## EDITOR'S NOTE

## STAKEHOLDERS AND STANDARDS

With more than a million standards in place in the world today, it is axiomatic that we are all profoundly affected by their existence. Yet only a very small number of people are involved in the creation of these standards, relative to the billions that benefit from their implementation. As a result, the ranks of the affected vastly outnumber those of the affecting.

In this issue I examine the concept of the "stakeholder" – an identifiable class of people and/or entities that is affected by the implementation of standards – and whether such classes are adequately represented in the standards development process.

In my *Editorial*, I focus on one of the most problematic of stakeholder issues: if one assumes that individual end-users should have a say in standards development, how can this be accomplished? Historically, involving such stakeholders has proven to be a difficult ideal to achieve. But with the Internet and the dramatic success of collaborative efforts such as the Wikipedia and open source software projects, both the technical means as well as the willingness of individuals to participate in on-line activities without compensation have been demonstrated. I believe that it's time to experiment with these new technical tools in order to bring this last, and largest, stakeholder group into the standards development process in at least an advisory capacity.

The *Feature Article* this month provides an in-depth explanation of how stakeholder groups are defined, how the concept is used in serious research, and how the various types of standards development organizations do (and do not) attempt to include all affected parties into their process.

This month's entry from the *Standards Blog* addresses the stakeholder topic from a very different perspective, comparing two current (and quite different) experiments directed at bringing third parties into the development of semiconductors. Traditionally, such designs have been among the most proprietary forms of intellectual property. Now, however, both IBM and Sun have launched initiatives that allow other vendors to influence (and in the case of the Sun initiative to freely use) chip designs developed at great cost by these influential vendors.

My *Consider This* piece for this month examines what can happen when one type of stakeholder – in this case, a state government – decides to use its legislative and procurement powers (perhaps inexpertly) to influence the type of standards that vendors decide to implement.

I'm also pleased to pass along an *Open Invitation* from ANSI, which is sponsoring a follow-on meeting to the very successful meeting of consortia and accredited developers that my firm hosted last March. The hope of this new meeting is to build upon the ideas exchanged at the first get together, and discuss ways in which these two systems – each of which serves the same stakeholders – may work together more productively in order to better serve those affecting, and affected, constituencies. Last year, I was elected to the Board of Directors of

ANSI, and I am pleased to be able, in this and other ways, to assist in bridging the unnecessary and counterproductive communication gap that has historically existed between accredited and non-accredited standard setting organizations.

As usual, this issue closes with the *Rest of the News* – a collection of what I thought were some of the most significant and interesting stories of the past month, selected from those that I posted on a daily basis at the Consortiuminfo.org Standards News Portal.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue.

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Best Regards,

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

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