ISSIG Bits



July 2010

For the latest information in Information Systems and Technology Project Management, visit http://www.pmi-issig.org/. The Information Systems SIG (ISSIG) dedicates itself to promoting the value of project management in Information Systems and Technology. It serves as a forum for communicating project management knowledge, principles, and practices by bringing practical solutions to our members and the industry worldwide.

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I. Information Systems SIG Milestones

Our Mission

The mission of the PMI Information Systems SIG is to become *the* professional IS and IT project management organization of choice by providing the greatest value to current



and prospective worldwide members through the delivery of quality and unique services and products in a cost-effective manner. The Mission will be accomplished through:

- Disseminating state-of-the-art project management practices.
- Member education.
- Members sharing and exchanging information.
- Championing professionalism of IS and IT project management.
- Serving as a networking and collaborative hub for all industries and all project management practitioner levels by supporting corporations, government agencies, academic institutions, subject matter experts, trainers, consultants, vendors, other components of PMI and other organizations that contribute to the profession of project management.

Looking for PDUs?

Many of our members earn Professional Development Units (PDUs) through the ISSIG to maintain their PMP certifications. From our Web site, click on Learn, Webinars or Podcasts to access a wealth of information and start earning those PDUs!







By Sanjay Swarup, PMP PMI-ISSIG Chair chair@pmi-issig.org

Dear PMI-ISSIG Members:

I have been in constant touch with you on the progress being made on the Virtual Communities Program. In my communication, I had shared with you on how diligently we have worked with the PMI on the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to continue to deliver to you all the current PMI-ISSIG programs and services, as well as make available new products and services common to all Virtual Communities. The MOU with PMI was the first step to ensure that the interests of all the PMI-ISSIG members will be taken care of in the transition. At the same time every effort is being made for continuing to provide member benefits during the transition process and keep providing the benefits thereafter, as seamlessly as possible.

While the MOU provides a legal framework, the business plan developed for the IS CoP ensures that the PMI-ISSIG members get the current product and services and much more upon transition. PMI-ISSIG board, as your volunteer leader group has worked tirelessly to get the best deal for you. Therefore, it is now time for you, as the member of PMI-ISSIG to decide by a membership vote if you are in favor of this transition. We have the year-end deadline to complete this transition process before all SIGs are de-charted by PMI.

Soon you will receive by postal mail service a ballot from VoteNet, a separate outside voting software consulting firm with a request for your vote. We encourage you to vote soonest upon receiving the ballot by postal mail.

Deadline for Ballot Receipt is 9-Sep-2010: Only ballots received by 9-Sep-2010 will be counted. Once you are in receipt of the mail-in ballot, please mail early to allow for delivery by the deadline date.

As communicated earlier, the PMI-ISSIG Board has unanimously voted in favor of transition of PMI-ISSIG to PMI as IS CoP and later dissolution of PMI-ISSIG after successful transition, upon affirmation by

the PMI-ISSIG board. Your vote is needed for the following:

- 1. To transition PMI-ISSIG as a new virtual community of PMI, to be named as Information Systems Community of Practice (IS CoP).
- To dissolve the PMI Information Systems SIG (PMI-ISSIG), upon the successful transition to PMI-IS CoP. The PMI-ISSIG will no longer be needed as a separately incorporated entity.
- 3. To transfer the PMI-ISSIG URL ownership to PMI for the web site redirects, effective on the date the new virtual community website opens to the membership.
- 4. To amend the PMI-ISSIG by-law, Article XIII Dissolution. This amendment will allow PMI-ISSIG to transfer all the remaining funds to the PMI for the future use of IS CoP, in place of donating them to a charity upon dissolution, as stipulated currently in the PMI-ISSIG by-laws.

If the results of the membership vote will be in support of the transition, the PMI-ISSIG transition team will auto-subscribe all the PMI-ISSIG members in good standing to the new website. This will make your access to the new IS CoP website automatic. Currently subscription to all the virtual communities is free to all the PMI members as a promotion; therefore, you will have full access to web sites of all the virtual communities. This should be helpful to view and use tools and templates, engage via discussion boards, and receive periodic e-communications from the community leaders.

