The IETF's Standards Setting Process – Is It Still Up to the Job?

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"The Internet standards development process is by far the best in the business." **A. Rutkowski, 1995).**
"Is it indeed?" **(K. Jakobs, at least since 1998).**

The IETF Mantra:
Rough Consensus and Running Code

- "everyone can speak"
- no formal balloting
- individual participation (as opposed to corporate/national representation)
- requires at least two interoperable implementations
- addresses small, well-defined problems
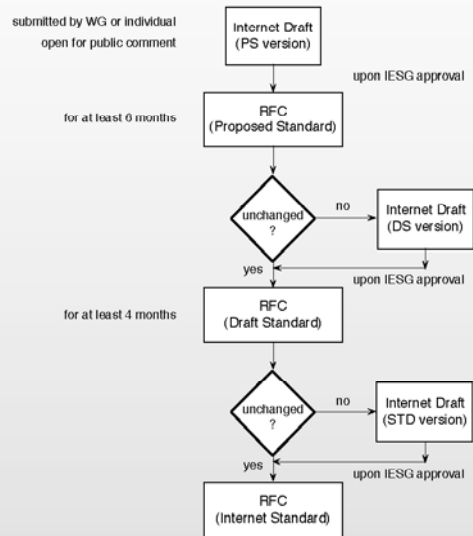
Evolution of s document alon the 'Standards' track

Goals of the standards process (WG level)	Identified Issues
technical excellence	The IETF has difficulty handling large and/or complex problems
openness and fairness; "rough consensus"	Concentration of influence in too few hands
	Excessive reliance on rersonal relationships
	Difficulty making technical and process appeals
	'Naysayers' and 'loudmouths' may obstruct the process
	'Individual particiation' is largely a myth
timeliness	Working Group dynamics can make issue closure difficult
	The IETF does not consistently use effective engineering practices
	Procedural blockages

There's a real risk that they loose the big picture.

Basically, the 80/20 rule applies - 20% of the members decide about the content of the specification.

The IPv6 specification w as published as 'Proposed Standard' in 1995 (RFC 1883); and has been at 'Draft Standard' level since 1998 (RFC 2460).

"Many of the problems and symptoms appear to be fundamentally caused by the organization failing to adapt its management and processes to its new larger size, and failing to clearly define its future mission once the initial mission had been completed or outgrown." (IETF WG member)