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

The complete series of Consortium Standards Bulletins can be accessed on-line at http://www.consortiuminfo.org/bulletins/ It can also be found in libraries around the world as part of the EBSCO Publishing bibliographic and research databases

Sign up for a free subscription to Standards Today at http://www.consortiuminfo.org/subscribe/2.php?addentry=1