You will have endless opportunities upon the launching of the new IS CoP website. You can show off your subject matter expertise by writing blogs, starting discussions or post resources in the IS CoP website. Together, we can create a knowledge community that provides a global perspective on best practices, lessons learned and industry trends. Should you decide that the IS CoP is not the right fit for your interests, you would have to simply click the unsubscribe hyperlink that would be located under your name in the upper right corner of the community website.

If the results of the membership vote are not in favor of the transition, the PMI-ISSIG will no longer be an affiliate of PMI and will have its charter with PMI terminated by 31-Dec-2010. The PMI-ISSIG transition process will end and PMI-ISSIG will lose





all affiliation with the Project Management Institute and usage of its Intellectual Property. PMI-ISSIG will be unable to transition into a virtual community under PMI, loose membership subscriptions from PMI and toil to survive as an independent organization.

Please consider this vote and its implications very seriously. The PMI-ISSIG Board is confident that this transition will foster a great new way of connecting our members with other global communities and bring additional value to our members. I encourage you to mail back your votes immediately and let your voice be heard.

It is an exciting time to be involved in this organizational change! Please stay tuned, contact us and feel free to send your questions to vcp communications@pmi-issig.org

With best regards,

Sanjay Swarup, PMP, P.Eng. Chair, PMI-ISSIG chair@pmi-issig.org http://www.pmi-issig.org

2010 PMI-ISSIG Theme: "Members First"

III. From the Editor



By Tolitha Lewis, PMP PMI-ISSIG Director of Communications communications@pmiissig.org

Welcome to your July 2010 issue of the Bits!

We are able to provide this information thanks to the many volunteers within our group. Thanks to everyone who helps contribute to all of the efforts of the PMI-ISSIG community.

We love to include information written by our members! It's a great way to share your experience and provide critical value to the entire PMI-ISSIG community.

PDUs are awarded to authors as follows:

- ISSIG Review articles selected for publication earns 15 PDUs!
- Bits articles allow you the opportunity to be read by our thousands of members; however, they do not qualify for PDUs.

We urge you to document your expertise and send us an article to share in the Bits and/or Reviews. All articles should be in an MS Word format and can be submitted to communications@pmi-issig.org

Remember that you can read past issues of the Bits and ISSIG Review on our Web site under Documents. Visit our Web site at www.pmi-issig.org You will be glad you did.

IV. Articles and Contributions



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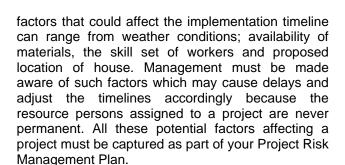
By Ernest Volson, PMP

evolson@slucia.com

Now that all documentation is in place, we can begin work and start implementation. The project team has created their project schedule and identified some timelines they feel can work. These timelines should have been worked out based on input from all stakeholders involved, the domain experts past experience of working on similar projects, past project facts or just on your experience in the field. We must also take the unplanned events into consideration when finalizing any timeline. We know and expect a task to take "X" amount of days but on any given day we can have an incident(s) that may extend or delay a task.

We have to remember that no two projects are the same. There must be some factors or factor that changes a project. Take for instance a project to build two houses same size same design on two different lots. Building one house may take longer than building the other based on many factors. The





The displacement of staff can test a manager's skill in motivating, reshuffling and utilizing employees not involved on a project to cover the void left by their colleagues. It also allows staff to improve on their multitasking skills and their overall management skills. It is truly an art being able to be directly involved in a project and still be able to make a meaningful contribution to your department or unit. Being able to manage your time across project and daily duties is something that will help you develop into a true project professional. Managers need to ensure the role of their employees on a project (full time or part time) is clearly defined.

If your employee is a Full Time project resource on a project then you must ensure that other persons can fill the void left by that employee. There should be NO employee who is the only one with knowledge of the tasks involved in completing their days work. We must ensure that succession planning is in effect and that any officer can step in and complete a task should the regularly assigned employee be unable to complete it for whatever reason. If your employee is a Part Time project resource then he or she must be able to plan the time that is spent working with the project team and the time spent back in his/her department. A Manager/Supervisor should request a copy of the project tasks/activities in which their employee is involved in so that they have an idea of what that employee's involvement is on the project. This also allows Managers to assign tasks to that employee during the time he/she is not involved on the project.

