

MUTE Charter Document

I. Name.

The name of the organization is Malicious URL Tracking and Exchange or may also be known by the acronym “MUTE”.

II. Mission.

The mission of the organization is to minimize the exposure of end users from computing threats through timely tracking and exchanging of malicious URLs.

III. Charter.

Provide a medium of communication among members of the organization related to protecting, defending and educating end-users through sharing, tracking and exchanging information about malicious URLs.

IV. Organization.

The organization shall consist of

- Members
- Advisory Board

A. Communication medium.

The organization will communicate mainly using email as a medium.

The organization will have 3 main discussion lists.

1. Discussion list – for the general discussions.
2. Exchange list – for the exchange of malicious URLs
3. Advisory board list – for discussions within the advisory board.

However, if necessary, communication and discussions may also be done using voice conferencing, instant message conferencing or in person, which, will be arranged, announced and facilitated by the advisory board of the organization.

B. Members.

1. Individuals only membership.

Membership is individual based so as to maintain an unbiased structure for the organization. All members are expected to be individual contributors regardless of their affiliation and as long as they are unanimously accepted into the organization based on the guidelines as described in the “Application for New Membership” section.

2. Membership acceptance and termination
 - a. New applicant needs to have a sponsor who will nominate. Sponsor can be any member of MUTE.
 - b. A standard questionnaire will be sent to this new applicant (by sponsor or myself)
 - c. Nomination then takes place with the information from questionnaire
 - d. Advisory Board decides with super majority ($\geq 2/3$)
 - e. Termination: A board member makes a motion to remove a member (based on a set of criteria described in Procedure doc)
 - f. Board decides with super majority ($\geq 2/3$)
3. Advisory Board
 - a. Board shall always consist of odd number members
 - b. Less than half $[(x-1)/2]$ of the board gets refreshed every year
 - c. Board membership is nominated by a MUTE member, and voted on by entire membership. Contest is decided by max number of votes.
 - d. One member of the board should be part of the company/affiliate that host the MUTE system.
4. Officers
 - a. Officers, such as Chair and Vice Chair, are nominated and voted by the board. Contest is decided by max number of votes.
5. Membership rights.
 - a. Right to have access to the discussion list.

As member of the organization, a member has the basic rights of having access the discussion list.

However, this does not grant the right to be included in the exchange list, in which, the member’s rights will depend on status of the member, as explained in the section below.

- b. Right to have access to the exchange list.

Members that are participating in the exchange list shall be classified in one of the four (4) statuses below:

Status	Description	Send Links	Receive Links
Newbie	New member. Starts with probationary status	Yes	No
Probationary	Member with exchanging deficiency. Members with this status will be excluded in the receiving of links until the deficiency is corrected.	Yes	No
Active	Member with good exchanging status	Yes	Yes
Inactive	Member that is not part of the exchange list	No	No

c. Other rights.

A member shall also have the rights to perform the following action:

- i. Nominate applicants for new membership.
- ii. Nominate members for membership review.
- iii. Nominate members for exchange list deficiency review.
- iv. Nominate new advisory board members.
- v. Nominate advisory board members for review.
- vi. Add new, or, amend existing, information in the charter document.

6. Change of membership status.

Members that are “non-inactive” are expected to share links regardless of the membership status. Evaluation of the frequency, quality and quantity of links shared are to be done every week and will be used as the basis for the status of a “non-inactive” member.

Members that have been found to be deficient in the frequency, quality or quantity of links shared will be assigned with a probationary status and shall be evaluated after a week, and, if the deficiency is corrected, the status of the member shall be changed back to active status. Information about deficiency is discussed below.

A member may be removed from the exchange list if the member has been in the probationary state for an extended period of time. After a thorough evaluation by the existing exchange list members, a vote will be conducted among the exchange list members and if it results to a unanimous decision

(zero “No” votes), then the member will be removed from the exchange list and will be classified as an “Inactive” member.

7. Deficiency information.

Deficiencies are anomalies found in shared links. As every member is expected to be equal contributors, deficiencies are to be used to adjudge a member’s status in the exchange list.

Deficiencies will define the state in which a member may or may not receive the shared links and having deficiencies for an extended period of time may warrant a removal from the exchange list.

Using the self-policing method, members of the exchange list are expected to conduct the validation of deficiencies and inform the organization for any potential deficiency that may have occurred within the shared links.

Below are the current Deficiency categories:

a. Frequency.

- i. Frequency expectations: Share as often as possible.
Links should be shared at the soonest possible time that it has been verified. The aim is to provide it in a timely manner to protect the users and should always be sent after it has been verified. With malicious links’ “time to live” getting shorter and shorter, it is expected that links are shared instantly.
- ii. Frequency deficiency: 4 days without sharing.

