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SVGs in RFCs

Abstract

This document defines policy for the inclusion of Scalable Vector Graphics (SVGs) in the definitive versions of RFCs and relevant publication formats. It contains policy requirements from RFC 7996 but removes all requirements related to using a specific SVG profile or implementation code. It also makes the RFC Production Center (RPC) responsible for decisions about SVG tooling and implementation.

This document obsoletes RFC 7996.

Status of This Memo

This document is not an Internet Standards Track specification; it is published for informational purposes.

This document is a product of the RFC Series Policy Definition Process. It represents the consensus of the RFC Series Working Group approved by the RFC Series Approval Board. Such documents are not candidates for any level of Internet Standard; see Section 2 of RFC 7841.

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at <https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc9896>.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Policy Requirements	2
3. Implementation Guidance	3
4. Security Considerations	3
5. IANA Considerations	4
6. Informative References	4
Authors' Addresses	4

1. Introduction

This document defines policy for the inclusion of Scalable Vector Graphics (SVGs) in the definitive versions of RFCs and relevant publication formats defined in [RFC9720]. It contains policy requirements taken from [RFC7996] but removes all requirements related to using a specific SVG profile or implementation code.

SVG has been developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C); see [SVG].

The RFC Production Center (RPC) is responsible for making decisions about SVG tooling and implementation. The RPC may use the content of [RFC7996] as a starting point for those decisions, but they are not bound by [RFC7996]. In addition, the RPC may change elements of the implementation as needed to support the RFC authoring community as long as those changes are aligned with the policy requirements in this document.

2. Policy Requirements

Decisions about SVG tooling and implementation are made by the RPC and must adhere to the policy requirements in this document:

- SVGs may be included in RFCs to help explain a concept more clearly, but they should not be the only representation of that concept. A good-faith effort should be made to ensure that descriptions of concepts -- which might include protocols, formats, or system architectures -- are fully represented in the text of the RFC. At minimum, SVGs should be consistent with the descriptions in the text of the RFC.
- SVGs must not include animation or interactive features. SVGs should include only limited reactive design elements (scaling, dark/light mode, and perhaps minor adjustments to allow for variations in display technology). The intent of this is to ensure that the diagram's meaning is not altered.

- Images and diagrams in RFCs should be successfully rendered and understood by the widest audience possible. To that end, the RPC may prohibit the use of SVG features that are known to lack support on common devices, that do not render on small or low-resolution screens, or that could make diagrams less comprehensible for any significant readership. In particular:
 - SVGs must not contain pointers to external resources.
 - SVGs must not contain executable script.
 - SVGs should be as accessible as possible to people with visual disabilities, including those who have color blindness, those who need to scale or change fonts, and those who use screen-reading software. The RPC will refer to the W3C Accessibility Guidelines [\[WAI\]](#) when making decisions regarding accessibility.
- Authors may include multiple versions of images or diagrams in RFCXML [\[RFC9720\]](#). Publication formats should present the versions best suited to each format. In many cases, that will be an SVG.
- SVG vocabulary and implementation may change over time. Changes are not required to remain backwards compatible, although maintaining compatibility where possible is encouraged.

The RPC is authorized to place constraints on SVG usage in RFCs for both technical and editorial reasons in order to ensure that published RFCs meet the above policy and to provide consistency across the RFC Series. The RPC must document the acceptable usage of SVGs, and all changes to decisions about SVG tooling and implementation must be widely communicated to the RFC author community using mailing lists or other means.

3. Implementation Guidance

The RPC is expected to solicit community input before making decisions and to publicly explain their reasoning.

Documentation produced by the RPC should describe the technical and editorial constraints that apply to SVGs and provide RFC authors with guidance on how to produce diagrams that meet those constraints.

The RPC's implementation should strive to allow SVGs produced by widely used drawing tools. Where possible, implementation decisions should focus on specifying what is disallowed rather than attempting to specify exactly what is allowed.

The RPC should periodically review and revise their practices.

4. Security Considerations

This document has no security considerations.

5. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA actions.

6. Informative References

- [RFC7996] Brownlee, N., "SVG Drawings for RFCs: SVG 1.2 RFC", RFC 7996, DOI 10.17487/RFC7996, December 2016, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7996>>.
- [RFC9720] Hoffman, P. and H. Flanagan, "RFC Formats and Versions", RFC 9720, DOI 10.17487/RFC9720, January 2025, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc9720>>.
- [SVG] W3C, "Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) 2", <<https://www.w3.org/TR/SVG/>>.
- [WAI] W3C, "W3C Accessibility Standards Overview", <<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/>>.

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