One thing we must remember on every project is that employees/resources are never permanent and will return to their respective departments/units at the end of the project. While an employee is involved in a project his/her manager/supervisor should try to ensure that the void created is filled using the remaining employees available to the department or unit. If these employees are full time resources of the project, the manager should make

the necessary arrangements to have the remaining or other employees hold temporary or multiple roles within the department. This will assist a manager in improving himself/herself by allowing him/her to work with the remaining employees at his/her disposal, managing and maintaining the stress levels of these employees, improving their overall skill set and job experience and keeping them motivated on the job.

As an employee you will be able to benefit by being able to perform multiple jobs in your department/unit and improve your multitasking skill. When given the opportunity you must maximize the time you have on any project to showcase your leadership, verbal, writing and technical skills. Employees not assigned to a project should not conclude that being temporarily assigned to do someone else's desk is a "prison sentence" but rather a "get out of jail free card" that could see you get promoted or be seen as a true well rounded professional



Don't Blame the Project Team

By Vijay Aluwalia vijay@varune.com

Today we see BP in turmoil and blame being apportioned to various individuals during this awful crisis.

Taking this scenario down to a project level we see project failures being blamed on the team by the project manager. It's quite easy to point the finger at others and simply state that they were not pulling their weight on the project. Some of you may have heard statements like "It's not my fault the project is failing, it's because Joe & Jane did not do complete their work!" or "The project dashboard is in red as the XYZ team did not complete their work." Someone gets thrown under the bus as a result of the undesirable state of the project.

It's like going to a restaurant and having to wait for ages for your meal which then turns out to be unpleasant for your taste buds. The poor waiter gets a full frontal verbal assault from you. But the real problem may be related to a number of reasons: the menu is new, the chef did not turn up, the junior chef is being trained, the ingredients are stale, not enough waiters are available, the oven is not





working properly, too many guests turned up at once or you were in grumpy mood and were looking to expend some negative energy when you arrived.

If you are leading projects and things start to go astray then don't blame the team, blame yourself. Yes, stand up in front of the stakeholders and say aloud, "it is my fault that this project is in this state." Hopefully, you find this a liberating experience and your colleagues appreciate your truthfulness.

The real value comes from examining factors that you (yes you the project leader) need to consider and fix moving forward. Here are the five factors that need to be addressed:

1. Communicating the necessity for the project

Do individuals understand the purpose of the project and the value it brings the organization? Who should be communicating this to them and when should they be informed? What will success look like? It's difficult to move ahead when there is no clarity around these questions. There has to be wide, constant, clear communication from various levels within the project team.

2. Commitment to the project

Do individuals see the value to them personally? How is each individual motivated? What links have been established relating to these factors and the tasks at hand? It doesn't matter how important the initiative is if the underlying team members are not behind the project. They need to have ownership and be motivated to push ahead productively.

3. Individual capability

Do individuals have the right knowledge and skills? What training needs to be in place? Do they have the appropriate tools to succeed? Are there knowledge pools to support team members? Team members must have sound knowledge, skills and tools to succeed. Else you are setting them and the project up for failure.

4. Ability to apply knowledge

What is hindering the individual's ability to apply the knowledge and skills? Is the person the right fit for the project activity? Do they have the capacity to succeed? What external factors are influencing their performance? Providing individuals with training and tools is not enough. Ensuring they can and are willing to apply these skills needs to be considered.

5. Reinforcing results

How can results be constantly attained and improved on? What specific and individual related reinforcement needs to be in place? How frequent and who should be reinforcing results? It's vitally important to maintain results over the duration of the project and not look for one-hit wonders.

Individuals typically come to work to succeed. I doubt anyone wakes up and says "I am going to do a poor job at work today."

John C. Maxwell, in his book 'Develop the leader within you' points to an article in Newsweek quoting the president of Hyatt Hotels as saying: - "If there is anything that I have learned in my 27 years in the service industry, it is this – 99% of all employees want to do a good job. How they perform is simply a reflection of the one for whom they work."



Microblogging in Project Management 2.0

By Andrew Filev http://www.wrike.com

Note: This article appeared in Project Management 2.0 Blog dated July 1st

A new tool came to our lives and greatly influenced the way we communicate. Twitter turned out to be next big thing of the social media world, and it looks like it's here to stay. How can we explain Twitter's immense popularity? Simplicity, convenience, speed? I'd say it's all three of them that make the tool so sticky. In fact these factors even made many of us seek a similar tool to facilitate our project communications.

