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# AI Preferences @ IETF

Suresh Krishnan

# Agenda

- Background
- Scope
- Major Discussion Points
- Deliverables
- Questions

# Background

- IAB Workshop on AI-Control took place in September 2024 (DC)
- Side meeting at IETF 121 in Dublin
- Working group chartered Jan 2025
- First meeting in IETF 122 in Bangkok
- Interim meeting in Brussels

# Scope

## In Scope

- Vocabulary for expressing AI-related preferences
  - independent of how those preferences are associated with content.
- Means of attaching or associating those preferences with content in IETF-defined protocols and formats
  - including but not limited to using Well-Known URIs ([RFC 8615](#)) such as the Robots Exclusion Protocol ([RFC 9309](#)), and HTTP response header fields.
- A standard method for reconciling multiple expressions of preferences.

## Out of scope

- Technical enforcement of preferences
- Application layer protocols for authenticating or authorizing clients and/or crawlers
- Establishment of registries of preferences relating to content
- Auditing and other transparency measures for AI training

# Vocabulary Complexity

- Converging towards the idea that the initial vocabulary should be relatively simple, so that there was less chance for confusion by adopters.
  - Since a well-designed vocabulary will be extensible in the future, this also seems prudent; it's difficult to un-deploy things on the Internet.

# Attachment Locations

- Attachment mechanism by URL.
  - One candidate for that mechanism is an extension to robots.txt
  - Also possible for embedded metadata in IETF-controlled protocols and formats.
    - Some candidates include HTTP header fields, link relations (see RFC 8288), JSON formats, and other protocols.

# Opt-in vs. Opt-out

- There are legal/regulatory regimes which can either be opt-out or opt-in.
- Any chosen mechanism should not make assumptions as to defaults in absence of any signal

# Working with other organizations

- The WG needs to work with with organisations that control formats defined elsewhere.
  - Some candidates include HTML in the W3C, JPEG, MPEG, and potentially more.

# Combining Preferences

- Usage in real life requires a method for ***reconciling multiple expressions of preferences***
- This might include location-based preferences, embedded preferences, preferences found in a separate repository (as is common for some industries in managing copyright), or preferences found elsewhere and correlated by some similarity measure.

# Licensing Schemes

- There was some interest in enabling licensing schemes whereby a preference that permits some usage is conditional on participation in that scheme (likely involving compensation).
    - While this is not exactly in scope for the charter, **it would be good to assure that our extensibility mechanisms enable it.**

# Matters for Policymakers

- By necessity, **our work is only part of the solution in this space**; policymakers are likely to deliver a legal framework that creates expectations and consequences for diverging from expressed preferences.
  - It may be helpful to them if we can communicate what our deliverables provide, and more importantly what they do not.
  - e.g. technical enforcement of preferences is unlikely to happen using the mechanisms we define, although we could recharter in the future to deliver improvements (e.g., an audit format).

# Matters for Policymakers (2)

- Documenting the limits of the mechanisms we provide -- as well as how they might interact with policy measures -- would be helpful in managing expectations and assuring that policy and technical work well together.

# Deliverables

- Vocabulary
  - Initial (-00) WG document exists
    - https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-ietf-aipref-vocab/
  - Issues at
    - https://github.com/ietf-wg-aipref/drafts/issues
- Attachment to come soon

# Further reading

- AI Prefs Working Group
  - https://datatracker.ietf.org/wg/aipref/about/
- First Impressions from the IAB AI-CONTROL workshop
  - https://www.ietf.org/blog/impressions-ai-control-workshop/
- IETF setting standards for AI preferences
  - https://www.ietf.org/blog/aipref-wg/
- IAB Workshop on AI-Control
  - Accepted submissions at https://datatracker.ietf.org/group/aicontrolws/materials/

# Thanks!