beunited.org RFC Specification for
Open Standards BeOS-compatible Operating System

Status

This memo defines a Draft Specification for the Open Standards BeOS-compatible Operating System (OSBOS) community. This memo does not specify a OSBOS standard of any kind. Discussion and suggestions for improvement are requested. Distribution of this memo is unlimited. Derivations of this work are not granted.

All comments should be directed to the author at john.tegen@beunited.org or to the beunited.org RFC forum at www.beunited.org.

Abstract

The RFC method will provide a consistent and open forum to define various aspects for OSBOS. These specifications may range from file/folder location, file formats, attribute conventions, inter-application message formats, and other conventions that will allow various implementations to be developed. The specifications defined are to separate the implementation from the specification so that competing applications can still cooperate with the user's environment. The RFC's developed will allow for segmented development and use of the operating system. This document outlines the structure and process to create and submit RFC's for the OSBOS.

1. Introduction

The OSBOS RFC (Request for Comment) is a process to developing specifications for various aspects of the operating system. Anyone can create an RFC but are encouraged to consult with the RFC committee to ensure that the work is not currently being performed. Any number of people can co-author a specification and is encouraged to do so to allow the specification to be balanced and thoroughly designed prior to public comment.

The RFC would like to embrace all variants of the Be Operating System in its definition. This includes both open and closed source variations of the operating system. It is hopped that standardization of basic items within each variant will allow greater reusability of software and components in addition to providing the consumer with more quality choices in selecting a variant and software components on top of the operating system.

A RFC is a written specification that covers various aspects of the operating system. It is a document that interested members of the public have commented on and contributed to the formation of the specification. Though there is an author in developing the specification, once made publicly available, the speciation is owned by the public, but only the RFC committee can oversee and authorize its change.

2. Process

The RFC process conforms to the following steps:

1. Verification:
   The author verifies that a similar RFC does not already exist in any stage of development.

2. Submit Query:
   The author submits a query to the committee with the planned RFC with a summary of the feature. This will reduce the likelihood of repeated efforts and the committee can help to focus or expand the effort.

3. Submittion:
   A draft RFC is submitted by the author in the format outline below. The draft RFC does not have to be a completed draft. Incremental releases of the specification are encouraged to solicit constructive feedback.

4. Standards Committee Review for Entry:
   The RFC will be reviewed for content and quality. If a large quantity corrections are needed (formatting, spelling, grammar), will be noted and returned to the author for corrections. That revision will not be published until it is suitable and consistent with the standard format. Any minor adjustments will be done and copied back to the author.

   Once validated, the RTF formatted document will be converted to PDF and made available to the public. Only the latest revision will be made available and previous revisions (if any) will be archived.

5. Public Review:

There are three stages of an RFC: DRAFT, EXPERIMENTAL, and STANDARD. The stages are to ensure that the specification has been carefully thought out by the author(s), had sufficient time for public review and comment, and been validated by prototype, before it becomes a standard specification. Non-standard specifications do not have to become standard specifications. They may be defined as place holders for further considerations or may become obsolete based on their findings.

DRAFT.

The draft specification is the first stage of a specification. A draft specification goes through the most changes and is considered a living document. Any implementation of a draft specification is considered at risk of being invalidated by the next revision. Once the draft specification has normalized, a date will be selected to accept final comments before it can be moved to the next stage.

EXPERIMENTAL (EXP).

The experimental specification is the next stage of the specification. It takes the current specification and validates its ability to perform as defined in the document. This may require software development, interoperability with other applications, or proof of concept in how the specification will work. Some specifications may not need the experimental stage, and will be given a waiver by the RFC committee. This stage allows all interested parties to develop to the specification, but at a lower risk than the draft stage. However, based on findings during this stage, the specification may still change. A date will be selected to accept final comments before it can be moved to the next stage.

STANDARD (STD).

The standard specification is the final, blessed stage of a specification. It has sufficient time for comment and validated (hopefully in more than one example). A standard specification cannot be altered and does not contain revisions. If a new approach or change needs to be done to a standard specification, and new RFC needs to be created and followed through this process. The new specification needs to state that this is a extension to a standard specification or a replacement. Standard RFC are assigned a number for future reference. For example, "OSBOS-1294-RFC".

RETIRED (RET).

A retired specification is a draft, experimental, or standard specification that was determine by both the RFC committee and the author to retire the specification because of its unsuitability, over come by other events, or replaced by another RFC. Retired specifications are archived and still available for public review.

Application developers using or conforming to a RFC are encouraged to submit their application name and contact information to the RFC committee. This provides both a little advertisement for your application as well as allows the RFC author and committee

know what impact may occur if a RFC is being considered for extension or replacement.

A discussion group will be created for public discussion of the standard on the discussion section of the Standards Portal. The document will be announced in the New Standards discussion topic. The document itself will also be placed in the review section of the Portal. This review period will last for 40 days, after which the review will be closed.

6. Approval:

The OSG Committee reviews all discussion comments, experiments, applications, and RFCs. Once the RFC is ready for consideration, the Committee holds a vote. Of the 15 members of the committee, a 2/3rds (10 of 15) margin in favor of adopting the standard wins the vote and the RFC become a standard. Upon rejection, the RFC remains indefinitely as an EXPERIMENTAL RFC and can continue being developed by the author. Once the author is satisfied with their modifications it can be resubmitted to the committee for further consideration.