A member found to have been not sharing links for 4 consecutive days will be incurred a frequency deficiency.

b. Quality.

- i. Quality expectations: Links must be verified.

Links that are to be shared should be verified, regardless of the method used. For the purpose of having the capability to combine each member’s resources in order to handle the volume of threats effectively, sharing an unverified link would lead to extra work for other members and this is greatly discouraged. Sharing unverified links in the any of the verified links list can lead to false positives

which may end up more work and potential issues with other members.

ii. False positives.

A false positive link is classified as a URL or link shared that contains non-malicious binaries, non-error pages.

iii. Deadlinks.

Although deadlinks are not considered a false positive, a member sharing too many deadlinks may be considered for a membership review and maybe used as grounds for removal.

iv. Quality deficiency: >3% False Positive.

A member found to have shared a set of links with more than 3% are links that either point to a clean binary or a non-malicious page will be incurred a quality deficiency.

c. Quantity.

i. Quantity of links expectations.

Each member is expected to share as many verified malicious URLs as possible. Although members and the companies they work for have varied resources, there needs to be at least a defined amount of links to be shared at any given time. As the organization is trying to combine each and every member's research capabilities, each member is expected to share the load of researching and sharing newly discovered malicious URL. This does not imply a "What you give is what you receive" scenario, but, each member is expected to be an equal contributor and not just a recipient.

ii. Unverified links will not be counted.

Unverified links will not be included in the count for quantity.

iii. URL collections.

URL collections (i.e. ZLOB, DNSChanger, or the like) will be counted as only one (1) link shared.

iv. Recycled links will not be counted.

Links that have already been shared by another member at an earlier time will not be included for the count for quantity.

- v. Quantity deficiency: 150 links per week.

A member found to have shared less than 150 quality links will be incurred a quantity deficiency.

8. Termination of membership.

Membership to the organization shall terminate based on the following conditions:

- a. Resignation of the member.
- b. Incapability to support the operational requirements of the organization as defined by the advisory board.
- c. Decision by the board.

9. Affiliation information.

Members may officially indicate their affiliation either through a company or another organization and may do so at their own discretion.

However, should a member change their affiliation (move to another company, etc...):

- a. The existing member shall become newbie status and shall have to meet the qualifications necessary to be reinstated in the exchange list.
- b. The previous affiliation shall be contacted and shall be allowed to have new representation in the organization to replace the member that was previously affiliated.
- c. The new representative shall to undergo the new member qualification as described in the “Application for New Membership” section.
- d. The new representative shall also be re-evaluated to see if it can still meet the qualifications necessary to be part of the exchange mailing list.

Although membership is individual based, the organization believes that affiliations play a very vital role in the research and operations that goes behind every sample shared. Both the individual member and their affiliation is important in this scheme but each serves their own purpose to both uplift the integrity of the organization, and the quality of exchanges necessary to keep the organization a valid and important contributor to the Anti-Malware research community.

C. Advisory board.

Outlined below shall be the roles, responsibilities and rights of the organization's advisory board.

1. Safeguard of the integrity of the organization.

The advisory board's first and foremost responsibility is to safeguard the integrity of the organization.

2. Maintenance of the organization documents.

The advisory board is also responsible in maintaining the documents that comprises the bylaws, rules, guidelines or any form of document that the organization has produced.

3. Manage the operating requirements of the organization.

The management of the operation of the organization is a responsibility of the advisory board, which includes, but not limited to, mailing list management and costs, meeting events, and any other form of activity that is related to the organization. This also includes the dissemination of operating cost information to all the members and the collection of fees and dues from the membership for the operation of the organization.

4. Manage the voting process.

The advisory board shall be responsible in managing the voting process, which includes the collection and announcement of nomination, the collection, counting, and announcement of the voting results, and, the reflection of such voting results to the organizational structure.

5. Manage the discussion list.

The advisory board shall be responsible in managing the discussion list, which includes but not limited to, moderating the discussions, addition or removal of subscribers, and, announcement of changes to the discussion list.

6. Manage the exchange list.

The advisory board shall be responsible in managing the exchange list, which includes, but not limited to, defining the exchange format, managing the senders and recipients list, maintenance of the exchange infrastructure, and amendment of the exchange list guidelines.

7. Resolve disputes among members.

The advisory board shall be responsible in the resolution of disputes, whether functional or organization, among the members of the organization.

8. Manage the advisory board organization

The advisory board shall be responsible in managing the members of the advisory board, which includes the addition, removal or suspension of advisory board entities.