But communicating with your team members may be quite different from chatting with your friends on the Web. When the first wave of enterprise microblogging tools' popularity started to fade, it turned out that impressions of "business tweeting" were ranging from "friction-free collaboration" to "waste of time." These responses maybe confusing, especially when you're thinking of whether or not to adopt a microblogging solution for your team to use.

So, is microblogging for project communications worth a try? Let's explore the opportunities offered by microblogging and see. Here's how microblogging may help you in project management and collaboration





Instant collaboration for distributed teams

One of my favorite examples is <u>Hal Macomber's story</u> about using a microblogging solution, Yammer, with his project team at Lean Project Consulting. It's a great example of how microblogging can improve and speed up your teamwork when your team is separated by time zones and distances. Hal's team members use Yammer to ask questions, announce issues, share tips on how to resolve these issues and get help from their peers immediately. Hal and all his team members check this microblog from their phones and can respond to an important request even when they're on the go.

Reporting on project progress

Microblogging is an easy way to update people on the project status, especially on assignments that are not mission-critical. Team members can inform their peers about what they are doing at any given moment in time and let others know how the work is going. Of course, a microblogging tool will not be a replacement for updating statuses in a system where you track your project plans. But it can successfully be used as a complementary solution for sharing thoughts in an unstructured way. Besides, some project management systems show your actions on structured data in the activity stream, bringing the best of two worlds together. See the discussion on standalone vs. integrated solution below.

Lightning-speed knowledge-sharing

Yes, as of today, microblogging is the fastest way to share an idea, a fact or a conclusion. Short messages are written quickly. They are read quickly as well. Even though 140 or 200 characters look much too short to distribute knowledge, it is enough for a teaser link or a headline.

If you read an interesting book slightly related to your work, you probably wouldn't spam your immediate colleagues, and you surely wouldn't bother managers and folks from other groups. If we receive an e-mail, there's an unsaid rule that we should invest our time in acting on that e-mail. With status updates, there's no such protocol. One can ignore them at will, and thus all of us can share more freely, with less pressure.

Of course, there's no one-size-fits-all solution. For example, if you want to inform your team about a new corporate policy, then microblogging probably is not the right solution for you. At the end of the day, when you think of adopting a microblogging tool, you should always keep in mind the problem you're trying to solve with it.

Stand-alone or built-in?

Now, how do you choose a microblogging solution if you decide to try one? There are many options available on the market today. For example, you can use Twitter while protecting your updates from the public, so that only your followers can see them. But that is fairly inflexible and might force you to have several Twitter accounts. There also are many microblogging tools designed for private use. Yammer, used by Hal's team, is only one example; there's also Present.ly, CubeTree, Communote, etc.

However, despite the popularity of standalone microblogging solutions, they hardly justify adopting a separate product. Jeffrey Mann, research vice president for Gartner, thinks that "it will be very difficult for microblogging as a standalone function to achieve widespread adoption within the enterprise ... Mainstream enterprises are unlikely to adopt standalone, single-purpose microblogging products."

Nowadays, there's a tendency of adding microblogging-like features to online project management and collaboration solutions. This makes the logistics a bit easier and brings the benefits of better adoption and cross-pollination of data.

Have you tried microblogging with your project team? What was your experience? Please share your thoughts.



Agile and Culture: The Results

By Michael Spayd http://collectiveedgecoaching .com/

Note: This article appeared in Collective Edge Coaching dated July 6th

In May this year, I began a survey on Agile and Culture, covering the three big methods: Scrum, XP,





and Lean-Kanban. I solicited participation on several major lists (scrumdevelopment, leandevelopment, and extremeprogramming) and from a couple of organizational clients. Approximately 120 people responded.

The results were confirming on the one hand, surprising on the other. As a cultural meme, Agile is fundamentally patterned on the Collaboration culture type (not surprising). A strong second preference, however, is the Cultivation culture type (surprising). On the overall level, there are only slight differences culturally between the 3 Agile methods studied (a bit surprising). However, on the level of specific culture levers (things like Power & Influence, Decision-making, etc.) the results were either different from the overall pattern (e.g., Collaboration followed closely by Cultivation) or showed a different pattern between the 3 methods.

