

Difficult Conversations

RTG Chair Training

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Agenda (open to bashing)

- Problem Statement (background)
- IETF Resources
- Applicability (use-case examples)
- Open discussion

IETF Resources

- RFC 7776 - Anti-harrassment policy in IETF
- <https://www.ietf.org/iesg/statement/ietf-anti-harassment-policy.html>
- Ombudspersons at ombudsteam@ietf.org: (Linda/Allison/Pete)



Working Group Chairs-Should Take the Lead

Keep your WG Positive and Productive by:

- Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment, which appreciates and values the differences within your working group so technical expertise will not be lost
- Keeping communications open; being good listeners
- Being aware of participants interaction, allow for diversity of ideas/opinions
- Establishing a high standard for mutual respect and professionalism within your working group
- Not allowing disruptive behaviors

Applicability - Use Cases

Applicability - Chair's interactions

- Upwards - with AD's
- Peers - work in overlapping WG's
- WG - authors, participants, mailing-list
- Support - IANA, RFC-Ed

Applicability - Upwards

- Talks with IESG/AD's is generally never difficult (or we wouldn't admit it, so skip for this forum.. 😊)

Applicability - Peers

- Where to advance a draft
 - Occasional ambiguity in which WG owns the document
 - Chairs can discuss/agree on the ‘primary’ WG and keep other related WG’s aware (cross-posting, preso/LC in multiple WG’s etc..)
 - AD’s can weigh in, if chair’s can’t agree (or need some clarification).
 - Note: in general technology owning WG progresses mods to the technology

Applicability - WG - Authors

- Tardiness on progressing drafts
 - Gentle nudge to move documents further
 - After repeated reminder, offer to find alternate editors
 - Timeout after some time, and decide on new (able) editors
- Unwillingness to change content
 - Chairs can assess rough consensus and (strongly, if needed) guide authors

Applicability - WG - Participants

- Behavior issues on mailing-list, meetings
 - Chairs can discuss 1:1 to better understand the perspective
 - Most of the times it's a mis-understand, easily clarified by a public or private note as appropriate
- Complaint from participants that they are getting ignored (race/gender/english-proficiency)
 - Chairs need to dig deeper to assess if it's a real issue
 - Inclusion & Diversity requires some careful messaging to the concerned audience (and don't forget to repeat periodically)
- Consensus building
 - At times, WG is split in opinions, hard to see rough consensus
 - One suggestion is to do some offline discussion with authors and a few selected subject matter experts, and share the results with the WG, decide on step forward

References

- **Some highly rated books to read**
 - Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In
 - The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict
 - Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most
 - Crucial Conversations Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High

Open Discussion

Thank You