

JOINING THE IETF FOLDS

I take this opportunity to record my sincere thanks and appreciation for ISOC for their sponsorship and the organizers at the IETF who made it possible for me to participate in the 72nd IETF meeting. The arrangements of travel, lodging and hospitality, extended during the stay were all splendid and were very professionally handled. My indebtedness to Ms. Leni Nazare, Mr. Martin Kupres and Ms. Mirjam Kuenhe for their efforts.

Though I was, by and large, conversant with the working of IETF, I indeed was a newbie to its proceedings. Earlier, I used to wonder how did the WG ideas at the IETF pop up—was it the WG chair who would spell out seemingly utopian ideas?, or was it the companies who would steer the chartering of the agenda items. It was only through the first hand experience at the IETF that I have comprehended the “working style” here; a clearly chalked out agenda is thoroughly deliberated and firmed up with consensus on the mailing lists. And thereafter, it is floated for consideration at the IETF meeting. Objective synoptic presentations and Q&A session after each ID expose the participants to a therapeutic forum wherein they reflect upon, and make appropriate amends in their proposals. The ideas evolve through debate and candid comments, though at times these might seem like parleys in the Internet warzone! Undoubtedly the two consequent features of IETF meetings, i.e., synergy and pro-activity, arise from honest commenting that relegates courtesy to a lower priority. These are the people for whom the maxim holds true, “If violence is a sin, silence is a felony”.

My doubts were further cleared when I met my mentor, Professor Carsten, a pleasant, modest and knowledgeable person, maintaining his characteristic silence unless provoked, who chaired the 6LoWPAN working group. I realized that people here at the IETF only accept to be led by those who are focused, doers and team-players—not bothered about their carefree dresses and easy style. While attending the meeting as a first timer, I found myself awkwardly dressed up, way-out to the getaway style of majority of the participants. As it went, Professor Carsten promptly commented on a lighter vein that of all the participants, only two gentlemen were clad very formally—a dig on me, I realized!

The meeting also afforded me interaction with other Fellows from all over the globe. While exchanging notes with Hugo from South America and SM from Mauritius, I realized that such people from diverse backgrounds and multivariate ethnicities who have the will and potential very often, remain untapped contributors. Though their passions would find vent through an open call for participation in the IETF mailing lists, it is only through bursaries and fellowships that they get recognition for their efforts. It was indeed very rewarding for us all to be part of such an activity.

My admiration, at times fringing to infatuation, for academic stalwarts has always been there. And there could be no better place than the IETF meeting, to get them together. To my immense pleasure, I could meet Professor David Culler and Ms. Samita Chakrabarty, and attended talks by Mr. Pascal Thubert and Mr. JP Vasseur—people who all work in subjects that closely relate to my interest domains, and are also highly cited. Likewise, it was quite motivating to see young scholars like Mr. Jonathan Hui and Mr. Phil Kevin at 6LoWPAN and

ROLL working groups, present their works of high order. Their success story bespeaks of their professional approach and relentless pursuits.

With limited leisure time at my disposal, a city tour seemed to be a good extracurricular activity, so I set out the hitch-hike. While I went to the city centre in a more “hop on hop off” mood, my touring spree turned out to be more academic. My visit to the highly-acclaimed Trinity College and the National University of Ireland allowed me to meet some very good researchers there in Dublin. Professor Murphy from UCD and visiting faculty from the Washington State University, Professor Sumit Roy were amongst the professors I met, who work on IP-based wireless networks. I plan to take the initial interactions on to subsequent levels of rapport.

As a whole, the experience of spending just about a week in the IETF folds proved to be remarkably eventful. It however warrants to spur more than that. For instance, pursuance of an ID together with my mentor, to explore ways and means to open a new ISOC chapter at Lahore (my hometown), and offering talented minds for ISOC, all are merely the initial contemplations that we wish to pursue.

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