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Consortium Standards Bulletin

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HOW CONSORTIA TELL THE NEWS

Editorial: Is Anybody Listening?

Some people would compare the excitement of keeping up with standard setting to watching the grass grow. Faced with this type of attitude, how can a consortium or SDO get the word out to those who need to hear it? The first step is facing reality, and dealing with it.

Feature Story: How Consortia Tell the News: A Survey of Over 150 Consortia and SDOs

In order to learn what consortia are doing today and how they tell the world about it, we surveyed the websites of 159 consortia and categorized the information they released during a thirty day period ending on March 22. The results yield a snapshot of what consortia are doing, how they do it, which of them are most active - and some interesting differences in PR practice among various types of consortia.

Trends: What Are Consortia Doing Today? More Survey Results

Standard setting organizations are having meetings, conducting interoperability tests, issuing studies and white papers, conducting training sessions, promoting their industries, issuing lots and lots of press releases - and, oh yes, doing some standard setting, too.

Rambus: Update: It May Not Be Over Yet

Last issue, we reported on a surprising decision by the Appeals court in the *Rambus v. Infineon* case, and the possible consequences. We also invited consortia to join in a "Friend of the Court" brief we planned to file in support of Infineon's motion for a rehearing. Six major consortia responded. It may not be over yet.

News Shorts: W3C releases a working draft of its long-awaited royalty-free (almost) patent policy; Video companies and standards bodies advocate for royalty-free standards; the Department of Commerce and ISO/IEC both seek to harmonize international standards to facilitate trade; Congress considers more anti-trust protection for SDOs; OASIS continues its rapid-fire launch of new web services initiatives; the standards world turns its attention to the rising tide of SPAM; and more.

Consortium Standards Bulletin is a free monthly electronic Journal sponsored by the Boston law firm of Gesmer Updegrave LLP. The current issue of the **CSB** and a subscription form may be found at www.consortiuminfo.org/bulletins. Questions or comments about these articles, the **CSB** or ConsortiumInfo.org may be directed to Andrew Updegrave at updegrave@consortiuminfo.org.

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EDITORIAL

IS ANYBODY LISTENING?

Andrew Updegrove

After working with more than 50 consortia over the past fifteen years, I am left with the sad realization that the only two times when a consortium can be guaranteed to get some attention from the press is when it is born, and when it dies.

Even then, there are conditions. At birth, a new organization must be able to announce an impressive and influential list of founding members in order to be "news". In such a case, the hook is that the group of founders is sufficiently powerful to indicate that the group's objectives may be achieved, and the course of the market affected. If the new alliance was unexpected and causes other companies to reevaluate and scramble, so much the better. At death, the winding up of the effort may also be news - but only if this indicates that the effort has ended in failure (see, for example, "[Memory Consortium Fades Away](#)"). Sadly, declaring victory and going home may not be seen by the press as "news".

Part of the problem is that (how to say this delicately?) standard setting is not a riveting spectator sport. As one technology reporter once said to me as I tried to pitch him a consortium story, "Whenever I hear about standards, my eyes begin to glaze over." What's a standard setting organization to do?

In this issue of the *Consortium Standards Bulletin*, we look at how consortia and official Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) try to tell the news, based upon a survey of the websites of 159 such organizations. But before diving into the data, it is worth taking the time to ask a few questions:

What's it all about? Before one tries to gain an audience, it's important to define who you want to address, what you want them to hear, how you will persuade necessary intermediaries to pass the word along, and how you will inspire the ultimate reader to read. Each of these questions deserves a closer look.

Who should a standard setting organization address? Looking beyond the membership of a consortium, the logical answer to the first question is "potential members, potential adopters and requirements authors, and those who may influence the first two categories".

What do you want them to hear? In the case of members, the message is "you will benefit from participating". In the case of non-members, it is "you will benefit from adopting and/or specifying our standards". In the third, and most difficult category, the message is "your readers will be interested in what we have to say."

How do you persuade intermediaries that what you are doing is "news"? The most important lesson to learn here is realism: either information is "news", as defined by the press and analysts, or it is not. Helping them understand why you think what you have to announce is newsworthy is necessary (and essential), but not sufficient. If there is something that you need the targeted interest groups to know, and it is not "news" -- as the press would define it -- then no number of press releases will be effective in delivering that message. You will need to find other channels to use to get the message through.

How will you inspire the reader to read? This one is both easy and difficult. If a press release is picked up or an appropriate reporter or analyst is otherwise persuaded to write, then the odds are in your favor. Of course, the presentation of the facts and the message delivered will be as the author prefers it to be. Patience, clarity, availability and the other cardinal virtues of working with the press will increase, but not guarantee, the likelihood of a happy result.

Dealing with Reality: As a military strategist once famously observed, "Diplomacy is the science of the achievable". One might reasonably paraphrase his observation to state "public relations - when it is well executed - is the art of the achievable". What we found in our survey is that more than half of the press releases issued by the broad sampling of consortia and SDOs surveyed represented wasted effort. The

information that was contained in these releases could only be expected to be "news" (at best) in the opinion of the organization's own members, and the issuing organizations should have limited its distribution to that group.

Given the meager human and capital resources of most standard setting organizations, the efforts spent in producing, releasing and promoting these press releases could have been more productively spent in other ways. In many cases, one can only assume that the press releases issued are the result of a "four press releases per year" contract with a PR firm that is fulfilled, whether or not there is anything worthwhile to announce.

The fact of the matter is that consortia and SDOs often lose sight of the fact that the audience they need to reach is narrow, and that the press is not always the optimal, or realistic, way to reach that audience. Standard setters also often fail to marshal the forces of their own members to put the significant marketing shoulders of that group behind the organization's message.

In short, standard setting organizations too-often play the game as if they were commercial vendors, without critically analyzing who, as a consortium, they need to reach, how to reach them, what to say - and whether or not the press is likely to play ball. The result is more activity, and less result.

