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**NEW AT CONSORTIUMINFO.ORG:**

A New Look for the Standards MetaLibrary

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***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)*

In February of 2005, I launched a new resource at ConsortiumInfo.org called the "[Standards Metallibrary](#)." The announcement of the MetaLibrary was included in an issue I dedicated to [The Study of Standards](#), which emphasized the increasing importance of standards of all types to modern society. Briefly stated, the purpose of the MetaLibrary was to aggregate the largest collection anywhere of serious works of authorship on standards for the benefit of students, academics, standards professionals and government. As with everything else at ConsortiumInfo.org, the MetaLibrary is available free of charge as a service to my firm's many consortium and corporate clients, as well as for the standards community at large.

The mission of the MetaLibrary was more fully explained in the original [announcement](#), which read in part as follows:

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 [1,086, as of this writing] 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 to the project in 2004], 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?

Needless to say, standards are even more important now than they were two years ago. To give but a few examples, knowledge is becoming increasingly digitized, the world is becoming ever more networked, and confronting global warming will be very dependent upon the development of adequate standards to assess and restrict further damage.

Now, the MetaLibrary has a new look and feel, carrying over the cleaner, more intuitive style and organization of Standards Today (throughout this year, the rest of the ConsortiumInfo.org site will be similarly updated). In addition, I have launched an aggressive program of adding new material to the MetaLibrary on a weekly basis (you can follow the additions as they are made by using the RSS feed that you can find [here](#)).

Whether or not you are familiar with the MetaLibrary, take a moment to check it out at <http://www.consortiuminfo.org/metalibrary/>. If you are the author of articles, or are aware of articles that should be, but are not yet, in the MetaLibrary, by all means please let me know, and I'll be pleased to add them.

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