Background

Fundamentally, organization culture is to organizations what personality is to people. Culture combines many things: work practices, values, how processes and other systems are carried out, styles of leadership, decision making and thinking about organizational challenges and solutions. I have been using a specific culture typology for working with Agile transformation efforts for many years, and that approach is the basis of this research.

In The Reengineering Alternative: A Plan to Make Your Current Culture Work (1994), William Schneider outlines his researched-based model of organizational culture (Bill is a great guy, and one of our partners-see our Partner page). Schneider outlines four core cultures. Similar to a person taking the Myers-Briggs type inventory, there is no "right" answer or "better" culture. Any culture (like a personality) can be adaptive to its environment or not, in balance or not, and authentic or not. Determining and aligning a management approach (such as Agile) that is being implemented with the existing organizational culture is the difference between flourishing success and abject failure. Not all ideas are good ones, depending on their fit with the organization's culture. Here's a brief description of the four cultures.

Control

If a culture could be said to have a quest, in the Control culture that quest is for certainty and predictability. Not surprisingly, the Control culture loves data and objective analysis. It strives for

market share dominance with customers and to be the 'only game in town.' Managers in a Control culture tend to be directive and authoritative. Jobs are focused on functional need, even functional loyalty. The archetype of the Control culture is the military, where a strict chain of command is followed and rank means everything. The climate in such a culture is serious, formal, and at times even secretive. The underlying psychological motive here is power. A potential misunderstanding is that a Control culture is inherently 'controlling.' The urge of the culture is for certainty—the kind of certainty needed in a nuclear power plant, for instance which is not necessarily controlling, but rather orderly and procedural. When the culture is overly controlling, that represents an out of balance situation.

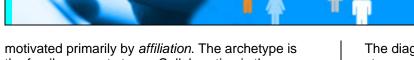
Competence

The guest of the Competence culture is for freedom, distinction and uniqueness. A consistent product strategy in such a culture is striving to be the best, innovative, one of a kind, cutting edge. In contrast to a Control culture, the role of employees here is to become an expert within one's specialty. The culture is oriented towards learning and development in service of becoming the best. The climate is intense and competitive, with a tendency towards being Spartan and prideful. Power comes not through position per se, but through prowess in one's field, a meritocracy. Organization structure tends towards the matrix or an adhocracy. The underling archetype is the traditional University, where people pursue being the best. *Achievement* is the driving motivation in the Competence culture. Many engineering organizations and specialty product companies are Competence cultures, as are many IT organizations.

Collaboration

The quest in the Collaboration culture is for unity and connectedness. The relationship with customers is synergistic and oriented towards partnering. The natural organizational form that goes along with this intent is the cluster, often a cluster of teams. Leadership in the Collaborative culture is participative and collegial, focusing on team building and developing trust. Employees are encouraged to be generalists, to honor diversity and utilize others as resources. There is an atmosphere of informality, of "let's try it and see what happens," of on the job training and learning. The climate is harmonious, trusting, spontaneous and egalitarian with a 'can do' philosophy. (Parallels to the Agile philosophy are perhaps obvious.) A Collaboration culture is





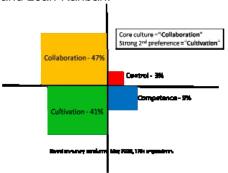
motivated primarily by *affiliation*. The archetype is the family or sports team. Collaboration is the favored culture of many consulting companies and other highly collaborative service providers.

Cultivation

The final of the four core cultures is called Cultivation. Its quest is for meaning, for making a contribution. The relationship to its customer (or constituent) is their growth, the realization of their highest potential. Leaders in the Cultivation culture are catalysts, cultivators and stewards of human potential. The role of employees can vary from functionalist to generalist to specialist, depending on organizational need and personal inclination. Mentoring, sponsoring and a fervor to learn and grow are common. The climate of such an organization is lively, magnetic, committed, emotional and giving. The organizational structure is unconventional such as a wheel or lattice. Cultivation is the ultimate 'values-driven' organization. It is the least common type in the forprofit world, but quite prevalent in non-profits and religious and spiritual organizations, which provide the underlying archetype. Self-actualization is the primary motivator in a Cultivation culture. The four core cultures are generally depicted by Schneider on a 2x2 matrix, where the horizontal axis represents the Personal cultures on the left and Impersonal ones on the right. Likewise, the vertical axis represents an Actuality culture on top, a Possibility one on the bottom. Collaboration and Cultivation are Personal cultures; Control and Competence are Impersonal ones, etc. The matrix also represents the fact that Control and Cultivation are opposite culture types, as are Competence and Collaboration.