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FEATURE STORY

HOW CONSORTIA TELL THE NEWS: A SURVEY OF OVER 150 CONSORTIA AND SDOs

Andrew Updegrove

Introduction: A consortium, like any other type of entity, has a need to spread information in order to achieve its goals. At one level, it needs to communicate with its members, but it is equally important that it inform a broader audience of its activities in order to achieve its objectives. The reasons for doing so include recruiting new members and informing non-members of the release of specifications. The latter is particularly important, since in order for a new standard to be successful, it is almost invariably necessary that it be implemented by a wider audience than the consortium members that helped create it.

There are many other, less direct reasons for a consortium to tell the news. Those reasons include achieving a position of trust in the commercial world in order to gain respect for its work product, and (when necessary) to seek to assert influence on the legislative process.

At the same time, almost all consortia are constrained by the limitations of small (or no) dedicated staff, and minimal budgets. Where, as is often the case, a given standard is intended for global adoption, the financial resources of a consortium are manifestly insufficient to carry on any meaningful degree of advertising. In consequence, a consortium must pursue every public relations opportunity its resources allow, as well as rely upon its members' own advertising, public relations and endorsement activities to leverage the limited efforts of the consortium itself.

The advent of the World Wide Web, the increasing pervasiveness of connectivity, and the availability of inexpensive electronic broadcasting of press releases have been a significant boon to consortia, as they have been for many other organizations and businesses with limited resources. Of course, rising above the increasing flood of released information is a challenge equal to the opportunity.

In order to determine how consortia seek to disseminate information, we decided to conduct a broad survey of how consortia make use of one or two of the most common methods of spreading the news: the familiar press release, and the design and content of websites. In so doing, we expected to also be able to take a snapshot of how consortia today are spending their time, and which of their efforts they think are most significant and important to promote.

Methodology: We visited all 159 consortia and official Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) which are profiled in the "Consortium and Standards List" section of ConsortiumInfo.org (www.consortiuminfo.org/ssl/links.php?cat=1) which maintain a website. This list includes virtually all major global standard setting organizations (both formal SDOs and consortia), as well as a sampling of regional and national bodies. It also includes organizations with all types of missions in support of standards, from strictly technical, to those which are both promotional and technical, to those which are purely promotional in nature. In short, we believe that the survey set is both diverse and comprehensive, and therefore can yield an accurate representation of the organizations which today create and/or promote technical standards and technologies.

In our first step in the survey, we recorded the date of the most recently posted press release at each site, in order to gauge the relative activity of standard setting organizations today. We also noted the number of consortia that do not appear to employ press releases at all as part of their efforts to achieve their objectives. Finally, we examined every press release issued in the past thirty days by the sampling, and categorized their content (see the following article, [What Are Consortia Doing Today? \(More Survey Results\)](#))

Findings A variety of information became clear from a survey involving a sampling of this size, whether measured over an extended period (as below) or over a shorter period of time (as in the following article). The raw data is as follows:

Quantitative Results:

· **Number of Releases per Organization:** During the survey period, the 156 organizations whose sites were live issued a total of 125 press releases, or an average of less than one (**.80**) per organization. However, when the number of releases is divided by the number of organizations (109) that have issued at least one press release since January 1, 2002, the number of releases per surveyed organization rises to **1.15** , and when the relevant period is reduced to the past six months, it jumps once again - to **1.37** for the 91 organizations involved. The highest number of releases per organization was 10 (ANSI), while a number of organizations issued only 1.

Not surprisingly, the organizations that issued the largest number of press releases were those that have the highest number of simultaneously active technical processes - the SDOs and consortia active in core areas, such as **W3C** (www.w3c.org) and **OASIS Open** (www.oasis-open.org/news/oasis_news_01_07_03.php). Note that we believe that at least some organizations are likely to have issued press releases which were not made available at their websites, and accordingly a margin of error in this data and the data which follows must be assumed.

· **Frequency of Releases:** Although the results in this respect were not tabulated, it was clear that most organizations either made the issuance of press releases part of their ordinary course of operation or they did not. Widely separated, isolated press releases were comparatively rare.

· **Degree of Activity:** A healthy number of organizations (35, or **22%** of the live sites) had issued at least one press release in the first 21 days of March. A further 33, for a combined total of 68 organizations (or **44%** of the sampling), had issued at least one press release thus far in 2003. A total of 86 organizations (or **56%**) had issued at least one press release within 6 calendar months of our survey. Interestingly, a total of 28 organizations (or **18%**) either had never issued a press release at all, had removed any prior releases due to their becoming stale, or had succeeded in guarding their press releases from discovery by someone making a determined assault on their site.

18 organizations (or **12%** of the sampling) had issued their last press release in the first eight months of 2002, presumably indicating that these organizations are on the decline or have changed their PR strategy. The balance of the sites hosted a last issued press release dated in 2001 (6 sites), 2000 (6 sites again), 1999 (2) or 1998 (2). Some of these sites, however, indicated ongoing activity.

· **Qualitative Data:** Several interesting observations on how consortia manage their news and present it to the public can be made from the surveyed data.

• **Attitude Towards News** Consortia take different approaches with respect to news, some of which seem to relate to their goals, and some of which relate to their apparent view of the role of a website. For example, some news-rich sites appeared to be directed almost entirely at their members, with the website serving simply as a convenient publishing platform (one site even limited all news to a password protected portion of the site). These sites had few, if any, available press releases, even though it seemed likely that the organizations in question would have issued them from time to time, and could have made them publicly available at their site had they chosen to do so. The organizations hosting these sites therefore either did not use press releases in support of their efforts, or failed to make them available through their website. The apparent reasons vary:

We Have a Secret Plan but We Can't Tell You What it is Some organizations were surprisingly bereft of news. For example, the **ECMA** (European Computer Manufacturers Association) site has a prominent "News" button occupying a significant portion of its home page real estate, but clicking on it will only reveal the documents approved at the 84th General Assembly of that august organization. There is no other news to be found at the site. Similarly, the **BlueTooth** organization (www.bluetooth.org), which presumably has issued many press releases, has an extensive site section for the press and analysts, as well as links to recent articles written about it and its members, but no way to access any of its own releases.

