

Irish National Input to Zurich, June 19-21, meeting of the ISO/IEC JTC 1 Strategic Planning Group

1. The National Body of Ireland urges that discussion and decision on the future strategic orientation and work processes of JTC 1 be based on a clear vision of the customer(s) and customer service.

Who are the customers of JTC 1 and how does JTC 1 relate to them? Are they the same as the current participants? Are they different, and if so in what particular way? What procedures are in place to ensure dialogue before, during and after individual standards development efforts? Once that is done all levels within ISO/IEC JTC 1 can apply continuous improvement techniques to harness the energies of all involved in the process
2. Standards development, ratification, and maintenance are the only services provided by JTC 1. Each of these can benefit from better marketing and visibility. JTC 1 has a responsibility to improve the marketing of its processes and deliverables. The MRG report into the Tromso Plenary meeting should include recommendations on this. Other possible ideas include suggestion that the theme for a future World Standards Day be 'ICT Standards makes life easier for all.'
3. Good project management practices are required. Ireland agrees that all work projects within JTC 1 should be managed using the same software package and planning details. This will enable better project tracking and management in the event of any changes occurring at SC, WG, and higher levels. Ireland has no recommendation to make on any specific packages.
4. It is urged that the open membership and national body consensus approach within JTC 1 be maintained. We do not support the introduction of direct representation to the international committees. Further reorganization of JTC 1 is not required or recommended at this time. The existing structures work for many committees and change at this time would likely severely disrupt JTC 1 standards efforts for a considerable time. Any changes needed should be identified and based on use of well-established techniques of continuous improvement. These include benchmarking for time and quality, and better customer satisfaction targets and metrics.
5. Funding of secretariats is an issue. The recommendation of Germany that countries pool resources to fund secretariats with agreements on rotating or sharing chairmanship nomination is supported.
6. JTC 1 should not become just another consortium.
7. Further information and clarification on points made at the first meeting in relation to leveraging technical directions, new deliverables: living standards, and responsibility of maintenance teams (JTC 1 N 5911) are attached.

I.

Leveraging Technical Directions

There is a need to better understand and establish a process to meet user requirements for the systems integration aspects of groups of standards and specifications working together in given technical areas. The synergies established between experts within the JTC 1 Technical Directions should be increased and the opportunity taken to leverage this talent to help meet user requirements for standards integration.

Additional Information

The main issue confronting JTC 1 is the need to understand requirements for standards and ensuring that those within JTC 1 domain of responsibility are adequately met. Discussions on process, tools etc are secondary to the need to address the real needs of users. Both issues underlie the Irish contribution.

The first is the recognition and understanding of user requirements for groups of standards. In the increasingly networked complex technology environment and increased user expectations it is seldom the case that only one particular standard is relevant and sufficient. Instead, it is postulated, the real interest is in technology which implements a range of standards and specifications simultaneously. On that basis JTC 1 needs to understand the degree of this shift and adjust its development and delivery process accordingly. In effect this requires answers to the following questions:

Who are the customers of JTC 1 and how does JTC 1 relate to them?

Are they the same as the current participants?

Are they different, and if so in what particular way?

What procedures are in place to ensure dialogue before, during and after individual standards development efforts?

The second is, accepting the need for standards that work well together, how can JTC 1 leverage the immense talent of its standards community to meet user requirements for standards integration. It is recommended that this can perhaps be achieved by increasing the synergies between experts within (and across) the JTC 1 Technical Directions. In addition this could have the advantage of strengthening the *esprit de corps* of all JTC 1 participants. Success for one, is success for all.

In summary, we believe that discussion and decisions on the future strategic orientation and work processes of JTC 1 should be based on a clear vision of the customer(s) needs and a strong process focus on customer service. This for example requires engagement and co-operation of participants from all levels within ISO/IEC JTC 1 and the application of continuous improvement techniques which harness the energies of all involved in the standards development process. The application of these ideas is suggested to investigate adequately and address the specific requirements for JTC 1 standards integration.

II.

