



# World Wide Web Consortium Supports HTTP/1.1 Reaching IETF Draft Standard

## IETF/ISOC Contacts

Mona Peloquin, <[Mona\\_Peloquin@dc.edelman.com](mailto:Mona_Peloquin@dc.edelman.com)>, +1.202.326.1728

Keith Moore, <[moore@cs.utk.edu](mailto:moore@cs.utk.edu)>, +1.423.974.3126

Fred Baker, <[fred@cisco.com](mailto:fred@cisco.com)>, +1.408.526.4257

## W3C Contacts:

Janet Daly, <[janet@w3.org](mailto:janet@w3.org)>, +1.617.253.5884

Europe: Ned Mitchell, <[ned@ala.com](mailto:ned@ala.com)>, +33.1.43.22.79.56; or Andrew Lloyd,

<[allo@ala.com](mailto:allo@ala.com)>, +44.1.27.367.5100

Asia: Yuko Watanabe, <[yuko@w3.org](mailto:yuko@w3.org)>, +81.466.49.1170

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<http://www.ietf.org/> and <http://www.w3.org/> -- 7 July 1999 -- The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is pleased to recognize that [HTTP/1.1](#), along with the [accompanying authentication specification](#), has been approved by the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) of the Internet Engineering Task Force ( IETF) as a [IETF Draft Standard](#).

## HTTP/1.1 Improves Web Performance and Security

[HTTP](#) is the primary protocol of the Web, originally proposed by [Tim Berners-Lee](#) while he was at [CERN](#). [HTTP/1.0](#), co-authored by Berners-Lee, Henrik Frystyk Nielsen of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Roy Fielding of the University of California at Irvine, was the first version of the HTTP that was widely used on the Internet. Although extremely popular, it had several significant performance issues that, combined with increased use of the Web, caused severe load problems on many parts of the Internet.

The purpose of HTTP/1.1, first proposed by Roy Fielding while at ICS/University of California at Irvine, is to provide higher end-user performance while preserving the integrity and stability of the Internet using features including persistent connections, pipelining, caching, and IP address preservation.

As important, the HTTP Digest Authentication mechanism, described in the accompanying HTTP Authentication specification, defines a method for authenticating a user to an HTTP server without exposing the user's passwords to potential eavesdroppers. This is an important step toward improving security on the Web.

## W3C Participation in Development and Implementation

Standardization of HTTP has occurred in the IETF from its inception with strong support from the [W3C](#). W3C team members have contributed heavily to the development of HTTP/1.1. Jim Gettys, visiting scientist at W3C from Compaq Computer Corporation, serves as HTTP/1.1 editor and co-author; Tim Berners-Lee, Director of W3C and Henrik Frystyk Nielsen, W3C HTTP Activity Lead, are co-authors of HTTP/1.1. Other co-authors include Roy Fielding of University of California at Irvine; Jeff Mogul also of Compaq; Paul Leach of Microsoft Corporation; and Larry Masinter of Xerox Corporation's Palo Alto Research Center.

W3C has also made several HTTP/1.1 implementations: the [libwww](#) client sample code library, by Henrik Frystyk Nielsen was used to demonstrate many early designs; and [Jigsaw](#), W3C's Web server, implemented by Yves Lafon, Benoit Mahé, and Anselm Baird-Smith (now at Sun) implements both a normal server as well as a proxy server. These are among the very first HTTP/1.1 implementations, and play a key role in discovering errors in the HTTP/1.1 Proposed Standard ([RFC 2068](#)). Currently, most servers are able to support HTTP/1.1.

Previous W3C work includes a paper investigating HTTP/1.1 and the interactions of compression, style sheets and HTTP/1.1 entitled: "[Network Performance Effects of HTTP/1.1, CSS1, and PNG](#)" published in ACM SIGCOMM '97, by Henrik Frystyk Nielsen, Jim Gettys, Anselm Baird-Smith, Eric Prud'hommeaux, Håkon Wium Lie, and Chris Lilley of W3C.

## IETF Draft Standard

Draft Standard is the second of the three step IETF standardization process; it recognizes that that HTTP/1.1 is stable, and has [multiple interoperable implementations](#), and that all known technical issues have been resolved in the specification. A Draft Standard is considered to be very close to a final specification, and changes are likely to be made only to solve specific problems encountered. The RFC, based on draft 6 of the specification revision with some minor final editorial changes, is available as RFC 2616.

## About The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF)

The [Internet Engineering Task Force](#) (IETF) is a large open international community of network designers, operators, vendors, and researchers concerned with the evolution of the Internet architecture and the smooth operation of the Internet. It is the protocol engineering

and development arm of the Internet. The IETF conducts its technical work through working groups, which are organized by topic into several development areas and are managed by Area Directors. Area directors, in turn, make up the IESG, which is responsible for both the technical management of IETF activities and the Internet standards process.

## About The Internet Society (ISOC)

[The Internet Society](#) (ISOC) is the international organization for global coordination and cooperation for the Internet, and is comprised of members from more than 150 countries. It was established in 1992 in response to a recognized worldwide need for a non-governmental, international organization to help support global expansion, standardization and change of the Internet. The Internet Engineering Task Force, the Internet standards body, conducts its work under the auspices of the Internet Society.

## About the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

The W3C was created to lead the Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that promote its evolution and ensure its interoperability. It is an international industry consortium jointly run by the [MIT Laboratory for Computer Science \(MIT LCS\)](#) in the USA, the [National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control \(INRIA\)](#) in France and [Keio University](#) in Japan. Services provided by the Consortium include: a repository of information about the World Wide Web for developers and users, reference code implementations to embody and promote standards, and various prototype and sample applications to demonstrate use of new technology. To date, over 330 organizations are [Members of the Consortium](#).

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