That's Not How We Do it Here: Some organizations which are strongly technical may release a great deal of information which is of interest to a broader audience, but seem to expect anyone interested to visit their site to find it. Most obviously, this includes several of the prominent organizations which are responsible for continuing the evolution of the Internet and the World Wide Web. For example, the **W3C** (World Wide Web Consortium - www.w3c.org) releases a great deal of information at its website which other, less active and/or influential consortia would happily feature in a press release. Still, it packages news in formal releases only 1 to 3 times a month. Of course, the W3C can depend on the technical, and even the popular, press visiting its site for news without having to be led there. The **IETF** (the Internet Engineering Task Force - www.ietf.org) takes things to the limit: its austere (but informative) site presents an impregnable wall between a reporter and any way to learn more about what the organization is currently up to.

We're All About Our Members: All consortia are ultimately about promoting the interests of their members, but some consortia go farther than others to promote individual members directly. As already noted, many consortia provide links to member press releases. But some, like the EBU (European Broadcasting Union - www.ebu.ch), go even farther, and provide links to only member news at the organization's website.

The Seven Ages of Man: Organizations, like people, go through stages of growth, maturity and decline. At least seven sites we visited relate to organizations which we know to have been disbanded, in some cases several years ago. In some cases, the remaining site serves a useful purpose, and provides access to completed standards. In others, only a mournful home page remains as a sort of hyperlinked tombstone. Still, a number of the organizations which had not issued a press release in some time represent active organizations. For example, the **MIDI Manufacturers Association** (www.midi.org) celebrated its 20th anniversary in January of this year, and currently has four active working groups. There are no press releases, or indeed any current news, in the public portions of the site.

Effectiveness of Site Design: While collecting our information, we could not fail but form some less empirical impressions regarding the visual and organizational ways that consortia and SDOs employ in presenting themselves to the world via the 'Web. To our surprise, we found that many consortia made it extremely difficult for a site visitor to learn what a given organization might be up to. Here are some of those impressions:

Bad Design Features In the most extreme example, three sites of entities which we know to be active were down for at least two consecutive days, precluding our gathering data from those sources at all. Also, while many consortia made it easy to find news, we were surprised at the poor design of the sites of many other organizations, which made it difficult or impossible to learn what the most recent accomplishments of the hosts might be. Examples of bad design included the absence of a clear tool bar (or even a drop down or side bar menu) category such as "Press Room", "What's New", or "Media Center". Many of the same sites which had a "search" function were found to host press releases which could only be found by that mechanism. Still others not only lacked a category, but also failed to supply either a site map or a search function at all, thus effectively locking whatever news they might have away from any curious eyes.

Good Design Features Of those sites that made an effort to make news easy to find, most employed a multiple column home page design, allocating one column to news. Most that did so, however, did not make an effort to distinguish between press releases, news of interest primarily to members, and (often) news relating to individual member companies which had adopted a standard or otherwise taken an action which supported overall consortium objectives. The balance of the well designed sites retain the somewhat less trendy format which requires a click through to a press or news center. Those that followed this format often divided news into the categories of press releases, member news, news from members, and (sometimes) general industry news. An interesting question is whether a categorized approach -- which allows for easy research, or an aggregated approach -- which emphasizes momentum behind consortium goals, represents the most effective practice.

Quality of Reported News: In the following article we analyze the content of the press releases viewed. Not surprisingly, standard setting and promotional consortia are no less likely to issue press releases relating to "non-news" than any other type of entity. Sadly, a great number of the press releases

reviewed related to announcing the names of new directors, the signing of new members, recording participation in trade shows, and other types of information which (in fact) would be better limited to posting at the organization's website for the information of members. Thus, despite the limited resources of consortia and SDOs, there was a surprising amount of "going through the motions" in the issuance of press releases, notwithstanding the low likelihood of the issued news ever finding a wider audience.

The lack of information and news at sites generally was surprising. The types of facts that a reporter or analyst might seek for background were often difficult to find (or absent entirely). In short, many sites displayed an absence of careful planning and thought regarding how best to make information available to the world. A sad commentary, given that the creation and hosting of website content is one of the most inexpensive promotional tasks that a consortium can undertake.

Summary and Conclusions: While a variety of ways of handling and disseminating news were observed, the practices of most organizations fell into a limited number of categories. Some of the decisions made by organizations in choosing one method or another seemed reasonably related to the goals of those organizations, while other techniques seemed more likely to be the result of limitations of resources, the individual preferences of those charged with site creation and public relations, or differences in the corporate culture of the members (e.g., business managers versus engineers or Open Source advocates).

In a surprising number of cases, it seems likely that issued press releases were not maintained in a visible location following the original electronic distribution of its text or linking information. In other cases, their location was so difficult to find that the result was functionally the same.

Whether in a given case this was the result of poor site design or faulty decision making regarding content, the result was to reduce, or eliminate, the long-term value of released information. This type of failure seems particularly unfortunate, since members of the press and analysts are likely to look to an organization's website as a resource for data, and as a means to form an accurate picture of an organization's goals, achievements and level of activity.

Overall, it appears that consortia would be well advised to be more critical of their means of disseminating information, and less prone to delegating all responsibility for these tasks to outsourced providers who may simply go through the standard cycles of promotion, regardless of their applicability to the task at hand.

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TRENDS

WHAT ARE CONSORTIA DOING TODAY? (MORE SURVEY RESULTS)

Andrew Updegrove

Introduction: One way to assess the success of consortia is to review what the organizations themselves think is noteworthy. Whether a reader ultimately agrees with the value of the claimed accomplishment, it is not likely that she will conclude that an organization's actual accomplishments exceed its own claims. For most organizations, the significant news (as internally perceived) is packaged for broader consumption in that most venerable of all promotional devices - the press release. Hence, surveying the raw press release output of the worlds' consortia and SDOs in any given period is likely to give a reader a fairly accurate picture of what the global standard setting infrastructure is up to, and why it thinks it matters. At the same time, the reader can form her own judgment as to how much, and what, is truly significant.

