XEP-0378: OTR Discovery

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This document provides a mechanism by which OTR encryption support can be discovered in XMPP, without relying on OTRs protocol agnostic discovery mechanism.

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Contents

1 Introduction

The Off-the-Record messaging protocol (OTR) is widely layered on top of XMPP to provide end-to-end encryption. Current use of the protocol is described in Current Off-the-Record Messaging Usage (XEP-0364) [1]. OTR provides its own discovery mechanism in which it sends messages with special whitespace characters to indicate support. While this works when initializing a session, there is no way to query a client for support and to know in advance that a particular version of OTR is supported. This specification aims to solve that by providing an in-band mechanism for discovering OTR support in XMPP.
It should be noted that newer, more secure encryption protocols exist for XMPP, and that new implementations of OTR are discouraged. This protocol is primarily intended to solve issues with existing implementations of OTR.

2 Discovering support

If an entity supports OTR it MUST advertise the fact by returning a feature of 'urn:xmpp:otr:0' (see Namespace Versioning regarding the possibility of incrementing the version number) in response to a Service Discovery (XEP-0030) [2] information request. This indicates support for OTRv3 as defined by Off-the-Record Messaging Protocol version 3 [3].

Listing 1: Disco response

```
<feature var='urn:xmpp:otr:0' />
```

If older versions of OTR are required, they may be discovered out of band using OTRs built in mechanism which is beyond the scope of this document.

3 Security Considerations

Because OTR support is advertised outside of any end-to-end encrypted stream, it may be subject to downgrade attacks (eg. the server operator may remove OTR from the features list).

4 IANA Considerations

This document requires no interaction with the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA).

[1] XEP-0364: Current Off-the-Record Messaging Usage <https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0364.html>.
[2] XEP-0030: Service Discovery <https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0030.html>.
[3] Off-the-Record Messaging Protocol (OTR) version 3 <https://otr.cypherpunks.ca/Protocol-v3-4.0.0.html> (Accessed 2015-08-30).

5 XMPP Registrar Considerations

This specification defines the following XML namespaces:

- urn:xmpp:otr:0

The XMPP Registrar [4] shall include the foregoing namespaces in its disco features registry as defined in Service Discovery (XEP-0030) [5].

```
<var>
        <name>urn:xmpp:otr:0</name>
        <desc>Indicates support for Off-the-Record Messaging (OTR)
            version 3</desc>
        <doc>XEP-0378</doc>
</var>
```

[4] The XMPP Registrar maintains a list of reserved protocol namespaces as well as registries of parameters used in the context of XMPP extension protocols approved by the XMPP Standards Foundation. For further information, see <https://xmpp.org/registrar/>.

[5] XEP-0030: Service Discovery <https://xmpp.org/extensions/xep-0030.html>.