

INTERNET-DRAFT

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**IETF Guidelines for Conduct**  
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Abstract

This document provides a set of guidelines for personal interaction in the Internet Engineering Task Force. The Guidelines recognize the diversity of IETF participants, emphasize the value of mutual respect, and stress the broad applicability of our work.

Status of this Memo

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## **1. Introduction**

The work of the IETF relies on cooperation among a diverse range of people, ideas, and communication styles. The Guidelines for Conduct inform our interaction as we work together to develop interoperable technologies for the Internet. All IETF participants aim to abide by these Guidelines as we build consensus in person and through email discussions. If conflicts arise they are resolved according to the procedures outlined in [RFC 2026](#) [[RFC2026](#)].

This document obsoletes and replaces [RFC 3184](#) [[RFC3184](#)].

## **2. Guidelines for Conduct**

1. IETF participants extend respect and courtesy to their colleagues at all times.

IETF participants come from diverse origins and backgrounds; there can be different expectations or assumptions. Regardless of these individual differences, participants treat their colleagues with respect as persons especially when it is difficult to agree with them; treat other participants as you would like to be treated.

English is the de facto language of the IETF. However, it is not the native language of many IETF participants. All participants, particularly those with English as a first language, attempt to accommodate the needs of other participants by communicating clearly. When faced with English that is difficult to understand IETF participants make a sincere effort to understand each other and engage in conversation to clarify what was meant.

2. IETF participants have impersonal discussions.

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We dispute ideas by using reasoned argument rather than through intimidation or personal attack. Try to provide data and facts for your standpoints so the rest of the participants who are sitting on the sidelines watching the discussion can form an opinion. The discussion is easier when the response to a simple question is a polite answer [[SQPA](#)].

3. IETF participants devise solutions for the Internet that meet the needs of diverse technical and operational environments.

The goal of the IETF is to maintain and enhance a working, viable, scalable, global Internet, and the problems we encounter are genuinely very difficult. We understand that "scaling is the ultimate problem" and that many ideas quite workable in the small fail this crucial test.

IETF participants use their best engineering judgment to find the best solution for the whole Internet, not just the best solution for any particular network, technology, vendor, or user. While we all have ideas that may stand improvement from time to time, no one shall ever knowingly contribute advice or text that would make a standard technically inferior.

4. Individuals are prepared to contribute to the ongoing work of the group.

IETF participants read the relevant Internet-Drafts, RFCs, and email archives beforehand, in order to familiarize themselves with the technology under discussion. Working Group sessions run on a very limited time schedule, and sometimes participants have to limit their questions. The work of the group will continue on the mailing list, and questions can be asked and answered on the mailing list. It can be a challenge when attending a new working group without knowing the history of longstanding Working Group debates. Information about a working group including its charter and milestones is available on the IETF Tools web site [[TOOLS](#)] or from the working group chair.

### **[3. Security Considerations](#)**

Guidelines about IETF conduct do not directly affect the security of the Internet.

### **[4. Acknowledgements](#)**

Most of the text in this document is based on [RFC 3184](#) which was written by Susan Harris. The author would like to acknowledge that this document would not exist without her contribution. Mike O'Dell

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wrote the first draft of the Guidelines for Conduct, and many of his thoughts, statements, and observations are included in this version. Many useful editorial comments were supplied by Dave Crocker. Members of the POISSON Working Group provided many significant additions to the text.

The editor would like to thank Jari Arkko, Brian Carpenter, Dave Cridland, Dave Crocker, Spencer Dawkins, Alan DeKok, Lars Eggert, Adrian Farrel, Stephen Farrell, Eliot Lear, Barry Leiba, Ines Robles, Eduardo A. Suarez and Brian Trammell for contributing towards the improvement of the document.

## **5. IANA Considerations**

[RFC Editor: please remove this section]

## **6. References**

### **6.1. Informative References**

- [RFC2026] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", [BCP 9](#), [RFC 2026](#), October 1996.
- [RFC2418] Bradner, S., "IETF Working Group Guidelines and Procedures", [BCP 25](#), [RFC 2418](#), September 1998.
- [RFC3184] Harris, S., "IETF Guidelines for Conduct", [BCP 54](#), [RFC 3184](#), October 2001.
- [RFC3683] Rose, M., "A Practice for Revoking Posting Rights to IETF Mailing Lists", [BCP 83](#), [RFC 3683](#), March 2004.
- [RFC3934] Wasserman, M., "Updates to [RFC 2418](#) Regarding the Management of IETF Mailing Lists", [BCP 25](#), [RFC 3934](#), October 2004.
- [TOOLS] <<http://tools.ietf.org/wg/>>
- [SQPA] <<http://www.ietf.org/proceedings/53/slides/plenary-3/index.html>>

## **Appendix A: Reporting transgressions of the guidelines**

An individual can report transgressions of the guidelines for conduct to the IETF Chair or the IESG.

## **Appendix B: Consequences of transgressing the guidelines**

This document does not discuss about measures that can be taken against a participant transgressing the guidelines for conduct.

[RFC 2418](#) describes a measure where a Working Group Chair has the authority to refuse to grant the floor to any individual who is unprepared or otherwise covering inappropriate material, or who, in the opinion of the Chair is disrupting the Working Group process.

[RFC 3683](#) describes "posting rights" action to remove the posting rights of an individual. [RFC 3934](#) describes a measure where a Working Group Chair can suspend posting privileges of a disruptive individual for a short period of time.

#### Appendix C: Changes from [RFC 3184](#)

- o The text about intellectual property guidelines was removed as it relates to intellectual property instead of guidelines for conduct.
- o The recommendation that newcomers should not interfere with the ongoing process in [Section 2](#) was removed as it can be read as discouraging newcomers from participating in discussions.
- o The text about "think globally" was not removed as the meaning was not clear.
- o The text about language was clarified.
- o The guideline about impersonal discussions was reworded as a positive statement.

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