As noted in the previous article ([How do Consortia Tell the News: A Survey of Over 150 Consortia](#)), we visited the websites of 159 consortia and SDOs to compile data on some of the ways in which these organizations disseminate news. As part of that survey, we also examined every press release which one of these organizations had issued in the thirty-day period beginning on February 19, and ending on March 22, 2003. As we reviewed this output, we assigned each press release to one of the categories which appear in Table 1 below. The following article summarizes the quantitative and qualitative results of that exercise.

Methodology: A number of categories were created which were intended to be sufficiently discrete to represent the various types of information which consortia report, while few enough to provide meaningfully interpretable results. Each press release was assigned to only the single most appropriate category. The results are as follows:

Category	Number of Releases
What We're Doing	47
Industry/Niche Promotion	17
Completed Standards and Specifications	11
New Initiatives	10
Meeting Announcements	9
Training Programs and Other Education	8
White Papers, Studies, Guides, etc,...	7
Advocacy	7
Interoperability Demonstrations	6
Issues (IPR, privacy, etc,...)	3
Social Responsibility	2
Total:	127

The following summarizes the principal types of information in each category:

What We're Doing: This category includes a wide variety of information, such as the announcement of newly elected directors, the addition of new members, presentations made at trade shows, awards given, tributes to individuals and similar reports of what are, in fact, ordinary course of business events.

Industry/Niche Promotion: These press releases usually reported the results of statistical surveys, member responses, current events and other data intended to present either the need for, or

success of, the organizations' standards or other goals. Not all information reported in these press releases was internally generated, or exclusively involved the organization's members.

Completed Standards and Specifications: These are the evidence of the completion of the core deliverables of consortia.

Meeting Announcements These releases largely comprise announcements of regular meetings or forums being presented by consortia.

Training Programs and Other Education: These press releases related to training and similar activities other than regular membership meetings.

White Papers, Studies, Guides, etc.: This category includes those press releases which related to work product which we regarded as furthering the goals of the organization, other than standards and specifications.

New Initiatives This category captures the announcements of new processes or collaborations, including new specification work groups, liaisons with other organizations, commissioning of new studies, and so on. It does not include updates on existing processes which (for purposes of this study), were included in "What We're Doing".

Advocacy: A minority of consortia take an active interest in influencing public policy or public (as compared to purely customer) perceptions. These press releases comment on proposed laws and regulations, or the adverse effects which might result from the failure to endorse standards or other supported activities.

Interoperability Demonstrations One traditional way of convincing the marketplace that completed standards are effective is to arrange a demonstration of networked systems of diverse vendors which "plug and play" through use of the standards, usually at a trade show.

Issues: This category was created to address matters of internal policy: how to manage intellectual property, privacy issues and other matters which are important for a consortium to grapple with.

Social Responsibility: This category relates principally to SDOs, whose charters obligate them to be responsible to constituencies beyond their commercial membership.

Findings: The sampling was sufficiently large that some findings may be made with confidence. In addition, a number of interesting observations can be made which would require a longer sampling period to conclusively establish.

Is this News? The first, and most obvious, conclusion is that a very significant percentage of the press releases issued by consortia and SDOs are not likely to be viewed as "news" by the press or by analysts. As a result, no actual stories are likely to be written based on these releases, and their issuance is largely a result of the public relations process going through the motions to little actual result. Virtually all of the releases in the "What We're Doing", "Meeting Announcements", and "Training Programs and Other Education" fall into this category. The combined total of 64 press releases destined to fall into a PR black hole therefore is a minimum of **50%** of the total. And, of course, many of the remainder are no more likely to attract the attention of the press.

Reportable Accomplishments: Arguably the most newsworthy information which a standard setting consortium can announce is the completion of a standard, or some other work product which directly furthers its mission. In the sample surveyed, there were 11 announcements of standards, and an additional 7 releases relating to studies, supporting guides and other deliverables directly relating to the mission of the organization. The combined total of 18 represents **14%** of the total number of releases. **11.5%** of the surveyed organizations therefore announced a completed process or the release of another significant work item, equating to an annualized completion rate of 216 deliverables (**1.38** deliverables per organization). However, this substantially under-represents the actual work product per organization of

the entities in the sample set that actually set standards, given that many of the included organizations are purely promotional.

Pipeline: While the categories just noted represent the completion of projects, the "New Initiatives" category indicates the measure of new activities being commenced. The survey indicated that only 10 new initiatives were commenced, or **56%** of the number of projects completed. However, a thirty day period is not likely to be statistically significant, and it would therefore be necessary to track this ratio over at least a three or six month period before drawing any conclusions as to whether there is an overall decrease in the volume of standard setting in process.

Nature of Activities: Only a very small number of consortia appear to be engaging in any activities other than pure standard setting and promotion. While a thirty-day period again is too short to draw definite conclusions, six of the seven organizations issuing press releases in the "Advocacy" category fell into certain categories: SDOs (ANSI and ISO) - which have a broader charter than consortia; a regulated industry (telecom - three organizations); and a national standards organization (BSI - the British Standards Institute). Advocacy, therefore, appears to be something which is not included in the game plan of most consortia (at least to the extent of this data).

Promotion: A surprisingly small number of press releases were dedicated to promoting the industry, technology, demand or effectiveness of the standards or other concerns of the sampled organizations. Only 17, or **13%**, of the press releases were so categorized, and seven of these were issued by a single organization (DSL Forum, which reports extensively on the growth of DSL usage). While some of the press releases included in the "White Papers, Study Guides, etc." are also promotional, only 7 releases fell into that category. Accordingly, while much effort was presumably spent by the sample group on promotional activities, few of these efforts were thought to merit the issuance of a press release (notwithstanding the low news threshold indicated by the number of "What We're Doing" press releases issued). Perhaps more of these efforts (if indeed more were in process) should have been more strongly promoted, at least at the websites.

