2015 Self Review -- RFC Editor Production Center

The RFC Production Center (RPC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on its services over the past year. As we work to produce high-quality RFCs in a timely manner, the team strives to continually improve its services and information transparency, as well as develop new features that benefit the Community and our staff. We appreciate your partnering with the RPC to continue to help us accomplish these goals. 2015 was a busy year for document submissions. Though we were largely focused on document throughput, because of the high volume of submissions, we have also made a number of changes and developed features that we believe are beneficial to the community. Details are below.

This self-review will examine the challenges the RPC faced in 2015, discuss the queue throughput rates, 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 submission and "moved to EDIT" rates have been bursty and have been higher than usual. There were significant bursts in submissions (and docs moved to EDIT) in Jan - Mar and again in Sep – Oct, without slowing down much in the months in between (see Figure 1). While a Q1 burst is typical, as ADs work to move their documents along before changing over in March, a second burst later in the year is not.

For 2015, the submission count (352 documents) was the highest it's been since 2011 (364 documents, which is the record for the RFC series). This was a 15% increase in submissions over 2014. The total number of pages moved to EDIT increased by approximately 10%. This made it difficult to keep up with the expected processing times defined in the SLA and related Work Standards, which indicates that 67% of published RFCs shall have an RFC Editor time (RET) of 30 business days or less (i.e., 6 weeks or less). Throughout the year, about 40% of the documents published had an RET of 6 weeks or less (see Figure 2).

Publications have been steady throughout the year, with an average of 25 RFCs being announced per month. Overall, the RPC edited and published 300 RFCs (7948 pages) during 2015. This is a decrease in documents of 8% from last year, but only a 2% decrease in page counts.
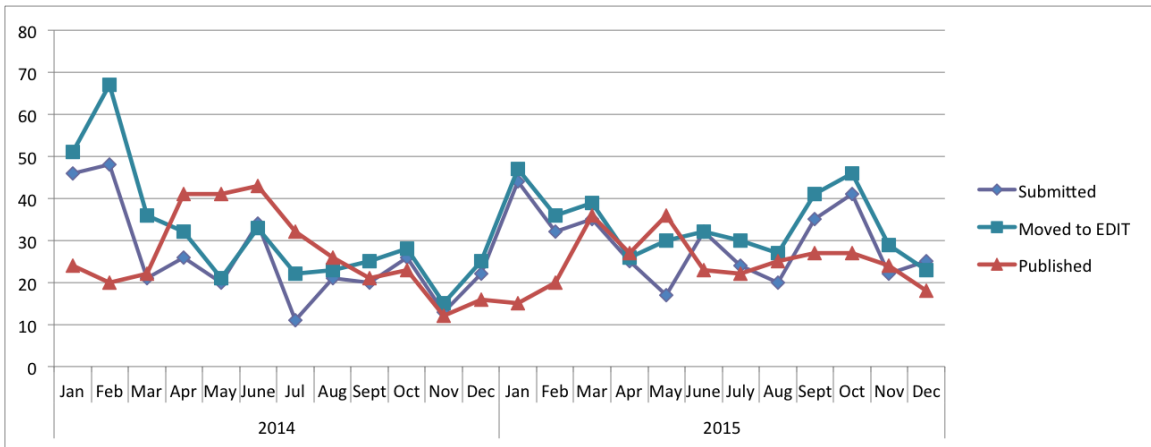
Figure 1. Queue Entrance and Exit Rates over the Last 24 Months

	2015												12mo Avg
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Met SLA Target (67% RET or better)	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	**17%**
% of docs pub <= 6 wks	73%	60%	50%	81%	19%	43%	14%	24%	22%	19%	21%	28%	**38%**
# of docs pub <=6 wks	11	12	18	22	7	10	3	6	6	5	5	5	**9**
total # of docs pub	15	20	36	27	36	23	22	25	27	27	24	18	**25**
total # of docs sub	44	32	35	25	17	32	24	20	35	41	22	25	**29**
total # of docs entering EDIT	47	36	39	26	30	32	30	27	41	46	29	23	**34**
67th percentile (wks)	5.9	6.3	7.4	6	9.2	7.5	8.5	8.2	9	8.6	6.9	8.6	**7.7**

Figure 2. Performance for the Past 12 Months

The RPC kept the RSE and stream managers informed about the status of the queue and processing times. The stream managers verified that they were content with the RPC's processing times and throughput rate, which was solidified when each of the streams agreed to an alternate SLA to be effected in 2016.

While handling the high volume of documents in the last year, there were very few issues that required escalation to the RSE. Issues escalated to the RSE primarily involved disagreements with points in the RFC Style Guide (RFC 7322).   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 2015:

[Redacted]

Other Improvements

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 2015, the RFC Editor did the following:

- Provided input on rfc5741bis
- Initiated a tutorial session provided by Michelle Cotton of IANA as part of staff education and looked to identify a more efficient processes between IANA and the RPC
- Responded to 10 legal requests, which included drafting many of the responses and working with the relevant parties on invoices
- Participated on the Errata Design team
- Participated on the Format Design team
- Participated on the EDU team and presented "Tools for creating I-Ds and RFCs" at IETF 94
- Met with Joe Hildebrand to understand how the introduction of Github might be used for AUTH48 processing in the future
- Continued discussion regarding the implementation of digital signatures
- Drafted a document process for the "new format era" for discussion with the stream managers
- Provided input for the SoW for the Stats/Metrics project
- Updated the database and info & errata pages to handle the reorganization of IETF (i.e., the addition of the ART area)
- Worked with relevant parties to propose new SLA parameters that were ultimately adopted and will go into effect in 2016
- Created an XML reference library to meet new style guide recommendations
- Worked with a 3rd party vendor to implement DOIs and managed the editorial process to include DOIs in references
- In a separate contract, completed the website revamp; this required RPC input in order to successfully transition & organize the pages in the new content management system.
- Bug fixes on various website pages (not part of revamp)

- Updated the look and feel of the RFC info pages in preparation for the format change. These info pages will become more essential for accessing the various file formats.

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 2016, while continuing to edit and publish high-quality RFCs, we will also tackle the projects listed below.

- Continue to participate on the RFC Design Team and manage the workload this creates. We expect the workload related to the format transition to xml2rfcv3 to be significant in 2016, as this requires continual tracking of the format discussion, identifying processes and tools that will be impacted, participating in tool testing and bug identification, creating a transition plan, training editors on the new processes and tooling, etc.
- Work with the RSE and other relevant parties to prepare for the infrastructure/data accessibility update (goal to update the RFC Editor database and related scripts in 2017)
- Help the RSE redesign the errata system to meet new requirements created by transition to xml2rfcv3
- Help to refine the Stats/Metrics requirements and work with a 3rd party vendor to implement the Stats/Metrics project
- Continue to improve our communication, processes, and follow-through internally and externally. In particular, we'd like to find better ways to improve
    - our communication and process for issues that involve multiple streams so they are more streamlined
    - our timing to respond to community suggestions for tool and information display enhancements
    - ways to assist authors struggling with the language in their documents and/or struggling with formatting issues

AMS and the RPC staff are dedicated to providing the Internet Community with first-rate editorial and publication services as well as excellent customer service. 2016 is going to be another year of significant change for the RFC Editor as the new RFC format approaches. The RPC is preparing, in advance, for the 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.