

Standards Today

A Journal of News, Ideas and Analysis

A publication of
**CONSORTIUM
INFO.ORG**
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February-March 2009

Vol. VIII, No. 2

EDITOR'S NOTE:

With Access and Information for All

This issue marks the third and final (for now) entry in a cycle that addresses the role of technical standards in government, and vice versa, occasioned by the election of America's new, technologically-savvy president, Barack Obama. Each of these issues looks back to a greater or lesser extent to a concept I introduced a year ago in an article titled [Recognizing "Civil ICT Rights" and Civil ICT Standards](#).

The first issue in this cycle was intended to provide an overview of the standards opportunities, and standards dependencies, of Mr. Obama's ambitious technology technology-based agenda, and was called [A Standards Agenda for the Obama Administration](#), while the second focused more narrowly on the President's most ambitious (and costly) standards-dependent program (that issue was called [The Electronic Health Record Standards Challenge](#)). This issue addresses another important goal established by Barack Obama early in his campaign, and confirmed on the first day of his presidency: a commitment to bring about a new level of public transparency, participation and collaboration in government, in large part through the innovative use of technology.

I introduce this theme with my **Editorial**, which makes the point that if Internet-based government is to be truly open, it needs to be accessible to all – and not just those who can afford a laptop or desktop, know how to use it, and are not held back by physical disabilities.

This month's **Feature Article** addresses the broader IT challenge of making the IT systems of government agencies internally interoperable and externally transparent and collaborative at the same time. Like the **Standards Blog** selection for the month, it refers in part to the already well advanced and sophisticated efforts of the European Union to achieve similar goals.

The issue concludes, as usual, on a lighter note with my newest installment of **Consider This**, which shines a harsh light on a standard of a different – and much less popular - type altogether: the much maligned but tenacious billable hour of law firms at home and abroad.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue. But whether you do or don't, it's always good to hear from you. You can reach me at andrew.updegrove@gesmer.com.

Andrew Updegrove
Editor and Publisher
2005 ANSI President's
Award for Journalism

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