Summary and Conclusions: The fact that comparatively little reportable news may be generated in a thirty day period by 156 consortia and SDOs is not surprising. In point of fact, such organizations, by their nature, are only capable of generating certain types of information which is likely to have significant appeal beyond their memberships. The fact that they are dedicating as much of their slim resources to producing so many press releases which cannot be expected to earn a return on the time invested is more surprising.

The press releases reviewed indicate that SDOs and consortia are continuing to do what they have traditionally done, with little indication of new methodologies or innovation. They also indicate that their activities are primarily inward-looking, which is doubtless appropriate, although it might be asked whether such organizations should attempt to play a role on a broader stage, as do trade associations in traditional areas of business. Certainly, there are legislative, regulatory and other processes and events which have an impact on members and their common businesses, and it is somewhat surprising that more collective action is not seen in these areas.

While consortia may be all about innovative technologies, they do not appear to be about innovation in collective action. Perhaps that is just as well, when one is engaged in a process that is as exciting as watching the grass grow.

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RAMBUS

UPDATE: IT MAY NOT BE OVER YET

Andrew Updegrave

In our last issue, we reported that the Appeals court had largely overturned the trial court's holdings in the much-watched *Rambus v. Infineon* case (www.consortiuminfo.org/bulletins/feb03.php#editorial). We also reported on the possible adverse consequences of that decision, and invited consortia and SDOs to join in a "Friend of the Court" brief which we intended to file in support of Infineon's motion to rehear the case. Six major consortia responded, and we filed that brief on February 25, 2003. The Court received three other Amicus Curiae briefs -- from JEDEC (the organization whose standards process formed the setting for the facts at issue), from a group of eight companies (including AMD, HP and Micron Technologies - which has itself been sued by Rambus) and from Robert Harmon, a patent attorney.

While most rehearing requests are refused, the Court asked Rambus to file a responsive brief with the Court - a sign that the Court is taking the rehearing request seriously. Rambus filed its response on March 25, 2003. The next step will be for the Court to announce whether or not the petition for a rehearing will be granted. We will report that news when it occurs.

The following is a press release relating to the filing of the brief:

BOSTON LAW FIRM AND TECHNOLOGY GROUPS TEAM UP TO FIGHT LANDMARK DECISION THAT COULD UNDERMINE HUNDREDS OF TECH STANDARDS

"Friend of the Court" Brief Filed on Behalf of Six Major Standard Setting Organizations Seeks Rehearing of Rambus v. Infineon Appeal

BOSTON, MASS. - March 12, 2003 - Boston-based law firm Lucash, Gesmer & Updegrave, LLP today announced that it had filed a "friend of the court" brief on behalf of six major standard setting organizations (SDOs) in an effort to influence the outcome of *Rambus v. Infineon*, one of the most closely watched cases in the technology industry. The organizations supporting the brief boast more than 850 members, including the great majority of the most prominent technology companies in the world.

For the complete press release, see: www.consortiuminfo.org/pressrelease/rambus.shtml

For a selection of news articles based upon the press release and interviews, see:
www.internetnews.com/infra/article.php/2108831
www.idg.net/ic_1219185_9675_1-5124.html
www.e-insite.net/index.asp

NEWS SHORTS

Advocacy

ATIS to Senate Subcommittee: Development of Technical Standards Key to Effective and Sound E-911 Service

March 5, 2003, Washington, DC - "Enhanced 911 (E-911) is an essential element for continued public safety..." said Susan M. Miller, president and CEO of ATIS, in written testimony to the US Senate Communications Subcommittee today. Miller detailed the establishment of the Emergency Services Interconnection Forum (ESIF), a joint venture of ATIS and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), and the recent release of ESIF's "Wireless E-911 Phase II Readiness Package." The ESIF Readiness Package is a standard evaluation method for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to utilize in determining and documenting their status for wireless carriers from whom they request Phase II implementation, and is available on the ATIS (www.atis.org) and NENA (www.nena.org) web sites.

To read Miller's testimony in its entirety, see: www.atis.org/pix/SM_Senate_Remarks.pdf.



Alliance Urges Royalty-Free H.264 Video Standard

San Ramon, CA, February 20, 2003 - A group of over 20 companies, working in conjunction with the International Multimedia Telecommunications Consortium (IMTC), have formed an alliance to advocate the final approval of a royalty-free baseline profile for the upcoming H.264 Advanced Video Coding (H.264/AVC) standard. The royalty-free profile will enable industry to bring an open, internationally standardized video codec to market quickly, without time-consuming and fractious licensing negotiations, and avoids the market risks associated with proprietary codecs....The H.264/AVC standard is approaching completion by the Joint Video Team (JVT), which brings together video experts from industry and academia in the International Telecommunications Union's Video Coding Experts Group (ITU VCEG), and the International Organization for Standardization's Moving Pictures Experts Group (ISO MPEG). H.264 will be simultaneously known as H.264 and MPEG-4 Part 10 AVC.... [The]advanced performance is expected to create a revolution in how digital video is created and disseminated royalty basis.

