EDITOR'S NOTE

WHAT MAKES AN SSO – AND A STANDARDS INFRASTRUCTURE - SUCCEED ?

Each year, more and more consortia are created to develop and support standards, with formations outpacing dissolutions and mergers. Some of the new organizations become significant contributors to the standard setting ecosystem, while others are intended to play only a minor part. Others never succeed at all.

Last month I focused on how to select the most effective consortium to join out of the many that are available. This month, I've written about how to create a successful consortium, and what the continuing proliferation of such organizations means for the overall effectiveness of the standard setting infrastructure.

I begin this issue in my ***Editorial*** from a different perspective, however, focusing not on what consortia do well, but on what they do not: cooperate in a comprehensive, well-considered fashion with other consortia, and with the accredited standards development organizations that are part of a more integrated and hierarchical global infrastructure. That system has its own disadvantages, but also its virtues. It is my belief that the members of each type of organization would benefit if there were greater communication and coordination among all types of standards development and standards supporting organizations, both consortia and accredited alike. A new American National Standards Institute (ANSI) working group that I'm chairing is exploring how that might be brought about.

In the ***Feature Article*** this month, I provide the first of a two-part series on how to form a successful consortium to develop and/or promote standards. In this first installment, I talk about practical matters such as scope, membership structure and process. In the next issue, I'll describe how to best create and support such a consortium from the legal perspective.

Of course, there's more to maximizing the system than simply improving communications, and non-profit organizations can be as competitive as their for-profit analogues. As a result, the ***Standards Blog*** entry that I've selected for this month focuses on what happens when different players in the standards ecosystem push and pull rather than collaborate, fueled in this case by political tensions between the United States and other countries relating to Internet governance. In a better-coordinated system, SSOs would spend their time addressing and resolving the underlying issues, rather than seeking to take advantage of them, as may be the case in this "Internet Case of Cat and Mouse."

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As usual, I take a less serious approach in my **Consider This** essay, which illustrates how the world of sports mimics the world of standards. Sports? As you'll see, sports of all types rely heavily on developing, utilizing and enforcing compliance with their own versions of standards in order to enable competitive play, and sometimes ongoing innovation as well.

You'll notice that this month, as last month, I have omitted the **Rest of the News** feature. Doing so significantly reduces the time spent in producing each issue, and the same news (and much more) is posted on a daily basis at both the Standards News Portal section of the ConsortiumInfo.org Website as well as in the right hand column of the Standards Blog. If you miss this feature in the Consortium Standards Bulletin, please let me know, and I'll consider restoring it.

Finally, since December is one of the two months that I turn my writing attention to other projects, look for your next issue in January of the New Year.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue.

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

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