IETF 75 - HTTPbis vs RFC2231

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Problem Statement (1/2)

- RFC2616 includes "Content-Disposition" (RFC 2616, Section 19.5.1), but also says:
  "RFC 1806 [35], from which the often implemented Content-Disposition (see Appendix 19.5.1) header in HTTP is derived, has a number of very serious security considerations. Content-Disposition is not part of the HTTP standard, but since it is widely implemented, we are documenting its use and risks for implementors." (RFC2616, Section 15.5)
- Refers to RFC 1806 (definition of Content-Disposition), obsoleted by RFC 2183.
- I18N for Content-Disposition (filename) relies on on MIME specs RFC 2047, augmented RFC 2184, which itself was obsoleted by RFC 2231 ('MIME Parameter Value and Encoded Word Extensions: Character Sets, Languages, and Continuations').

Problem Statement (2/2)

- RFC 2183 did not state that it obsoleted RFC 1806, making it hard to find the up-to-date spec (fixed in RFC Index in the meantime)
- RFC 2231 specifies many features that are not needed in HTTP, but also fails to REQUIRE common character sets for interoperability
- Interoperability suffers from all of this, see test cases at http://greenbytes.de/tech/tc2231/ -- Firefox and Opera are fine, the other UAs do not support the I18N extensions defined in RFC 2231.

Proposal

- Remove from HTTPbis (discussed during IETF-72 in Dublin)
- Profile RFC 2231 for use in HTTP (remove ambiguities, fix grammar, remove unneeded features, require a common character set: draft-reschke-rfc2231-in-http-02).

  (Note: does not normatively refer to RFC 2231 so it can evolve independantly)
- Profile makes it easier for new HTTP header definitions to "opt in" (HTTP Link Header draft would have been a candidate for using this, except for timing)
- Get feedback from "other" UA vendors (I was told that profiling RFC 2231 made it more reasonable to implement)
- Move actual definition of Content-Disposition as HTTP header into a separate specification (work has started)