

Three surveys on IPv6 in Sweden

Survey of IT managers

.SE hired Mistat to execute a survey concerning to what extent Swedish companies, municipalities and county administrations are aware of the coming implementation of IPv6. The purpose of the survey is to display how companies think about IPv6 and how far they have got in the process of implementing the new technique. For the survey, 100 IT managers from companies and organisations with more than 100 employees have been interviewed.

A similar survey was executed in 2008 and there are no huge differences between the results of last year and those for 2009. Yet, there is a positive trend when it comes to knowledge of and planning for the implementation of IPv6. The most significant change has come in the public sector.

The knowledge and awareness of IPv6 has increased according to the survey, albeit not within top management. A large percentage of IT managers answering the survey also say that they have discussed IPv6 with colleagues. This year, 60% of respondents claimed this to be the case, whereas last year the number was only 37%.

This survey also shows that planning for the implementation of IPv6 has intensified. Almost one out of five IT managers polled had started thinking about implementing IPv6 in their organisation, and the planning has to a higher extent started in the public sector. However, considering the narrowing time window, this should be a priority for a much larger share of companies and organisations today. The most common attitude still seems to be to wait and see, as is evident in that 82% of respondents say that they want to be among the last or second to last to implement IPv6 support in their external services.

Survey of IPv6 activities

Under .SEs direction, B3IT was given the task of surveying IPv6 activities. The inquiry focuses on Internet service providers (ISP) and service providers, who were interviewed concerning their IPv6 activities. First executed in 2008, the survey was updated in the second quarter of 2009 by renewed interviews. Replies were very similar the second time around.

The service provider's work has been mainly reactive regarding IPv6. ISP's are more proactive in their work on the subject. Nearly all work on IPv6 is being carried out within the technical organization, none within sales or management. All ISP's and service providers indicate that below 5% of their customers ask for IPv6-support. For remaining organizations the IPv6 activities are still mainly focused on mapping and building knowledge about IPv6, not to mention reviewing supply strategies (policy and agreements). On the market in general the awareness of IPv6 is slowly increasing.

Currently the general understanding is that the problems with IPv4 are acknowledged but IPv6 as a solution is being questioned. Distributors and providers are mainly in a phase where they are testing or reviewing the situation, and not all have acknowledged the problem regarding support systems. Several of the organizations that were interviewed consider themselves to be in control of the changes that need to be made in their own core network. There is, however, a lack of information regarding the actions that needs to be taken regarding access networks, customer premises equipment and customer applications.

Over 50% of ISP's state that they can deliver IPv6, but only a few can deliver with a defined service level. Several of the people interviewed have stated that the main advantage of IPv6 is the increased number of addresses and that this in itself only becomes interesting once there is a shortage of IPv4 addresses.

Today Sweden has approximately 130 city networks of which less than 10 are testing or operating IPv6. During 2008 Sunet has implemented an IPv6 policy that is at the front of the Swedish market. It is worth noticing that Sunet during 2005 was equivalent to where the commercial operators are today (85% of operators have yet to start planning).

Taking into account the shrinking time frame, the expected shortage of addresses and the lack of information regarding what actions that need to be taken, there is reason for all parts to begin their work on the IPv6 issue. Policies and technical specifications that are created today will be in use for several years. There is no advantage in further waiting, on the contrary, the risk increases if actions are taken too late.

A badly managed transition to IPv6, manifested in for example increase in expenses, delays in deliveries, or limited access to parts of the Internet, may lead to a diminished confidence in providers and the authorities of the Internet.

Overview of ISP's

Finally, IT security company Certeza has done an overview of some important Swedish ISP's ability to deliver IPv6 connections. Of the 12 ISP's surveyed, only 4 could deliver IPv6 without problems. Most providers were not at all ready for customers demanding IPv6, which makes it far from obvious to get going with the implementation of IPv6 for those Swedish companies and organisations who actually want to. The result underlines the importance of demanding IPv6 support from suppliers.