

IETF Identification and Security Guidelines

Status of this Memo

This memo provides information for the Internet community. It does not specify an Internet standard of any kind. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

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1. Abstract

This RFC is meant to represent a guideline by which the IETF conferences may run more effeciently with regards to identification and security protocols, with specific attention paid to a particular sub-group within the IETF: "facial hairius extremis".

This document will shed further illumination on these problems and provide some possible solutions.

This memo provides entertainment for the Internet community. It does not specify an Internet standard of any kind, but is rather unstandard, actually. Please laugh loud and hard.

2. Introduction

It has come to the attention of THEY [1] that a certain "facial hairius extremesis" of the male variety of the species "homo sapien" of the sub-culture "computeris extrordinarisis" have overrun the IETF conferences and thus led to the break-down of many identification and safety protocols.

3. Per Capita (Anecdotal) Evidence

While collecting research about the sub-group "facial hairius extremis" (FHE), it was noted that the per capita appearance of FHEs at IETFs was largely disproportional with the existence of FHEs in the world-at-large. In fact, the existence of facial hair at all within the IETF community is extraordinarily common among the males of the group. Apart from ZZ-Top and WWF Wrestling, it is not possible to find more facial hair within any occupational group. In

this author's own experience the average amount of men with long-term facial hair is less than 20%. Long-term versus short-term facial hair is a very important distinction as short-term facial hair, also known as the temporary illness "goatee universitis" (which symptoms range from full goatees to the less popular chin-goatee) is a common affliction for university-based males. Per capita (temporary) facial hair can go as high as 40%. However, among the males of the IETF the per capita long-term facial hair is as high as 60% [2].

Ordinarily, this abundance of long-term FHE would not require that an RFC be written. However, increasingly there have been issues regarding mistaken identification. For security purposes as well as ease of identification, this RFC will serve to clarify these issues and hopefully provide a solution for them.

4. Mistaken Identification Syndrome (or "Are you --jon. or Scott?")

I was speaking to a very well-known network researcher, I'll call him --jon., who tells me that he is often mistaken for a SOBbing Harvard person. --jon. says, "People tell someone to look for me or him and say that I'm about so-tall with a big white beard, and suddenly people are coming up to me and saying, 'Hi Scott' and he often tells me that he is mistakenly hailed as, '--jon.'. Often the mistake is made solely on the appearance of our facial hair."

Another story --jon. told me is that once a woman called looking for a computer researcher but only having a first name and physical description. The receptionist asked for the description and the woman said she was looking for an older Caucasian man with a beard. The receptionist reportedly blurted out, "they all have beards!!!!"

On a more personal note, two researchers who were both employed at USC/ISI shaved their very famous facial hair and were both unrecognizable to friends and co-workers alike. If it weren't for B.M.'s Grateful Dead T-shirts and lack of shoes, or R.V.M.'s voice I would have never recognized them.

5. Security Considerations

It is obvious to this researcher that facial hair of any variety is a very recognizable characteristic. Indeed, when giving a description of a male who has facial hair, it is always one of the first characteristics given. Ordinarily this would not be a problem, since facial hair in the world at large is below 20%. However, when used as a description at IETFs, disaster can ensue.

6. Solutions

There are two parts to my proposed solution: the role of the seeker and the role of the FHE.

For those who are seeking a FHE of known identity:

- It is important to recognize these men as individuals.

Just because a man has the facial hair you are looking for, please stop to inquire if you have the correct person. Think of what a blow it is to a person's ego to be constantly misidentified, and think of how annoying it is to be hailed by someone across a crowded IETF room and they are yelling the WRONG NAME. So remember to look, identify, and ask BEFORE you begin rambling on about some Internet stuff.

For the FHE:

- Give proper signals when being sought.

If someone mistakenly calls you the wrong name, do not lose heart. Count to 10 and commonly reply, "You must have mistaken me for so-and-so, I am not that person.", and walk away. Also, if someone calls you from across a room, raise your arm, smile and wave vigorously in affirmation or raise your arm, shake your head and give them a sign that you are not who they are looking for. As an FHE it is part of your responsibility to understand that facial hair is an extremely identifiable physical characteristic. Understand that non-FHE people do not mean any harm.

7. Conclusion

In closing, I hope you found this RFC worthwhile and that it raised some interesting points. I also hope that I was able to further the cause of FHE and to make everyone's life a little bit easier. ;^)

8. References

[1] THEY

THEY, "We Who Everyone Quotes But Doesn't Know Who We Are", Pop Culture, April 1998.

[2] 60% of IETF men have facial hair

A. Ramos, "Damn, A Lot Of Men Here Have Facial Hair", ISI Talk, September 1997.

9. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the men of ISI who inspired me to write this RFC. I hope that my work will make life easier for you, and that the cases of mistaken identity will not be as common in the future because of this RFC. I understand your plight and feel for you. Good luck.

Thanks to my life partner, Martin, who's reoccurring affliction of goatee universitis is a constant source of joy for me.

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