

2014 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 (Sandy, Alice, Megan, Lynne, Rebecca, Karen, Ann, and Priyanka) strives to continually improve its services and information transparency, and to develop new features that benefit of the Community and our staff. We appreciate your partnering with the RPC to continue to help us accomplish these goals. In 2014, we experienced a number of challenges throughout the year that made it difficult to meet the goals set forth in the Statement of Work (SoW) and related Work Standards. However, while largely focused on document throughput because of the high volume of submissions this past year, we have also made a number of changes and created features that are beneficial to the community.

2014 was the RPC's third complete year with a long-term RFC Series Editor (RSE) in place. With the RSE's adjustment to the RFC Editor practices and the communities served, there was significant progress made in a number of areas that required active engagement and participation.

This self-review will examine the challenges the RPC faced in 2014, 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

As of 12 December 2014, the RPC has edited and published 313 RFCs.

So far this year, the RPC has published more documents than have been approved for publication. However, there were a significant number of documents released from MISSREF with which we have not kept pace. While we experienced the traditional spike in document submissions in Q1 of 2014 (as the ADs worked to move documents along before changing over in March), the burst was abnormally large (see Figure 1 below). The burst was preceded by a flurry of high-page-count documents that were released from MISSREF and an expedited processing request for one of the large clusters (iSCSI), which consisted of a total of 574 pages among them (equivalent of 19 average-sized documents). After the Q1 burst, the number of documents moving to EDIT continued at a steady rate. These events, as well as, sadly, the passing of one of our editors early in the year, contributed to our inability to meet the throughput rates of 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). Figure 2 shows that about 50% of the documents published in the last 12 months have an RET of 6 weeks or less.

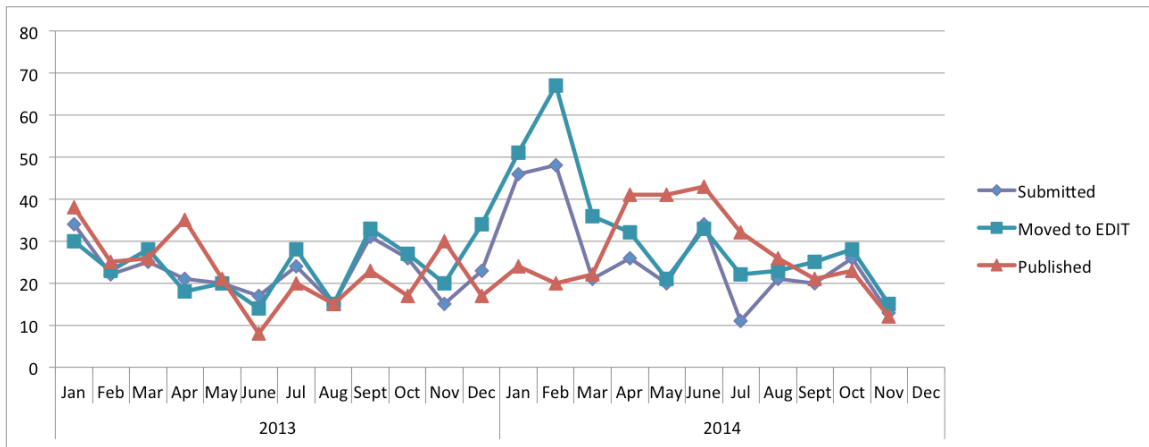


Figure 1. Queue Entrance and Exit Rates over the Last 23 Months

	2013	2014											12mo Avg
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Met SLA Target (67% RET or better)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	33%
% of docs pub <= 6 wks	88%	63%	60%	36%	17%	5%	2%	46%	77%	52%	74%	92%	51%
# of docs pub <=6 wks	15	15	12	8	7	2	1	13	20	13	17	11	11
total # of docs pub	17	24	20	22	41	43	43	32	26	25	23	12	27
total # of docs sub	23	46	48	21	26	20	34	11	21	20	26	13	26
total # of docs entering EDIT	24	51	67	32	21	33	33	22	23	21	28	15	31
67th percentile (wks)	5.9	6.1	6.1	7.1	9.7	10	11	8.2	5.9	7.4	5.8	5.2	7.4

