

IPv6 Briefing Paper e-meeting

22 September 2009, UTC 10:30 and 22:00

Chair: Matthew Shears

Additional Speakers: Phil Roberts, Mat Ford

Agenda:

1. General introduction
2. Walk through "IPv6 deployment: State of play and the way forward" paper
3. Chapter perspectives and Q&A
4. Walk through "IPv6 Why and how Governments should be involved" paper
5. Chapter perspectives and Q&A
6. Concluding comments

Attendees:

Marcin Cieślak - ISOC Poland Chapter
Sebastian Bachollet - various ISOC Chapter roles
Hans Peter Dittler - ISOC German Chapter
Olivier MJ Crepin Leblond - ISOC England Chapter
Sabrina Wilmot - ISOC staff
Anne Lord - ISOC staff

IPv6 Chapter calls summary

There was an excellent and stimulating exchange of views following the presentation of the Briefing Papers on IPv6. The introductory comments and the major areas of discussion have been summarized below.

Briefing Paper "IPv6 deployment: State of play and the way forward".

Introduction:

Introductory comments on the IPv6 deployment paper focused on the importance of looking at real as opposed to perceived challenges for stakeholders with regard to IPv6 deployment. The paper outlined how the rationale for moving to IPv6 will largely differ according to the stakeholder but that the real meta drivers should be competitive advantage and business continuity. The paper addresses the misconception that a killer application will be necessary to drive end user and customer demand, and on the issue of "who goes first" among content providers and network operators. The paper suggests that stakeholders need to factor IPv6 deployment into network 'refresh' cycles, and concludes by suggesting that stakeholders have no time for sitting back as depletion is imminent and progress through further deployment in planned and methodical ways is necessary.

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Discussion:

One of the biggest challenges identified in the discussion was the issue of the visibility and awareness of IPv6. There is no question that IPv6 is a technical issue and many at the technical level are aware of it and the impending depletion of IPv4, but the degree to which this awareness in business extends beyond the technicians is unclear - and, is indeed likely to be limited. A number of participants referred to meetings with customers or clients in which it became clear that IPv6 was of little interest to marketing, etc.

The role of the user in moving IPv6 forward was also discussed. There was some disagreement on the degree to which user demand will be a motivating force for the deployment of IPv6. Much may have to do with the IPv6 compatibility of the hardware used to interface with the network - modem, routers, etc., and the degree to which providers/manufacturers replace existing incompatible equipment. What was clear though was that there would be no tolerance by end users of dysfunctional Internet service due to lack of compatible networks and equipment.

Another issue of interest was whether the imminent depletion of IPv4 addresses was a compelling reason for businesses to move. The sense of the discussion was that it was not, at least not for businesses that already had addresses. There was agreement that the issue would likely become more difficult and compelling for smaller players or new players seeking (IPv4) addresses once depletion is real - particularly if IPv6 deployment across networks and hardware is haphazard.

There was also a good discussion of how the message of moving to IPv6 can be encouraged, and in Europe in particular (given the Chapter representation on the calls). It was noted that while the European Commission and some national governments were engaged, working at a pan-European level (through or with associations, ISOC Chapters, etc.) and working both with and beyond the traditional Internet community would be good ways of furthering the messaging and disseminating information.

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Briefing paper "IPv6: Why and how governments should be involved".

Introduction:

While noting that some governments have committed themselves to IPv6 deployment, the introductory comments focused on the need for additional government awareness of IPv6 and IPv4 depletion, and more multistakeholder engagement. The paper focuses on meta level reasons for greater government awareness, such as continued network and services stability and continuity, etc. The paper also makes the point that addressing is as important as broadband, both are important enablers of innovation and growth. The paper then reviews four ways governments can become more involved: outreach and assessment (understanding who is doing what, knowing what needs to be

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done); leading by example (drawing up plans for v6 implementation, for example); marketing and perception (support for v6 as competitive differentiator); and, incentives and mandates. It was noted that governments are now asking for more information, more specifics as to what they should do next.

Discussion:

One of the big challenges facing governments is how to engage. Participants agreed that many will follow the lead of the private sector - other governments are only just beginning to engage. There was a sense in the discussion that there would be differing responses to the imperative of moving to IPv6, dictated by the nature of government in the country in question (how "interventionist" versus "hands off"), the level of engagement of other stakeholders, etc., and that this might frustrate European level initiatives.

There was an acknowledgment that "leading by example" was starting to have traction in some countries and that this bode well for more government engagement. It was noted that one of the challenges facing the public sector is similar to that facing the private sector: IT managers in government are aware of issues related to IPv4 depletion and IPv6, but they are not the ones who have to sell the investment within government or sign the checks.

Finally, there was no clear orientation among the participants with regard to the efficacy of IPv6 mandates or requirements (such as in RFPs issued by public authorities). Again, it was felt that such approaches would differ considerably by government. However, the issue of what would prompt government to become involved actively was raised. Participants on the call wondered whether governments would become more actively involved if the Internet experience of the end-user was inhibited, lessened, or if there were service discontinuities, whether for business or government, for example.
