Terminology Standardization and Harmonization

ISO/TC 37 "Terminology and other language and content resources"
http://www.iso.org/tc37

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ISO standardizes process for the design and implementation of terminology standards

An International Standard based on the UNESCO Guidelines for Terminology Policies will assist policy makers and campaigners in the design and implementation process of such strategic guidelines.

Terminology policies have long been recognized as important part and parcel of language planning activities. They are essential to ensure that a language becomes functional in different domains, in mass media and education as well as in everyday life. Terminology planning is a very complex and widespread activity. Decentralized working methods are required to make terminology work affordable and sustainable. Thus, language planning institutions face a dire need for authoritative rules and their forceful implementation to achieve the goal of coordination and interoperability of resources. But apart from language planning, also commercial and civil society organisations have similar needs.

From 2003 to 2005 Infoterm and a number of international experts compiled a 50 odd pages document for UNESCO, laying down the process for the formulation and implementation of such policies. The focus was on national terminology policies, although companies and NGOs/ IGOs had been recognized as well as user group for such strategies.

Timing for the publication appears to have been timed perfectly and it has been received by a large number of language communities with great enthusiasm. Translations into French, Spanish and a variety of others have been conducted in the following years.

There were a series of workshops, seminars and conferences (e.g. European Association for Terminology and Lessius Hogeschool in Nov. 2006, European Association for Terminology in July 2007), and a number of publications and activities that have been dedicated to the subject.

In 2007, finally a new work item was registered by ISO with the aim of developing a service standard on the basis of the UNESCO Guidelines and taking them a step further by addressing the user groups in their entirety.

The current group of experts is an open one to ensure greatest possible involvement of the different user groups. A first Committee Draft is expected in Feb.2008 and the final standard is due in 2010.
For further information about the project and participation requests, please contact Anja Drame adrame@infoterm.org.

Infoterm Terminology Policies portal: http://www.infoterm.info/activities/terminology_policies.php

ISO/IEC publishes survey of icons and symbols to benefit IT users, including the disabled and elderly

Using computers and the Internet can be a challenge for any of us – let alone the elderly, or people with disabilities. ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) are contributing to a solution in the form of a technical report on accessibility icons and symbols that will make IT products easier to use for the elderly, the disabled – and the rest of us.

The technical report contains a survey of icons and symbols currently used to provide access to functions and facilities of IT products not only by people with visual, hearing, motor or cognitive disabilities, but also by the elderly, the temporarily disabled - and by those with no disability at all.

"This technical report is part of a series of standards aimed at making IT more usable," said Dr. Yves Neuville, Chair of the subcommittee that is responsible for its development. "We are not solely concerned with ensuring that the elderly and people with disabilities are treated the same as other users. We want all users to be able to use and contribute to IT services more effectively."

ISO/IEC TR 19765:2007, Information technology – Survey of icons and symbols that provide access to functions and facilities to improve the use of information technology products by the elderly and persons with disabilities, is expected to benefit people with a wide range of disabilities by removing barriers that prevent them from using or getting the best out of IT products and, in so doing, contribute to their overall effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction.

The issue of accessibility to products and services has become more critical with the increasing percentage of older people in the population worldwide. While not all older persons have disabilities, the prevalence of disability or limitations is higher amongst this demographic group.

The icons and symbols contained in ISO/IEC TR 19765 have been collected from a variety of sources including other standards, contemporary software products, Web sites and hardware devices. These sources are cross-referenced and listed in the bibliography.

ISO/IEC TR 19765:2007, *Information technology – Survey of icons and symbols* that provide access to functions and facilities to improve the use of information technology products by the elderly and persons with disabilities, costs 114 Swiss francs and is available from ISO national member institutes (see complete list with contact details) and from ISO Central Secretariat. The new technical report is the work of Joint technical committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, subcommittee SC 35, *User Interfaces, working groups* WG 2, *User interface interaction*, and WG 6, *User interfaces for disabled and the elderly*.

