



Attorneys at Law

Consortium Standards Bulletin

A ConsortiumInfo.org publication

February 2005

Vol IV, No. 2

ANNOUNCING

THE CONSORTIUMINFO.ORG STANDARDS <META> LIBRARY

Andrew Updegrove

Metallibrary: *An (abstract) metallibrary is the entire collection of a society's data, information, and techniques, together with the means by which it is stored, accessed, and communicated. (Rick Sutcliffe, The Fourth Civilization, 1998)*

We take great pleasure this month in announcing the newest major resource at ConsortiumInfo.org: the **Standards MetaLibrary** <www.consortiuminfo.org/metallibrary>.

What is the Standards MetaLibrary? Just as "meta information" is "information about information" and not useful data in its own right, and "metatags" are hidden codes that help a browser find a specific webpage, a "metallibrary" is a means to an end, and not the end in itself. In this case, the MetaLibrary is a research tool comprising an ever-increasing number of carefully indexed, sortable and searchable abstracts (705, as of the launch date) of articles about standards. Each abstract is linked to the full text of the article at its host site.

The Standards MetaLibrary is not limited to material about standards in a narrow sense. Rather, it focuses on the importance of standards to the modern world and their impact on society, and how they are created, and by whom. The materials included therefore address topics such as how the standard setting process operates, how governments support this process and utilize standards, the economic benefits of standards uptake, legal aspects of the use (and abuse) of standards, and many other subjects that illustrate the role of standards in the world today.

Why is there a need for a Standards MetaLibrary? There are four principal reasons why we have created, and why Sun Microsystems has supported (Sun provided a generous development grant), the Standards MetaLibrary:

- To raise the consciousness of society in general, and government in particular, on the importance of standards to society. With the increasing interdependence of the world on the Internet and the Web, the standards that enable communications and information technology are becoming essential to the operation of almost all aspects of modern life. The Standards MetaLibrary will provide a ready, effective and encyclopedic reference for those creating policy and supporting the legislative process.
- To encourage the proliferation of serious works of scholarship on standards and standard setting. By providing greater exposure for existing work, greater ease for conducting further research, and a broader audience for new work, we hope to provide incentives for more authors to dedicate their efforts to works of scholarship in this area of study.
- By making a rich and growing body of work readily available (most of which has been made available by the copyright holders without cost), we hope to encourage colleges and universities to offer more courses on standards, and to include more readings on standards in the syllabi of courses on other subjects as well.

- As the number of pages available on the Web expands more rapidly than the ability of search engines to efficiently filter them, the need for specialized on-line research resources becomes more acute. For example, a search using the relatively narrow request “consortium +standard +technical +internet +society” on the new Google Scholar web browser returned 8,110 items on February 12, 2005. With such riches at hand, how can someone performing research reliably find her way to the particular information needed?

How is the MetaLibrary Organized? The Metalibrary currently has 18 major categories (*shown at right*), and 85 subcategories. In each subcategory, the holdings may be sorted alphabetically (by author name and by article title) as well as by date and by the frequency with which the individual items have been accessed by site visitors.

How did the Standards MetaLibrary come to be created? The concept and structure of the MetaLibrary was conceived by Andrew Updegrave, the creator of ConsortiumInfo.org, and a partner in the Boston-based law firm of **Gesmer Updegrave LLP**. That law firm (which has represented more standard setting organizations than any other law firm in the country), supports both ConsortiumInfo.org and the MetaLibrary by providing hosting and web development services. The acquisition of all of the data in the Standards MetaLibrary was made possible by a generous grant from **Sun Microsystems, Inc.** The web development work was performed by Nathan Burke, the Gesmer Updegrave Webmaster, and all data collection and categorization was conducted by Greg Johnson, who works full-time on ConsortiumInfo.org projects.

Future plans: The Standards MetaLibrary by definition is a work in process. The work program for the balance of 2005 currently includes the following:

- Continuous addition of more articles as they are located
- Abstracting and linking of legislation, policy papers and other primary resource materials
- Compilation of a master bibliography, comprising all sources listed in the bibliographies of articles referenced in the Standards MetaLibrary
- Acting as a host for serious works of authorship not already available on the Web
- Addition of an automatic conversion tool to shift bibliographic data from MLA format to other commonly used citation forms
- Providing Amazon.com links to all in-print books listed in the master bibliography

Eventually, we hope to host a new peer-reviewed on-line eJournal on standards.

What you can do to help build the Standards MetaLibrary:

Tell us about a suitable on-line article that we don't yet link to. Simply send a link to the article to submit.articles@consortiuminfo.org. If we agree that the article is appropriate for inclusion, we will promptly add it to the Standards MetaLibrary.

Send us an article for hosting. If you have a suitable unpublished article or conference paper that is not currently available online, please send it to us. If we agree that it is appropriate for the Standards MetaLibrary, we will send you a brief copyright permission statement for your agreement before we post the article (you will retain ownership of the article or paper). Please be sure that your article includes a brief abstract.

Browse
.By Technical Area
.Certification and Conformance Testing
.Economics
.Formation and Management
.Government
.History of Standard Setting
.Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
.Litigation & Legal Issues
.Open Source
.Other Resources
.Participation
.Perspectives & Viewpoints
.Process of Standard Setting
.Regional/National
.Specific Organizations
.Standards & Society
.Structures/Types/Models
.Theory and Practice

Tell us how we can make the Standards MetaLibrary better. All suggestions, critiques and other constructive input will be gratefully received. We will acknowledge and respond to all such email. Please send your input to updegrove@consortiuminfo.org.

Offer to help fund the MetaLibrary, or one of the other features of ConsortiumInfo.org. Contact Andrew Updegrove at 617/350-6800, or by email at updegrove@consortiuminfo.org.

Partner with us. If you are a library, university, publisher, or other interested party and would like to discuss how we could work together, please contact us as above.

Join our Advisory Board. If you have an appropriate background and would like to join the ConsortiumInfo.org Advisory Board, again, please get in touch.

Volunteer to help. There are many ways you can help. The MetaLibrary is an ongoing and labor-intensive project. We would welcome assistance in expanding the MetaLibrary and adding to its features.

As with all of the other features of ConsortiumInfo.org, we hope that you find the Standards MetaLibrary useful to you, and a worthwhile addition to the tools that you use to further explore -- and to contribute back -- to the world of standards.

Comments? updegrove@consortiuminfo.org

Copyright 2005 Andrew Updegrove