New deliverables: Living Standards

The fit of JTC 1 deliverables with the fast moving requirements and changes which occur in ICT industries has been raised several times. One particular contribution worthy of detailed reconsideration is the concept of a "Living Standard". The proposal envisaged the introduction of a new standards deliverable which is issued electronically and is updated as required, possibly to a predetermined frequency. At the same time this new 'document' will contain or provide pointers to work in progress. The intent is to somehow link existing standards and work in progress for the reader and user community. The challenges represented by this proposed approach are substantial and would need careful study. Elements of the approach are evident in the way some Consortia deliverables are presented today.

Additional Information

The concept of living Standards was first introduced in JTC 1 N4030 dated February 14th 1996. This provocative proposal originated by the national Body of New Zealand was distributed at the Sydney Plenary (March 1996) during the last strategic planning exercise in JTC 1. The enhanced information ideas in that paper are worth reconsidering in view of the request in JTC 1 N 5757 that inputs to this Strategic Planning Cycle 'may include any changes ... however radical or provocative.'

One example of how this "approach" has been implemented by consortia is the production of CDs (usually members only) for finalized specifications enriched with other useful files and information. These CDs contain hyperlinks to trace from the earliest stages (e.g. calls for proposals, responses and liaison documents) through to the finished documents for each published specification. In addition draft texts from current work in progress are included and areas that are yet to be addressed identified. The net effect is that using CDROM (for example) or direct publication on the web the "finished standard" is presented as an emerging "living standard" and it is possible to note how the unresolved issues are being addressed. This information packaging is incredibly different from a hard copy document or a linear array of files placed on a CD. Pointers and information on related R&D activities, implementation pilots, new work proposals and other work in progress in an SC and from organizations in Liaison all have great potential to demonstrate that standards do not exist in isolation. The end result is a magnificent tool and resource for standardizers, business management and students of technology and standardization.

The public integration and presentation of standards results and related efforts contributes to business and technology understanding, and to commitment for future developments. It removes the air of definitive certainty which shrouds standards and provides the ability to identify, link and plant seeds to further avenues of work and research. Presenting more data to the reader is also a useful way to transfer the organizational learning inherent and implicitly used in the standards creation process.

In summary, a "Living Standard" is a rethinking in the context of electronic publication format of what additional information increases the value of a standard publication. It acknowledges and meets the user need to understand not just the standard but also its relationship with other standards, work in progress or unresolved issues/questions of technology.

III.

Responsibility of Maintenance Teams

A five year interval between review cycles is not adequate for most JTC 1 standards. JTC 1 should investigate adoption of the approach introduced by IEC. Maintenance teams, which are working groups of experts designated by the Participating members of their committee, have replaced the old IEC system of systematic review for standards. They are designed to ensure that standards are kept up-to-date according to market requirements, and not revised simply according to an arbitrary time schedule. This approach is more flexible and would add an additional set of inputs to any new NP process.

Additional Information

Discipline in ensuring stable standards while supporting structured review and replacement where necessary of established standards is vitally important in a dynamic information technology standardization environment.

The JTC 1 Directives are clear on the responsibilities for maintenance and for Periodic Review. They conceivably enable an NB or the Secretaries General to initiate a review immediately after a standard has been published or even approved. Recognizing the need for stable standards, and in order to give its TC/SCs greater flexibility to adjust maintenance cycles to correspond with market needs, IEC has established new maintenance procedures and guidelines (IEC Administrative Circular 132/AC, 1999-10-01). Understanding that individual standards may have different life cycles (which may vary from cycle to cycle depending on technology developments) an individual planned review schedule, typically ranging from 2-5 years, is specified for each standard in advance of publication.

Building on this insight and the provisions in current JTC 1 Directives (Clause 14.3 Periodic Review) which state that "review shall include an assessment of the degree to which the standard has been applied in practice" Ireland makes the following specific recommendations for consideration by the Strategic Planning Group and for adoption by JTC 1.

1. That JTC 1 assisted by its National Body members and SCs initiate and report by January 2001 on the results of specific mechanism(s) to compile information on the applications of its standards.
2. That JTC 1 instruct its SCs to specify and include in the DIS a proposed maintenance review cycle ranging between 2 to 5 years depending on their assessment of the technology developments in their area of responsibility.
3. That JTC 1 consider the revised IEC Procedures and guidelines for maintenance and that appropriate text is prepared and adopted for JTC 1 use.