2016 TechArk Plan

This update: December 17, 2015.

1 Overview

TechArk is a "Centre for the Creative Development of the Internet" (CCDI). As of late 2015, it is not a formal organization. It is a second-generation formulation of an approach to tackling hard Internet problems, homed at Thinking Cat Enterprises LLC, based on some of that organization's funded projects.

The overall aim of the year is to successfully complete those projects as example activities, raise awareness of and interest in collaborative activities to address Internet development and deployment issues, and set up for a more (organizationally) substantial 2017.

2 Plan

The 2016 plan is based on 3 areas of work: the projects themselves (engaging with others and getting work done for the Internet), a robust communications strategy to build up awareness of and interest in the work, and the meta-level efforts of shaping this into a self-sustaining organization in the coming year.

2.1 Projects

These projects have been selected as ones that can showcase advancement in Internet technology development and/or deployment, and that have some level of industry interest and engagement. Thinking Cat Enterprises LLC has some level of funding for them, with attendant deliverables and expectations. The material below describes the objectives for the projects as a whole, in furthering TechArk in 2016.

2.1.1 Unwedging Routing Security Activity (URSA)

In an ideal future, routing systems (infrastructure) will operate globally in a secured fashion, as evidenced by operators being able to validate the routes that they use and/or advertise.

2016 URSA Objective: Engage network operators to identify and effect a collaborative routing security activity, hosted under the TechArk umbrella, designed to address and answer an open question in routing security.

Strategy: Work with operators, communicate in operator community environments, to foster shared understanding of existing state and possible outcomes, to close the gap between the two.

Tactics:

- Refine and publish survey of routing security framework

- Engage NOG communities around the globe to gather more information, foster more connections
- Propose specific activity for advancing routing security (during the first half of 2016)
- Host that activity and publicize results (optimistically, second half of 2016)

2.1.2 Network Operator Measurements Activity (NOMA)

NOMA aims to establish a platform for collaboration on the initial definition, collection and dissemination of operator network measurements (self-instrumentation), with a goal of ensuring a better, shared understanding of what "good" Internet looks like. This will allow new networks brought online to determine that they are well aligned with that target, and will give operators a better sense of when their networks are underperforming.

Thinking Cat Enterprises LLC has support from the Internet Society and NLNet Foundation to work on the NOMA project.

2016 NOMA objective: Engage 2 – 3 network operators to define an initial set of measurements to constitute the basic instrumentation of participating networks. A first target outcome from measurements will be to track the relative performance of IPv6 and IPv4 (for HTTP traffic) in participating networks. A ratio of "1" indicates a network in reasonable balance for both "classic" (v4) and "modern" (v6) networking.

Strategy: Working with network operators to elicit available resources and plant the seed for sharing numbers as a contribution to the overall development of the Internet – so that it looks how they think it ought.

Tactics:

- elicit collaborative development of the measurements framework and culture of collecting and sharing
- provide a platform to collect and share basic benchmarking metrics across participating networks
- publish a baseline of public metrics for network operators
- publicize the Activity and its outcome
- encourage broader participation in the Activity

2.1.3 Other projects

There's room for another project, if well-chosen to round out the fold of activities here. Depending on partner interest, it could be something in:

- Mobile data networks – as Internet
- Working to raise awareness of what open standards are, and why/when they are important – Standards Activity Development (SAD)
- Fostering the discussions around new technology standards development across standards bodies (but not in a corporate coalition stranglehold)

2.2   Communications and visibility

Actions (projects) may speak louder than words, but no one will hear unless there is a solid communications platform to disseminate, explain, and archive the activities, learnings and related material.

2016 Communications Objective: Establish and operate a vibrant, platform-spanning communications framework for TechArk, with significant, relevant, active following.

Strategy: build out presence on the Web and other media, share relevant and timely insights.

Tactics:

- Set up TechArk.org website
- Regular blog posting – about TechArk activities, results and related industry goings-on
- Review what's popular (in terms of platforms, topics) and engage
- Participate in network operator group (NOG) meetings and other relevant industry meetings, organizing presentations and panels where sensible to broaden the dialog and raise awareness of TechArk in relevant topics

2.3   Organizational development

At the end of 2015, TechArk is a one-person activity with partial funding, a set of activities to work on, and a theory of how to make this a viable institution in the long term. If these activities are useful, there has to be a way to support them with more (fully-funded) resources. 2016 is about finding a path to that sustainability position.

2016 TechArk Organizational Development Objective: able to set up as a concrete organization, with salaries and more than one person involved for 2017.

Strategy: Balance the creation of value (projects) with raising awareness (communications) and search for support (business model, partners).

Tactics: The first half of 2016 is about set up and delivery on URSA, NOMA, and raising awareness in social media/speaking engagements. Working on potential funding models and test-airing them. Identification of potential partners for projects. That continues through second half, as well as more focused prospecting for activities and support in 2017. Aim is to have things shaping up by September – October, in order to have a clear fix on 2017.