Note: *ISO/IEC do not in any way endorse, recommend or dissuade the use of any of the icons or symbols presented in this Technical Report.*

Source:ISO News - http://www.iso.org/iso/pressrelease?archive=2007

Working together for interoperability:
The MoU on e-business standards

by Howard Mason, Chair, MoU Management Group and ISO/TC 184, Industrial automation systems and integration, SC 4, Industrial data

Electronic business in all its forms is now a cornerstone of the global economy, covering the entire range of business processes : from simple internet purchases to the most complex international trade and financial transactions ; from simple product catalogues to collaborative design processes for aircraft, ships and cars. Electronic business applies to government, manufacturing and service industries, as well as to global supply chains from the smallest of businesses to the end customers, throughout the life cycle of a product or service.

Many standards groups and consortia are developing e-business solutions in concrete areas to provide sectoral or national capabilities. However, the full potential benefits for consumers, industry and governments can only be achieved if this new capability is underpinned by a coherent set of open, interoperable and internationally accepted information and communication technology (ICT) standards. This is the ambitious goal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on e-business standards, endorsed by ISO, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and involving most of the leading e-business standards development organizations.

The MoU vision
The vision of the MoU is to offer an environment in which all key international organizations can cooperate and contribute to the delivery and promotion of an evolving set of e-business standards, maximizing their input to global commerce. The objective of the MoU is to encourage interoperability by recognizing the risks of divergent or conflicting approaches to standardization, avoiding duplication of efforts and therefore avoiding confusion among users, and fostering intersectoral coherence.

History of the MoU
Originally created in 1995 to support the harmonization of electronic data interchange across ISO, IEC and the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) in the early days of trade transactions, the MoU brings together the leadership of technical committees from each organization in a single MoU Management Group (MoU/MG). Key ISO groups include technical committees ISO/TC 37, ISO/TC 46, ISO/TC 68, ISO/TC 154, ISO/TC 184, ISO/TC 204, ISO/TC 215, as well as the Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1. ITU joined the Group in 2000.

The MoU was extended in 1998 to recognize the contribution of other stakeholders to the solutions required by government, industry and the individual citizen. Clear criteria were established for the new international user groups to ensure the inclusion of appropriate open standardization activities. Current participants include:

• OASIS – the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards, providing ebXML and web service standards;

• OAGi – the Open Applications Group, providing e-business objects and messages;

• GS1 (formerly EAN.UCC) – covering product codes, bar coding and the new Electronic Product Coding technologies;

• SWIFT – the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication ; and

• CEN/ISSS – the European Committee for Standardization Information Society Standardization System.

Some former participants, such as the Computer-Aided Acquisition and Life-Cycle Support (CALS) organization, ceased operations once their standards' objectives had been achieved through the MoU. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is planning to join the MoU/MG later this year.

The resulting Management Group is therefore a unique assembly of representatives from the *de jure* and *de facto* standards communities, committed to working in partnership towards a common goal. The group is chaired by a nominee from each of the four signatories in rotation, with a secretariat provided by staff from ISO, IEC, ITU and UNECE.

How the MoU/MG works

Under the MoU structure, each organization is encouraged to openly expose new work items to the other partners, seek comment and additional participation, identify topics that may be of mutual interest, and detect potential overlaps or conflicts. The MoU/MG can then develop consensus recommendations to resolve any issues, and harmonize activities across the organizations, facilitating expert participation in the most appropriate development programmes. As a matter of policy, the MoU/MG does not represent an additional level of bureaucracy in the standards process, but its recommendations are fed into the existing decision-making processes of the member organizations. In this way, the MoU Management Group has no formal power but a great deal of moral authority.

Once an issue has been identified by the MoU/MG as a challenge, it will be regularly monitored until the necessary coherent set of standards has been developed.

The e-business framework

The MoU/MG has established a framework within which the scope of any e-business standards initiative can be represented, providing a basis for the systematic evaluation of work items.

This framework is based on best practices of the participating organizations, integrated into a coherent structure, and supported by clear descriptions of the classes of standards involved. As well as providing a framework for standards, it offers an approach for identifying the necessary components to construct an e-business solution for a particular scenario, such as a trade transaction or an engineering process. The framework is already being used by the US aerospace and United Kingdom defence industries as the basis for their e-business standards planning.

The framework will be used to set up an open web-based registry for e-business standards that will act as a master reference source for standards components. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has offered to host the registry, which may be available by the end of the year.

