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EDITOR'S NOTE:

Let's All Get Together



Regular readers of *Standards Today* will be aware that hundreds of organizations that develop and promote standards have been formed using a legal and governance model that leads them to be referred to as "consortia." But think for a moment and tell me if you know what kind of model would be wise to use to set up an organization to support any other type of largely virtual activity?

That's interesting, isn't it? Silence would have answered the same question in the standards development community thirty years ago, too. But then a few pioneer consortia were formed, and the word spread. As it did, the structures used to form and govern consortia became more refined, and best practices evolved and became better known by word of mouth. The same phenomenon is happening today in the world of open source development.

But developing standards and open source software are not the only areas where people and companies would like to launch collaborative activities among nationally and internationally distributed participants. The question is, will they know how to go about doing so?

In this issue, I try and offer a lifeline to the would-be founders of the virtual collaborations of the future, by way of introducing and explaining the very flexible, impressively versatile, concept of the consortium. In my **Editorial**, I place today's Internet and Web-based opportunities for collaboration in historical perspective, and note that our ability to take advantage of today's enormously expanded

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opportunities for collaboration will be impeded if project founders are unable to create the type of governance, support and legal structures needed to ensure the success of their endeavors.

In the issue's **Feature Article**, I provide a detailed overview of what characterizes a consortium, how they can be created, and the areas of legal concern that consortium founders and participants need to take into account. I conclude with taxonomy of consortium structures, and evaluate each in comparison to the others for the benefit of those who will increasingly be in the market for the right foundation for their prospective collaborative activities.

I follow with this month's selection from **The Standards Blog**, in which I inform you, sadly, that our good friends in the world of video and consumer electronics are preparing a new, blockbuster standards war for our viewing enjoyment (roll over, Betamax).

Next up is the first chapter of a new project I'm working on: a cybersecurity mystery eNovel called **The Alexandria Project**. If you enjoy it, you can find another seven chapters at The Standards Blog, where a new episode will be posted every Monday.

As usual, I close with a **Consider This** essay, occasioned by the regrettable passing of J.D. Salinger, and the welcome demise of a type of short fiction that flourished under the stewardship a certain magazine's second managing editor, and justifiably became known as "a New Yorker Story."

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue. But either way, it's always great to hear what you think. Let me know, why don't you?

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

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