3. File Naming Convention

The file naming convention follows:

"osbos" "-" status "-" author "-" specname "-" revision ".rtf"

Parameter	Definition
status	The current status of the document. Only the RFC committee can approve a status change for a specification. The acceptable values for this parameter are "draft", "exp", "std", "ret".
author	The specification authors name. If there is more than one author, a principal author needs to be chosen. All authors of the specification is shown on the cover page.
specname	Specification Name. The specification name in the file name should be an abbreviated form. If the author is having trouble shortening the name, they may ask the RFC committee for suggestions.
revision	Revision of the specification. Any changes submitted to the RFC committee must provide a new revision. The revision is always a 2 digit number. The first revision submitted starts with "00". The next revision submitted, this parameter would be incremented to "01", etc.

The file name is all in lower case letters. The file format is in RTF format (hence the file suffix). The RFC committee will validate the RTF format and convert it to PDF for the general public. The RFC committee needs an editable form of the specification, and RTF allows for a rich formatting of the document.

Example:

osbos-draft-tegen-colorchooser-00.rtf

OSBOS Final

J. Tegen

Document: osbos-final-tegen-rfc-04.pdf

beunited.org RFC Specification

Expires: December 31, 2002

March 2002

4. File Format

The structure of the RFC document adheres to the following specifications:

Item	Definition
Page Size	8.5" wide, 11" high (portrait)
Margins	1 inch on all boundaries
Header	0.5" from top. Along 3 rows on the left displays the status of the specification, file name of the document, and revision expiration date. Along the 3 rows on the right, the author name and optional company, specification name, and date of first revision of the specification. See this document for an example.
Footer	0.5" from bottom. Along the left, the author(s) name. In the center, the status of the specification. Along the right, the page number.
Font Size	10pt
Font Family	Times
Justification	Forced Justified

Sections	See minimum sections required below. Sections shall be numbered with a maximum numeric indentation of 4 places, and bolded. For example:
	1. Topic
	      1.1 Sub-topic
	        1.1.1 Sub-sub-topic
	          1.1.1.1 Sub-sub-sub topic

Tables	Allowable
Graphics	Preferred vector based art, with no external links to files or to applications. Image based graphics are OK but should be kept to a minimum to keep specification file size to a minimum. Strongly suggested that PNG embedded graphics is with the RTF file.
Copyright	See copyright notice in the cover page and trailing page of this document.

5. Specification Sections

The specification contains the following minimum sections.

5.1 Cover Page

The cover page contains the status and abstraction of the specification document.

5.1.1 Status

The status outlines which stage the specification is at.

5.1.2 Copyright

Copyright notice.

5.1.3 Abstract

General abstracted description of the specification. Not longer than one to two paragraphs.

5.2 Table of Contents
Only required if the specification is longer than 10 pages.

5.3 Body
The remaining sections are up to the author to define that is specific to the specification being written. This section is not called "Body" but instead meaningful topic names that will make it easier for the reader to understand and search on. All the sections should progress logically. The depth of the sections depends on the specifications. There is a fine line between being too light and too wordy.

5.4 Contact Information
The author(s) name, address, and e-mail address. This allows readers of the specification to comment to.

5.5 Appendix
Any appendices need in support of the specification. If there were no appendices to include, then this section would not be present. Each appendix section should be listed as an alphabetical character and a name. For example:

A. Complete Attribute Listing

5.6 Revision History
The revision history allows an ongoing list of changes between each revision release of the specification. The section should include the revision number (e.g. 01) and a bulleted list of items that were changed. Do not refer to page numbers or the paragraph index. Only refer to section numbers and a brief statement of the change. The reader can always refer to the previous revision document to see the character-by-character change.

5.7 References
External references that were either used or referred to in the creation of the specification. This includes Internet or OSBOS RFC specifications, as well as published books. Do not refer to Internet URL's since there is no guarantee that those URL's will be current in the future. If there are not references to list, then the word "None" would be all that is included.

5.8 Glossary
Glossary of terms used in the document. If there are no new terms being used, then the section would just contain the word "None". The glossary should contain the word and its definition.

5.9 Copyright Notice
The copyright notice is a full copyright and disclaimer for the document. The copyright notice that appears at the end of this document should be use in whole for all RFC's.

OSBOS Final

Document: osbos-final-tegen-rfc-04.pdf

Expires: December 31, 2002

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beunited.org RFC Specification

March 2002

6. Contact Information

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7. Revision History

00	• Original Release
01	• Removed notation of the BeOS • Added more reference to beunited.org • Specified image format for document
02	• Cleaned up nomenclature • Added more description of use.
03	• Cleaned up format • Added modifications to process from OSG Meeting September 29. • Simon Gauvin added as author • Changed expiration date to November 31, 2002 • Globally changed BeUnited to beunited.org • Added Approval step to process definition.
04	• Changed OSBOS definition to "Open Standards" • Spelling correction in Glossary

8. References
None

9. Glossary

OSBOS	Open Standards BeOS-compatible Operating System. Operating systems that is at least source code, file system, and inter-process communication compatible with the legacy Be Operating System.

10. Full Copyright Statement

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