External (mis)perceptions of IETF/IESG/IAB/ISOC

- Some concern exists about this in the IAB
- An informal survey of IAB and IESG members and their personal contacts was conducted by email and phone
- Now follows a sorted list of views expressed by various people; more views welcome
- Anonymity respected; don't blame the reporter for any of what follows!
- Recommendations for any action TBD (will be posted as Internet Draft)

July 1994 Brian E. Carpenter

Perceptions of process (1)

- IETF is a gang of hippies, too informal
- IETF openness is a virtue
- Openness allows anybody to filibuster
- IETF rejects ideas without formal procedure
- Lack of formal votes in WGs means that people who are shouted down just give up
- Process fails to produce well-engineered standards
- IETF became bureaucratic and ineffective
- Officials mistrust culture of competition

Perceptions of process (2)

- IAB & IESG seen as self-perpetuating
- TCP/IP cheated on OSI by bypassing formal international process (trade policy view)
- IETF should be open to outside submissions wanting rubber stamp
- New WGs are formed bottom-up with gaps and overlaps
- Unclear how comments on last calls are handled
- On-line doc of process is good (but not for people who are not on-line)

Internationalism

- IETF is not as international as ISO and ITU
- IETF lacks formal international affiliation
- Difficult for European officials to view ISOC as international (no EU finance)
- Most government officials in [country X] have no knowledge of IETF, little of ISOC
- But some officials ask "how can we help?"

Authority

- IETF is less authoritative than, say, the ATM Forum
- People outside think IETF is just like OSF or ATM Forum
- People think it is smaller & smarter than it is
- IETF should not have monopoly on standards
- People outside think IAB has power :-)
- People have not heard of IESG

General perceptions

- Closed perspectives - "IETF Gestalt" (e.g. ignoring economics, insisting on datagrams, knee-jerk reaction against OSI)
- ISOC officers with industry jobs in conflict?
- Speakers on Internet should avoid hype
- ISOC is too PC, has ignored staff engineers
- IAB has weak profile (since Kobe?)
- IETF wonders what IAB does
- IETF wonders why IESG is slow, insular and autocratic
- IETF is too remote from users and operators