For the complete press release, see: <http://www.imtc.org/pressrel/press022003.htm>

New Initiatives

Two new initiatives - one governmental and one SDO-based - were announced recently to facilitate international trade by promoting greater harmony among national product standards and standard setting bodies

Commerce Department Launches Standards Initiative

New York, NY, March 20, 2003 - Department of Commerce (DOC) Secretary Don Evans announced yesterday a new initiative aimed at boosting U.S. exports by harmonizing product standards around the world. Included in the program is an eight-point plan intended to augment current DoC activities to break down trade barriers. The goal is to create a more level playing field around the world and incorporates assessment, training, warning systems, dialogue with industry and more. The project acknowledges that foreign standards – and methods used to assess conformity to standards – can facilitate efficient international trade and its benefits, or they also can be used intentionally or unintentionally to impede access to foreign markets. This observation mirrors statements included in the National Standards Strategy (NSS) for the United States that was approved in 2000. "The Bush Administration remains committed to promoting competition and opening new markets for U.S. goods," said Evans. "Standards and testing are key to our international competitiveness. But more and more we are hearing that foreign standards and testing requirements are keeping our products out of foreign markets. This is the wrong approach that reduces efficiencies, limits competition and increases prices for the consumer goods."

For the complete story, see:

http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=359

To access the National Standards Strategy, see:

http://www.ansi.org/standards_activities/nss/nss.aspx?menuid=3



New ISO/IEC Guide Aims to Improve Efficiency of International Trade

February 18, 2003 - A new ISO/IEC guide aims to reduce redundant, costly and time-consuming aspects of "conformity assessment" activities and, in doing so, contribute to the efficiency of the international trading system. As goods and services flow across borders, business partners or government agencies may require verification that they measure up to standards, regulations and other requirements. This verification is known as "conformity assessment". One of the main difficulties exporters face is costly, multiple testing and/or certification of products, services, systems, processes and materials. These costs would be drastically reduced if a product could be tested once and the results accepted in all markets. The new guide provides procedures for establishing and maintaining cooperation among the bodies that carry out conformity assessments and the "accreditation bodies" that verify their competence.

For the complete press release, see:

<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/commcentre/pressreleases/2003/Ref845.html>



OASIS Members Collaborate to Define Web Services Management

Boston, MA, USA, 10 March 2003 - The OASIS interoperability consortium today announced plans to define a standard way of using Web services architecture and technology to manage distributed resources. The new OASIS Web Services Distributed Management (WSDM) Technical Committee will closely align its work with related activities at other standards groups, including the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Services Architecture Working Group and the Distributed Management Task Force (DMTF), and with other OASIS security and Web services efforts. "As the number of Web services deployed across the extended enterprise increases, the ability to effectively manage those services will become critical to building out a comprehensive services-oriented architecture," said Winston Bumpus of Novell, co-chair of the OASIS WSDM Technical Committee. "By collaborating with other ongoing industry standards activities in this area, this new technical committee will play an important role in defining how services should be managed."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.oasis-open.org/news/oasis_news_03_10_03.php



Standards Group Takes Aim at Spam

CNET News.Com, March 6, 2003 - An influential Internet standards-setting body has begun a close scrutiny of the mounting problem of e-mail Spam, in an effort that could have broad-ranging implications for future e-mail use and security. [In this article, Staff Writer John Borland reports on the formation of the Anti-Spam Research Group (ASRG) under the aegis of the Internet Research Task Force, an affiliate of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). The ASRG will be a research, rather than an action, group.]

For the complete story, see: http://news.com.com/2100-1032-991305.html?tag=fd_top

For the official description of the ASRG, see: <http://www.irtf.org/charters/asrg.html>



OASIS Members Advance Reliable Message Delivery for Web Services

Boston, MA, USA, 26 February 2003 - Members of the OASIS standards consortium announced plans to collaborate on the development of a generic and open model for ensuring reliable message delivery for Web services. The new OASIS Web Services Reliable Messaging (WS-RM) Technical Committee will work to establish a standard, interoperable way of achieving reliability at the SOAP messaging level and potentially with other messaging protocols. The WS-Reliability specification, published by Fujitsu, Hitachi, Oracle, NEC, Sonic Software, and Sun Microsystems, will be submitted as input for the OASIS WS-RM Technical Committee. Other contributions are welcome. The group plans to work closely with related OASIS Technical Committees, such as the ebXML Messaging Services and the Web Services Security teams, and with relevant efforts of other organizations, such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Services Architecture Working Group.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.oasis-open.org/news/oasis_news_02_26_03.php



NFPA Technical Committee Holds Meeting to Address Code Writing Concerns

New York, NY, March 17, 2003 - The Technical Committee on Assembly Occupancies of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) held an emergency meeting on March 13, 2003 to address code writing and enforcement concerns underscored by recent tragedies in Chicago and Rhode Island nightclubs. Immediately prior to the meeting, NFPA opened the floor to a 90-minute public forum that included passionate testimony by victims' families, groups that work with fire and burn survivors, and representatives from key organizations such as the International Fire Marshals Association and Society of Fire Protection Engineers. In February, 21 people died during a stampede in a nightclub in Chicago. The West Warwick, RI nightclub fire at The Station erupted during a pyrotechnic display on February 20, and claimed 99 lives. NFPA has been asked by Rhode Island fire officials to assist with investigation and analysis of the accident.

For the complete story, see:

http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=353



New Standards/Specifications

Distributed Management Task Force Releases Final Status of WBEM Specifications

Portland, OR, March 18, 2003 - Distributed Management Task Force, Inc. (DMTF) today announced the final release of three Web-Based Enterprise Management (WBEM) Specifications. The status, "final release," indicates that the Specifications are stable and have been successfully used in multiple, independent implementations. Web-Based Enterprise Management (WBEM) is a set of management and Internet standard technologies developed to unify the management of enterprise and Internet computing environments. This release provides the ability for the industry to deliver a well-integrated set of standard-based management tools leveraging Web technologies. WBEM relies on HTTP and XML to offer a Web-based approach for exchanging Common Information Model (CIM) data across otherwise disparate technologies and platforms. In this way, WBEM is a forefather of today's Web services, as it anticipated the use of Internet standards and protocols to facilitate a more consistent approach to sharing information.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.dmtf.org/newsroom/releases/2003_03_18.php



SCTE Establishes New Standard for Cable Industry Graphic Symbols

Exton, PA, March 17, 2003 - SCTE has approved a comprehensive series of HFC symbols for the cable telecommunications industry in a new standard titled Graphic Symbols for Cable Telecommunications Part 1—HFC Symbols (SCTE 87-1 2003). The Graphic Symbols Working Group—part of SCTE’s Construction and Maintenance Subcommittee (CMS) chaired by Fred Wilkenloh of CommScope—developed the new standard. SCTE Board member Sally Kinsman chairs the Graphic Symbols Working Group. “The new Graphic Symbols standard provides consistency for all cable operators by using common symbols on their cable system plant maps,” said Kinsman. “It allows vendors, construction contractors and operators to immediately understand any map they use during construction and maintenance of cable infrastructure without first trying to interpret unique symbols.”

