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EDITOR'S NOTE:

All for the Want of a (Standardized) Horseshoe Nail

It's unlikely that anyone would truly relish confronting the matters that await Barack Obama on inauguration day. From wars to economic collapse, there will be much to occupy the attention of the new administration, each challenge seemingly more intractable and urgent than the next. But lurking somewhere down there in the weeds of policy implementation lies the unsettling question of whether the standards needed to implement the new administration's grand goals will be waiting for him. Unfortunately, in many cases, the answer will be "no." What's a new president to do?

That's what this issue is all about. So if you happen to be visiting with the president-elect, be sure to lend him your copy.

In the **Editorial**, I lay out the problem, highlight what needs to be done at a high level, and make the case for rapid action. In the **Policy** piece that follows, I make ten specific recommendations for actions that can be rapidly and inexpensively taken in order to avoid the new administration being held back for want of the standards-based solutions upon which some of its important policy goals must rely.

I provide a more detailed description of the underlying problem in this month's **Feature Article**, in which I review the implications of the "Bottom Up" standards development system that the United States has evolved in tune with its traditionally hands-off approach to the marketplace. In doing so, I demonstrate how such an approach leaves the United States less able to act quickly to accomplish technology-related policy goals, and how it may be at a competitive disadvantage internationally as a result.

Next, I include three essays with a seasonally political theme. In my **Standards Blog** selection, I focus on Ted Kennedy's surprise appearance at this year's Democratic convention, and the hopes for the future that it inspired. The Kennedy piece is followed by this month's **Consider This** essay, in which I reflect on how curiously difficult democracies find it to really believe in the concept of "one citizen, one vote." And finally, in this installment of the **Monday Witness**, I recall an incident that occurred during the presidential campaign just ended to examine how standards of ethics and conduct can suffer during the heat of a hard-fought campaign.

I close this issue with a pointer to the recently revamped ConsortiumInfo.org **Standards News Portal**, highlighting its new features and cleaner, easy to use look and fee. If you're not already a regular visitor to that part of the site, perhaps you'll become one soon.

Hopefully, all of the above will provide much food for standards-related thought as the days countdown to the inauguration of Barack Obama. As always, I hope you enjoy this issue.

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

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