERNED WITH THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNET ARCHITECTURE AND THE SMOOTH OPERATION OF THE INTERNET.

The IETF seeks broad participation. The work of the IETF takes place online, largely through email lists, reducing barriers to participation and maximizing contributions from around the world. IETF Working Groups (WGs) are organized by topic into several areas (e.g., routing, transport, security, etc.).

MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

The mission of the IETF is make the Internet work better by producing high quality, relevant technical documents that influence the way people design, use, and manage the Internet. The IETF pursues this mission in adherence to the following principles:

Open Process. Any interested person can participate in the work, know what is being decided, and make his or her voice heard on an issue. Part of this principle is our commitment to making documents, working group mailing lists, attendance lists, and meeting minutes publicly available on the Internet.

Technical Competence. The issues on which the IETF produces its documents are issues where the IETF has the competence needed to speak to them. The IETF is willing to listen to technically competent input from any source. Technical competence also means that IETF output follows sound network engineering principles—this is also often referred to as "engineering quality."

Volunteer Core. IETF participants and leadership are people who come to the IETF because they want to do work that furthers the IETF's mission of "making the Internet work better."

Rough Consensus and Running Code. The IETF makes standards based on the combined engineering judgment of participants and real-world experience in implementing and deploying IETF specifications.

Protocol Ownership. When the IETF takes ownership of a protocol or function, it accepts the responsibility for all aspects of the protocol, even though some aspects may rarely or never be seen on the Internet.

IETF PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATION

The IETF is really about the individuals its participants. There is no membership in the IETF—the IETF is made up of volunteers. Anyone may register for and attend any meeting. The closest thing to being an IETF member is being on the IETF or Working Group mailing lists.

The IETF Working Groups are grouped into areas, and managed by Area Directors, or ADs. The ADs are members of the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Providing architectural oversight is the Internet Architecture Board, (IAB). The IAB also adjudicates appeals when someone complains that the IESG has failed. The IAB and IESG are chartered by the Internet Society (ISOC) for these purposes. The General Area Director also serves as the chair of the IESG and of the IETF, and is an ex-officio member of the IAB.

While the actual technical work of working groups is accomplished largely through email lists, IETF meetings are held three times a year with the primary goal of supporting IETF Working Groups in getting their tasks done. A secondary goal is to promote a fair amount of mixing between the WGs and the areas. However, the results of Working Group sessions at a face-to-face meeting must gain consensus on the WG mailing list for a decision to be made.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Much more information is available online at **http://www.ietf.org** and, especially for those new to the IETF, at **http://www.ietf.org/tao.html**.