For the complete press release, see: <http://www.scte.org/news/detail.cfm?ID=163>



Liberty Alliance Project Completes Federated Network Identity Architecture

Liberty Alliance Project, March 11, 2003 - The Liberty Alliance, a consortium formed to develop open standards for federated network identity, today released details outlining the Liberty Alliance Federated Network Identity Architecture, a complete infrastructure that the Alliance expects will resolve many of the technology issues currently hindering deployment of identity-based web services. This new identity architecture outlines the direction the Liberty Alliance will follow to accomplish its vision of enabling a networked world in which individuals and businesses can more easily interact with one another while respecting the privacy and security of shared identity information. The complete Liberty Alliance federated network identity architecture provides an open, standards-based foundation for building and supporting identity-based web services. The architecture enables companies to increase the security of their information systems, lower infrastructure maintenance costs, and more easily adapt to new business models and new technology. Consumers and employees will also benefit by having more choice and convenience in how they share and manage personal information over the web.

For the complete press release, see: <http://www.projectliberty.org>



PICMG Ratifies First AdvancedTCA Fabric Specifications, for Ethernet/Fibre Channel Infiniband

Wakefield, MA, March 3, 2003 - The Executive membership of the PCI Industrial Computer Manufacturers Group (PICMG®) has voted to adopt the first two Fabric specifications in its new AdvancedTCA™ family of specifications, PICMG 3.1 Ethernet/Fibre Channel and PICMG 3.2 InfiniBand®. AdvancedTCA (for Advanced Telecom Computing Architecture) is the first open industry specification for carrier grade equipment incorporating high speed switched fabric technology, capable of switching and processing 2.5 terabits per second in a single shelf. The two new documents are the first to be completed of several AdvancedTCA fabric-specific specifications underway within the PICMG organization. The new specifications build upon the PICMG 3.0 Base Specification, and they are not intended to stand alone or to be used separately from the base specification. The various fabric specifications will offer system developers and users flexible choice of high speed interconnects for various applications from high speed routers to storage systems. The electronic keying features of the AdvancedTCA base specification allow interoperability of different fabric solutions in the same shelf or chassis.

For the complete release, see: <http://www.picmg.org/news.stm#pr030303>



I3A Announces Release of CPXe Specification Suite and New Online Directory Service

Harrison, NY, February 27, 2003 - The International Imaging Industry Association (I3A) today announced the availability of a suite of CPXe interoperability specifications and the creation of the Picture Services Network (PSN). Working in concert, CPXe specifications and the PSN Directory Service will simplify for consumers and businesses the process of finding, accessing and using Internet-connected and retail photo services...CPXe is providing the industry with an extensible and open technology platform on which any imaging device can seamlessly exchange digital images and order and commerce information with any networked imaging application or service, regardless of manufacturer, service provider or geography. The combined impact of CPXe specifications and the PSN Directory Service will simplify for consumers the process of finding and using Internet-connected and retail photo services.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.i3a.org/pr_02_27_03.html



GTIN Allocation Rules Published

February, 2003 - EAN International and the Uniform Code Council, Inc. (UCC), leaders in facilitating efficient international business, announced today the launch of the latest annual update (Version 4.0) of the General EAN.UCC Specifications, which includes a brand new section on Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) Allocation Rules....The aim is to reduce costs in the supply chain for all trading partners. Harmonizing the rules globally eliminates the historic variations that have crept into national interpretations over the years. Now manufacturers will benefit from having just one set of rules for all their retailer customers and conversely retailers will benefit from having the same set of rules used by all suppliers. Additionally the GTIN rules provide a glide path into the 1st of January 2005, the 2005 Sunrise initiative, when GTINs encoded in EAN-13 and EAN-8 symbols will be accepted in the U.S. and Canada and one set of rules for applying GTINs will ease the transition.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.uc-council.net/news/ne_022503.html



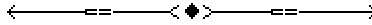
Antitrust

Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2003 Introduced in House

New York, NY, March 14, 2003 - In an effort to support the development and use of voluntary consensus standards, H.R. 1086 - Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2003 was introduced into Congress on March 5, 2003. The bill is sponsored by House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and is co-sponsored by the ranking Democratic member of the Committee, John Conyers (D-MI), as well as the leadership of the House Science Committee and a bipartisan group of fourteen other Members of Congress. The broad bi-partisan sponsorship of the bill indicates that wide support for standards development activities that exists in the Congress. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 1086 aims "To encourage the development and promulgation of voluntary consensus standards by providing relief under the antitrust laws to standards development organizations with respect to conduct engaged in for the purpose of developing voluntary consensus standards, and for other purposes." The text of the bill notes that technical standards developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies have replaced thousands of unique federal standards and specifications. Standards developed by government entities generally are not subject to challenge under certain antitrust laws, yet private developers of technical standards are often not similarly protected, and are vulnerable to legal prosecution. In most cases, the likelihood of their being held liable is remote, and these private entities often have limited resources to defend themselves in such lawsuits.