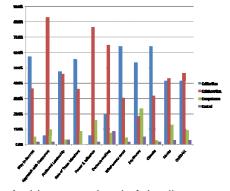
Results

The following diagram represents results from the Agile culture survey, combined across Scrum, XP and Lean-Kanban:



The diagram shows Collaboration to be the strongest culture preference (47%) for the ideal Agile team, as judged by the 120+ respondents to the survey. Cultivation is a strong second at 41%. Competence shows up a distant 3rd at 9%, while Control (predictably) is a meager 3%. What this confirms is that Agile is clearly a strong culture meme (it is not, for instance, spread somewhat evenly across the four types) and it is decidedly a Personal culture. Further, if you are implementing Agile into a Competence or (especially) a Control culture, beware. (There are ways to mitigate this risk, but that is beyond the scope of this blog). A further detailing of the results is revealed by examining each of the 10 culture levers measured in the survey (overall, Schneider identified 20; I choose the most salient 10 for this research).

The following diagram shows results for each of the 10 culture levers, again summarized across all 3 methods:



At this greater level of detail, some new patterns emerge. First, in only four of the ten levers does Collaboration have the strongest preference, while the other six have Cultivation as a preference. In general, Collaboration and Cultivation are number one and two. In three instances, however, the Competence culture is the second strongest. These three levers are Approach with Customers, Power & Influence, and Key Norms.

Two cautions: the results do not represent the study of actual Agile teams, but rather the 'ideal' preference for a good Agile team as expressed by practitioners. Second, when Schneider measures an organizations culture, he does it with a much more extensive (and statistically validated) instrument. These results may be incomplete due to this limitation of the survey.



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V. ISSIG Editorial Calendar & Contribution Guidelines

The ISSIG Editorial Calendar is a work-in-progress as we further streamline the publication process, better serving our members. Please remember your ISSIG staffers and contributing authors are all volunteers with busy careers of their own. A new calendar is under development and will be published when it becomes available.

ISSIG Review and Bits Contribution Guidelines: ISSIG cannot accept document manuscripts formatted as image files, so please send all manuscripts formatted in MS Word or equivalent, to **communications@pmi-issig.com**. To facilitate editing, graphics should be included as separate files as well as embedded within the document. ISSIG Review articles are typically 1,500 to 2,500 words in length and provide useful advice or guidance to ISSIG members.

ISSIG Bits articles are typically 500 to 750 words in length and provide similar value or entertainment to ISSIG members. (Word counts are rough guidelines only.) See "Copyright and Distribution Information" below, for more specifics on ISSIG Bits articles. ISSIG Review articles selected for publication earn 15 PDUs! Bits articles do not earn PDUs at this time.

VI. Contact Information

PMI-ISSIG's Membership Service Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:45 pm EST, excluding holidays to answer your questions about membership and PMI-ISSIG resources. You can reach us at:

Mailing Address:

PMI-ISSIG 109 VIP Drive, Suite 220 Wexford, PA 15090 USA

Other:

Toll-Free, US and Canada: 1-877-667-8707

FAX: 724-935-1560 e-Mail: info@pmi-issig.org Web site: www.pmi-issig.org

Attention: Are you an ISSIG member and not receiving your monthly electronic Bits newsletter? Sign in on the ISSIG Homepage, at http://www.pmi-issig.org, and click on "Newsletter Signup." Not receiving the ISSIG Review? Visit the PMI Homepage and update your personal profile. The Review distribution list is based on your contact information on file with PMI.

Remember: ISSIG receives its member contact information from PMI. Therefore, all changes to your member contact information must be made through PMI. E-mail your details to PMI. Alternatively, you can login to PMI's Web site and change it in the member section.

VII. Copyright and Distribution Information

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