Suggestions for Future IRG Workflow and Procedures

Source: SAT Committee

Status: Member Submission

Action: For consideration by IRG

1.   Background

Recent review process in IRG sees significant improvement, mostly thanks to the introduction of the online review system. As the result, however, we are inevitably all the more aware from the experience in WS 2017 review cycles so far, that there are disconnections between the traditional workflow and the review system architecture, which discount or restrict the efficiency and potential the new technology and/or methodology would provide, therefore remain to be improved.

2.   Suggestions

2.1.   Continuity of discussion between the review rounds

Currently, each versioned review round is theoretically self-contained, and problems raised in a certain period are basically supposed to be solved within the term delimited by meeting. While the current practice is reasonably designed in order to keep discussions consistent and handleable through paper-based distribution and circulation of essential documents, the introduction of online system in WS 2017 has brought imminent surge in number of review comments, especially in the initial round, which makes it sometimes difficult to process all incoming comments within the range of a meeting. In such cases, without a formal mechanism of "carrying over" discussion, the experts are forced to write their comments or responses twice or more (which is counterproductive), or allow their contributions lost in unfortunate crevasses between review periods; which is what we happened to find many through reexamination of review records and reported at the IRG #53 (Feedback to IRGN2385 on remaining characters).

We thus suggest that:

1)   Allow review comments and responses to be carried over unresolved. Instead of assuming all comments are either processed within each term or to expire, stack up review actions until they find a chance to be discussed, and mark them as concluded after the discussion at a meeting. It is rightful to set a communication deadline before each meeting, but late and untimely comments should still join in the next version/round once input.

2) Implement a feature on the review system that can open/close comments, and automatically forward late comments to the next round, to satisfy 1).

3) Add a function to notify each party or participant when they receive new comments to characters they submitted or they participate in discussion on, or an interface to browse such discussion history on the review system. We expect that the function would help original commenters to catch up with responses (currently no way of feedback), and facilitate more organic discussions across review rounds, just like that the latest version of the system has a summary view of character property updates between versions, which is immensely helpful.

2.2.   Review category priority

Traditionally, we start from discussing Unification issues at meetings as the foremost task. While they are still of much importance, the recent submitted characters become increasingly specialized and domain-specific, that their evidences can influence their credibility more than ever before. Moreover, since finding alternative supporting materials after the original evidence is questioned is often the most time-consuming job, experts would need longer time to deal with Evidence issues.

We thus suggest that:

- Discuss the Evidence category matters before Unification at the meeting. The screening of automatic IDS checking result can be prior to all of them as it is now.

2.3.   More detailed in-meeting discussion record

While the current format of working set document only allows several lines of discussion record per character, the review system has virtually infinite room to record details. In actual practice, however, what has been written down during the meeting is mostly less than ten words per character, including those which invoked fairly lengthy discussion. Characters that required substantial discussion are most likely ones complicated and controversial, and if details were not recorded, revisiting or restarting them in following meetings would rely on personal memories or fragmented memoranda by attendees, which easily ends up in duplicate or inconsistent discussion that is counterproductive. As we are bound to process hundreds of characters each with little connection in a meeting, it is crucial to know where we are on the topic beforehand.

We thus suggest that:

1) Record proportionate amount of information on the review system if actual discussion takes place regarding the character (and attendees agree to). Specifically, (a) the decisive factor derived the conclusion, (b) aspects mentioned or accounted for, and examined materials during the discussion, and (c) other voices if any, should be included if applicable.

2) The text area of the review system better support some basic formatting such as emphasis and bullet lists.

(End of document)