For the complete story, see:

http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=354



General

CompTIA Survey Reveals Human Error Most Likely Cause of IT Security Breaches

Washington, DC, March 18, 2003 - At a Washington briefing with government officials today, the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) revealed results from its new security survey *Committing to Security: A CompTIA Analysis of IT Security and the Workforce*. The survey shows human error – not technical malfunction – to be the most significant cause of IT security breaches in the public and private sectors. With an overwhelming majority of respondents stating that IT training and certification have improved network security, the survey's results strongly suggest that more training and certification for IT professionals will help America become better protected against mounting cyber threats. "We think the results are pretty staggering," said Brian McCarthy, CompTIA's Chief Operating Officer. "Where agencies and companies have looked primarily to technology for network safety, in over 63 percent of identified security breaches, human error looks to be a major, underlying factor."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.comptia.org/pressroom/get_news_item.asp?id=207



Critical Materials need IC Industry's Attention, Study Says

AUSTIN, TX, March 10, 2003– Chip manufacturers and suppliers must focus more attention on "critical materials" to ensure a dependable and affordable supply of such substances to the semiconductor industry, a study by International SEMATECH (ISMT) has concluded. These critical materials – which include elements and compounds as diverse as tantalum, helium, quartz, and etching gases – all face a variety of economic, environmental, and political risks that could disrupt the long and complex supply chain that feeds the \$1.1 trillion "electronics ecosystem," adds the study, which was published electronically in March by Semiconductor International magazine.

For the complete press release, see:
<http://www.sematech.org/public/news/releases/criticalmats.htm>



Path Towards Information Society for All Takes Shape

Geneva, Switzerland, February 28, 2003 - The second meeting of the preparatory committee for the World Summit on the Information Society (PrepCom-2) concluded with two working documents for a draft declaration and action plan. The results from the second in a series of United Nations-backed preparatory conferences lays the groundwork for the first-ever global summit on information and communication technologies (ICTs). The World Summit on the Information Society will be held in Geneva 10-12 December 2003 and in Tunis 16-18 November 2005. The document focuses on ways to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing nations, created by an explosion of ICTs during the past two decades. "The enthusiastic participation of more than 1500 participants is reflected in the comprehensive nature of the work produced, and in their collective belief in developing new and innovative partnerships between Member States, civil society and the business sector in order to bridge the divide," says Mr. Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary-General of ITU. "However, to achieve the vision of the information society we've outlined, we need to do more work as well as gain the support and political will of the leaders of the world."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2003/10.html



Commerce's NIST Reports Significant Advances Made in Facial Recognition Technology

Washington, DC, March 13, 2002 - Computers have become much more adept at "recognizing" human faces during the past two years, states a report released today by the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Scientists from NIST, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and DoD Counterdrug technology Development Program Office have completed the most comprehensive evaluation to date of commercially available face recognition systems, and concluded that the technology has made significant advances. The study, Face Recognition Vendor Test 2002 (FRVT 2002), was performed in response to the USA PATRIOT Act and the Enhanced Border Security Act. The primary objective of FRVT 2002 was to provide performance measures for assessing the capability of automatic face recognition systems to meet real-world scenarios—verification of identity, identification of an unknown individual and detection of an individual on a watch list. Key findings of the study include new data about verification, demographics, and indoor and outdoor matching abilities. The study shows that there has been a 50 percent reduction in error rates since comparable tests were conducted in 2000.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/releases/n03-04.htm



RosettaNet Standards Organization Extends Global Presence With Launch Of Consortium's Newest Asia Affiliate

Santa Ana, CA, March 12, 2003 - RosettaNet, the high technology industry's leading e-business process standards consortium, today announced the expansion of its Asia-based operations with the addition of a new affiliate organization in the Philippines. This move further extends RosettaNet's capabilities for adoption and implementation of its open supply chain standards that enable companies in Asia and throughout the world to engage in dynamic B2B trading partner relationships via the Internet. The electronics market sector is acknowledged as a primary driver of the Philippine economy and accounts for more than 70 percent of the country's total exports. RosettaNet Philippines' charter will be to drive global implementation of RosettaNet's internet-based business standards to further strengthen the country's global competitiveness

For the complete release, go to www.rosettanet.org



Comment on Final Draft of Royalty-Free Patent Policy

www.w3.org - March 19, 2003 - The [World Wide Web Consortium] Patent Policy Working Group has released a Working Draft of the Royalty-free Patent Policy for review by the W3C Advisory Committee and the public. The draft governs the handling of patents in the process of producing and implementing W3C Recommendations. Comments from both W3C Members and the public are welcome through 30 April. *[This policy has been watched with great interest by many industry participants during the three year process of its origination, as the W3C has functioned as the battleground upon which the forces of commerce and a free Internet, patent ownership and free software have thrashed out the issues that divide them, but which collide in the context of the further evolution of the World Wide Web. The current draft of the policy is a political compromise between the disparate forces, under which it is hoped that the W3C can move forward. Says Daniel J. Weitzner, Patent Policy Working Group Chair and Leader of the W3C's Technology and Society Domain: "Developing policy in this complex and often contentious area is difficult. I commend all of the participants in the Working Group for working hard to build consensus around this proposal. No single group -- patent holders, open source developers or users -- got everything it wanted. But with this final draft, the Working Group believes it has found a common, workable path that will encourage the widespread adoption of W3C standards across a wide range of business models, from proprietary to open source."*

For the complete press release, see: <http://www.w3.org/News/2003#item55>

For an article on this story, see:

http://www.dmreview.com/editorial/dmreview/print_action.cfm?EdID=6489

For a summary and history of the policy, see: <http://www.w3.org/2003/03/19-patentsummary.html>

For the text of the draft Patent Policy, see: <http://www.w3.org/TR/2003/WD-patent-policy-20030319/>



Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Working Drafts Published

www.w3.org - 18 March 2003 - The [World Wide Web Consortium] Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines Working Group has released the first public Working Draft of Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and its companion Implementation. Authoring tools can enable users ("authors") to create accessible Web content through prompts, alerts, checking and repair, help files and automation. Resulting content can be read by a broader range of readers. Read about the Web Accessibility Initiative...

For a variety of information and links relating to the Web Accessibility Initiative, see:

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>