IT99-0113 X

DATE: *March 8, 1999*

FROM: Dave Thewlis, Convenor, Ad Hoc Committee on Archiving Standards

TO: NCITS March 30, 1999 Boulder Meeting

SUBJECT: **Committee Report and Recommendations**

The Ad Hoc Committee on Archiving Standards was formed by NCITS at its July 1998 meeting in San Francisco. The purpose of this committee was to examine the issues involved in dealing with obsolete, dormant or "historical interest" standards and to make recommendations to NCITS as to how to treat these standards in the future.

Upon beginning work, the Ad Hoc Committee determined that it had two different issues which required resolution:

a. How can the maintenance requirements be streamlined for standards which are valid and should remain in effect but which are mature, such that they are not subject to ongoing change, in order to reduce the amount of administrative work to reaffirm them every five years. (Good examples are many old standards managed by NCITS/L2.)

b. What should be done with standards which are obsolete, perhaps of historical interest, instead of or in addition to withdrawing them?

It became apparent that ongoing confusion as to which issue was being discussed was inhibiting progress in either area. Therefore the Ad Hoc chose to separate the issues and deal first with the question of streamlining the reaffirmation process. Once that task was completed, the Ad Hoc could then go on to deal with the further problem of obsolete standards. A proposal to adopt this method of working was made by the Ad Hoc Convenor to the December, 1998 NCITS meeting and was adopted. A set of recommendations to achieve the goal of streamlining the reaffirmation process were to be submitted to NCITS for its March, 1999 meeting.

The Ad Hoc Committee has produced a set of recommendations for consideration by NCITS to achieve the goal of streamlining the reaffirmation process as stated in (a) above; the recommendations are attached to this report. We have discussed with the PPC whether they were willing to take general direction from NCITS in terms of recommendations and produce therefrom the final wording for changes to the NCITS Directives. We believe that

• These recommendations, once approved, can be given to the PPC to produce final wording
• These recommendations can be implemented by NCITS within the current ANSI Directives
• These recommendations adequately address the problem stated in (a) above

If NCITS approves these recommendations, the Ad Hoc is prepared to turn to the issue of obsolete standards as stated in (b) above, and requests that NCITS continue the Ad Hoc through the July 1999 NCITS meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON STREAMLINING THE REAFFIRMATION PROCESS

March 5, 1999

1. Under the current ANSI and NCITS Directives, a standard must be reviewed by the owning committee every five years (unless an extension is requested and granted). The Owner must recommend to NCITS to (a) withdraw the standard; (b) modify the standard; (c) reaffirm the standard. In all cases the recommendation becomes a 30-day letter ballot which must be reviewed and voted on by NCITS members.

2. The Ad Hoc proposes that a fourth option be added to the above: (d) declare the standard "stabilized". A stabilized standard would be one that has ongoing validity and effectiveness but is mature and insofar as can be determined will not require maintenance of any sort. Thus the owning committee would under current rules continue to reaffirm it every five years.

3. At least one five-year review cycle would pass after the last modification to an existing standard before it could be recommended for stabilization by the owning TC.

4. When a TC recommends that a standard be put in stabilized status, the recommendation would be accompanied by a statement of rationale and would result in a 30-day letter ballot just as a reaffirmation recommendation does today.

5. Once a standard is stabilized it goes on a master list of stabilized standards maintained by the NCITS Secretariat.

6. If a new work proposal is generated and adopted against a stabilized standard, the standard would automatically be removed by the Secretariat from the List of Stabilized Standards. To be eligible once again for stabilization it would have to go through a five-year review cycle with no modifications. At that point the owning TC could once again recommend it for stabilized status.

7. Each year the NCITS Secretariat would generate a List of Stabilized Standards identifying all stabilized standards for which five years have passed since their last reaffirmation.

8. The list would state that NCITS intends to reaffirm the listed stabilized standards and would offer a 60-day comment period for NCITS members, TC members and public review.

9. Any comments opposing the reaffirmation of a stabilized standard would be submitted by the NCITS Secretariat to the TC owning the standard. The TC would be required to respond to the comment. If the owning TC agrees to the removal of the standard from the list of stabilized standards then the standard must be the subject of an individual letter ballot recommending some action.

10. At the end of the 60-day comment period all stabilized standards remaining on the list will be recommended by the Secretariat to NCITS for reaffirmation via a single 30-day letter ballot or by NCITS meeting vote.

11. The owning TC may act to remove a standard from stabilized status at any time.

12. We expect that this process applies to any of the standards development methods use by NCITS including "L" and "M" projects, and the final procedural and directive changes made by the PPC should take this into account.