BITAG Announces Technical Review Focused on Internet Interconnection

Denver, CO (June 18, 2014): The Broadband Internet Technical Advisory Group (BITAG) is pleased to announce a technical review focused on the topic of Internet Network Interconnection. This topic was submitted jointly by two of BITAG's members, CenturyLink and the Center for Democracy & Technology, and the review will result in a report with an anticipated publication date in November 2014.

The Internet is a complex "network of networks" linked together in a variety of ways and by a variety of technologies. In order for end users connected to one network to access data and services connected to another network, these networks must "interconnect" with each other, either directly or indirectly. Internet network interconnection, also often referred to as "peering" or "transit", is an increasingly important topic as the Internet ecosystem faces a dynamic growth period characterized by rapidly increasing demand, changing technologies and product offerings, and significant shifts in data traffic patterns. But there is little public information about Internet interconnection available to those not intimately involved with operating networks – including consumers, journalists and regulators.

With this report, BITAG's Technical Working Group (TWG) aims to provide an informative contribution to the ongoing discussion surrounding Internet network interconnection. Some topics likely to be covered in the report include: (1) the history of Internet network interconnection, along with a brief historical review of network interconnection in other industries and contexts; (2) how Internet traffic is managed between networks; and (3) the evolving nature of Internet data traffic patterns.

Jason Weil, Principal Engineer at Time Warner Cable, and Joseph Lorenzo Hall, Chief Technologist at the Center for Democracy & Technology, will be the lead editors of the report on this topic. Douglas Sicker, Executive Director of BITAG, Chair of BITAG's Technical Working Group, Department Head of Engineering and Public Policy and a professor of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University, and on leave from the University of Colorado Boulder, where he is an Endowed Professor of Computer Science and Telecommunications, will chair the review itself.

The Interconnection topic will be BITAG's seventh technical review and report. BITAG's first two reports focused on IPv6 Whitelisting and Large Scale Network Address Translation. BITAG's third report was on best practices for mitigating SNMP DDoS Attacks, and the fourth report focused on Port Blocking best practices. BITAG's fifth report analyzed and made best practice recommendations on the topic of Real-time Network Management of Internet Congestion, while BITAG's sixth report focused on VoIP Impairment, Failure, and Restrictions. 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, especially those with the potential to be construed as anti-competitive, discriminatory, or otherwise motivated by non-technical factors. 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 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.