Figure 2. Performance for the Past 12 Months

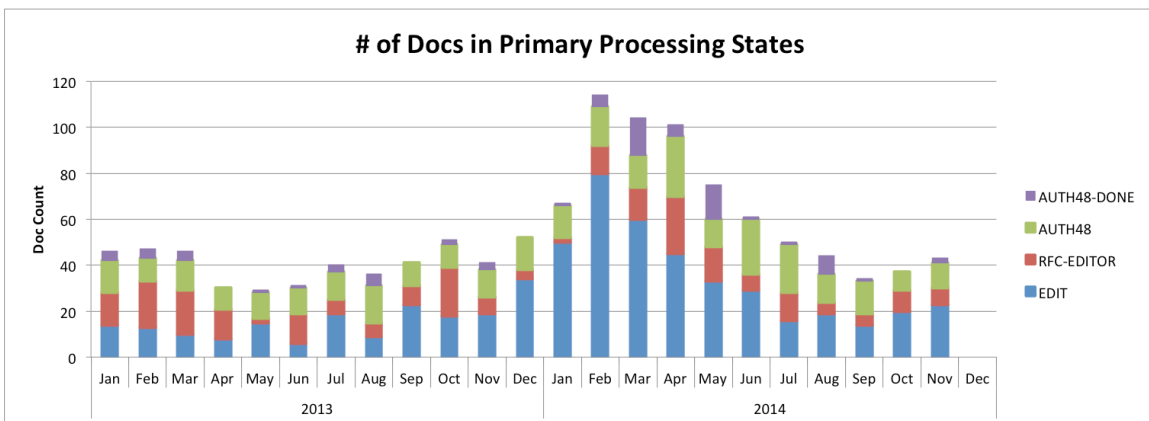


Figure 3. Queue Movement over the Last 23 Months

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 because of the exceptional workload created by the streams this past year and the other circumstances beyond the RPC's control.

Compared to 2013, this year (not including December) the number of documents entering the queue has increased by 20% and the publication rate has increased by 12%. The RPC rose to the challenge and steadily worked down the size of the queue, again meeting the SLA by August.

In addition to the editing queue, the editors were faced with a busy year that required their attention and participation in a number of areas (see discussion under "Other Improvements").

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 during 2014:

Sam Hartman (April 2014)

https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/msg/ietf/XRLxnaSg2spcw0h-Tj_ZXSInZQ

Martin Thompson (April 2014)

https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/msg/ietf/vMoOMgeR7CpFeflyqgau9Lrn_T4

[Redacted]

Other Improvements

While managing a huge editing queue, the RPC also made progress in a number of other areas. In 2014, the RFC Editor did the following:

- Generated a new reports page to facilitate report creation and consolidate all reports - <http://www.rfc-editor.org/reports>
- created a new Official Internet Protocol Standards page - <http://www.rfc-editor.org/standards>

- updated the search engine based on user input
- updated the RFC info pages so the Series could be indexed with Google Scholar
- transitioned to a new server
- created consolidated AUTH48 cluster pages
- attended the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers
- attended Preserving (Digital) Objects With Restricted Resources (POWRR) workshop
- re-reviewed the SoW and related Work Standards with the RSE
- published the new RFC Style Guide and managed the transition process
- participated in the RFC Design Team
- produced a framework for experimental writing lab sessions and held 10 sessions at IETF 91
- crafted an online writing resources page that is aimed at helping EFL authors (http://www.rfc-editor.org/writing_resources.html)
- responded to 8 legal inquiries
- generated procedures for authenticating RFCs, which includes procedures for whom Jorge Contreras should contact should the RPC not be in a position to authenticate the early RFCs
- engaged in discussion and provided input regarding the SoWs for the RFC Editor website, DOI, and statistics RFPs

Areas for Improvement

In one RFC, we didn't spot an error in the output from an XML file (tabs in artwork causing inconsistent spacing). As a result, we reevaluated the usage of diff tools during the editorial process and gathered information in order to accurately report the bug to the tool maintainers.

Some of the goals listed below are carried over from 2014. The RPC had identified projects to be completed in-house, preferably with full-time programming support. However, as a result of discussion with RSOC, several of these projects were put on hold while it was determined that each project would have an RFP. Therefore, we were unable to meet some our programming goals. We will try to communicate more effectively with the RSOC and IAOC so that programming projects can progress smoothly. This also involves working with the RSE to be clear about the resources and timelines involved.

What's on the Horizon

In 2015, 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 2015, as this requires reviewing and participating in 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 selected vendor to update the look and feel of the RFC Editor website
- work with the selected vendor to implement DOIs and make any other related process updates
- continue to track the discussion surrounding the IETF's potential reorganization and update our tools and displays as needed
- help the RSE redesign the errata system to meet new requirements created by transition to xml2rfcv3
- continue to review the SLA and provide input to the RSE
- 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 help authors having trouble with the language in their documents or having formatting issues

AMS and the RPC staff are dedicated to our commitment to provide the Internet Community with first-rate editorial and publication services as well as excellent customer service. 2015 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.