The framework accommodates multiple levels of detail, so that it is feasible to differentiate across the various classes of information in an enterprise, and the associated standards requirements. Trade transactions, product catalogues and other enterprise records build on information models, lists of master data such as code lists, unambiguous identification schemes for physical and digital objects and any number of product classification schemes. The e-business framework provides a common structure within which the various standards groups can agree their scopes and avoid conflicts.

Key successes

Starting from the improved cooperation resulting from its first summit meeting on business information, the MoU/MG has been successful in facilitating the involvement of consortia with standards bodies. It has, for example, promoted the ongoing collaboration between OASIS and UN/CEFACT on ebXML development, standardized through ISO/TC 154 as the ISO 15000 series. It has actively promoted the harmonization of ebXML core components, with all developers collaborating in a single group within UN/CEFACT to deliver a common library as the basis of ebXML messages, and the associated Naming and Design Rules. The common library is being used by all the groups developing ebXML messages to establish consistent electronic transactions.

Recommendations on the use of character sets, XML schema languages and the UN Trade Data Element Directory have also contributed to the convergence of e-business standards. In addition, the MoU/MG initiated an agreement on the development of radio-frequency identification (RFID) application standards for industrial applications.

Ongoing collaboration

The MoU/MG tracks a number of areas which require collaboration across standards groups. These include:

• harmonized address information for physical deliveries,
• web services,
• e-government services,
• identification schemes for digital and physical objects,
• supply chain security,
• secure container transportation,
• ubiquitous sensor networks, and
• document management and archiving.

The MoU/MG continues to drive active collaboration between standards bodies in meeting the needs of the users. Perhaps the best evidence of this is the growing number of reports on the collaboration between meetings, and the active participation of standards groups.

About the author

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SC 4, *Industrial data*, works for BAE Systems in the United Kingdom, and is responsible for information standards in the Corporate IT office. He has been involved in industrial automation standards for over 20 years, and has chaired ISO/TC 184/SC 4 since 2000. He has also chaired the Management Group of the MoU on e-business standards between ISO, IEC, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) since 2003.

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The new version of international standard ISSN makes life easier for the serials community

A new version of the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) based on the international standard ISO 3297:2007 has been published.

The use of a standard code for the unique identification of serials and other continuing resources is essential for the communities interested in the publication, distribution and management of serials and other continuing resources, in view of the fact that the exchange of information and communication between the different organizations transcends national boundaries.

Françoise Pellé, Director of the ISSN International Centre, explains: "In recognition of the increasing need in the digital environment to collocate as well as differentiate media versions, a new category of resources, "continuing resources" was defined to encompass new kinds of resources, such as updating websites, as well as traditional serials. This notion has been introduced in the scope of the ISO 3297:2007, and a new functionality, the "linking ISSN" (ISSN-L) has been defined for the purpose of supporting services that offer search and delivery functionality across all media versions".

ISSN allows the identification of any serial publication, including electronic serials, independently of its country of publication, of its language or alphabet, of its frequency, medium, etc. and is applicable to serials and to other continuing resources, whether past, present or to be published or produced in the foreseeable future, whatever the medium of publication or production. Continuing resources include serials such as newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, etc., and ongoing integrating resources such as loose-leaf publications that are continually updated and Web sites that are continually updated.

The ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) is an eight-digit number which identifies all periodical publications as such, including electronic serials. Each ISSN assigned to a serial publication is registered in an international database: the ISSN Register. It is the most comprehensive and authoritative source for the identification of serial publications world-wide. The exchange of information and communication between the different organizations such as libraries, abstracting services, suppliers, distributors, publishers and other content users transcending national boundaries imposes the requirement for a standard code: the ISSN.

Individual monographs, sound and video recordings, printed music publications, audiovisual works and musical works have their own numbering systems and are not specifically mentioned in ISO 3297:2007. Such items may carry an ISSN in addition to their own standard numbers when they are part of a continuing resource. ISO 3297:2007 has been elaborated by ISO's technical committee (TC 46) for information and documentation standards through the subcommittee (SC 9) that develops and maintains ISO standards on the identification and description of information resources.

ISO 3297:2007, *Information and documentation – International standard serial number (ISSN)* costs 96 Swiss francs and is available from national member institutes (see the complete list with contact details) and ISO Central Secretariat.

Source: ISO News - http://www.iso.org/iso/pressrelease.htm?refid=Ref1073