



Broadband Internet Technical Advisory Group

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BITAG Announces Next Technical Topic on Congestion Management

Denver, CO (March 12, 2013): The Broadband Internet Technical Advisory Group (BITAG) is pleased to announce the launch of a new technical review focused on the topic of real-time Internet network traffic management practices used by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) for purposes of congestion management that are based on subscriber behavior and/or type of application. This topic was brought to BITAG by Dale Hatfield and Scott Jordan, two members of BITAG's Community Representative member category.

Congestion management practices are an important subset of network management practices used by ISPs. Policymakers and the public have expressed a great interest in learning about what congestion management practices are used by ISPs and how these practices impact subscribers and application providers. In particular, there is interest in how these practices operate and what information about these practices should be disclosed to consumers. There is also interest in whether ISPs use congestion management practices to prioritize latency-sensitive or safety- and security-related applications, to improve network performance, and/or to prioritize or deprioritize packets for certain content. Among other things, there is interest in whether these practices are helpful or harmful to consumers.

Network architectures and technologies may impact congestion management practices, and it would be helpful to policymakers and the public for BITAG to provide guidance on this relationship. Furthermore, an understanding of congestion management practices is crucial in policymaking discussions about reasonable versus unreasonable network management.

Scott Jordan, University of California–Irvine, and Fred Baker, Cisco, will co-edit the report on this topic. Douglas Sicker, Executive Director of BITAG, Chair of BITAG's Technical Working Group, Director of the Interdisciplinary Telecom Program and professor of computer science at the University of Colorado Boulder, will chair the review itself. This review, and its attendant report, has an estimated completion date of August 2013.

This will be BITAG's fifth technical review. BITAG's first two reviews focused on IPv6 Whitelisting and Large Scale Network Address Translation. BITAG's third review was on best practices for mitigating SNMP DDoS Attacks, and the fourth review focused on Port Blocking best practices. Copies of these technical reports can be found on the BITAG website at www.bitag.org.

BITAG welcomes any questions, comments or suggestions. Please contact our Deputy Director, Kaleb Sieh, at ksieh@bitag.org. Also, if you are interested in submitting a technical review request to BITAG, you can do so at http://www.bitag.org/tech_work_group.php?action=submission.

About BITAG. BITAG is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization focused on bringing together engineers and technologists in a Technical Working Group (TWG) to develop consensus on broadband network management practices and other related technical issues that can affect users' Internet experience, including the impact to and from applications, content and devices that utilize the Internet.

BITAG's mission includes: (a) educating policymakers on such technical issues; (b) addressing specific technical matters in an effort to minimize related policy disputes; and (c) serving as a sounding board for new ideas and network management practices. Specific TWG functions also may include: (i) identifying "best practices" by broadband providers and other entities; (ii) interpreting and applying "safe harbor" practices; (iii) otherwise providing technical guidance to industry and to the public; and/or (iv) issuing advisory opinions on the technical issues germane to the TWG's mission that may underlie disputes concerning broadband network management practices.

BITAG TWG reports focus primarily on technical issues. While the reports may touch on a broad range of questions associated with a particular network management practice, the reports are not intended to address or analyze in a comprehensive fashion the economic, legal, regulatory or public policy issues that the practice may raise.

About BITAG's Technical Review Process. BITAG's core substantive work is performed through its Technical Working Group (TWG), which was formed with the core principles of being: technically driven, balanced, open, efficient, independent, and flexible. The TWG reviews technical issues brought to it through Review Requests submitted by both Members and non-Members, or through a majority weighted vote of the TWG engineers themselves. Each individual Review is taken up by a Committee of the TWG that is composed of engineers and other technical experts representing a broad cross section of the Internet ecosystem. TWG Committees generally operate on a consensus basis, with backstop weighted voting procedures so that when consensus cannot be achieved, each Member category has an equal say in the work product regardless of the composition of the Committee. Finally, BITAG was structured to work as expeditiously as possible, with each Committee operating under a 120-day "shot clock" to complete the respective Review and attendant technical report.