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NEWS SHORTS

Every day, we scan the web for all of the news and press releases that relate to standards, and aggregate that content at the [News Section](#) of ConsortiumInfo.org. For up to date information, bookmark our News page, or take advantage of our RSS feed: <http://www.consortiuminfo.org/news/rss/>. Updates are usually posted on Mondays and Wednesdays.

The following are just a few of the many stories from the past month that you can find digested at ConsortiumInfo.org.

New Consortia

New consortia are back in style: *In yet another sign of better economic times...consortia are back. Ever since the bursting of the Internet budget, funding new consortia has been near the bottom of corporate budget priorities. But now, new organizations seem to be popping up like crocuses in spring. The last several weeks witnessed the announcement of a spate of new organizations, particularly in the areas of security and anti-spam technology, for which the annual RSA convention provided an appropriate platform to publicize a debut. Gesmer Updegrove LLP <http://www.gesmer.com/practice_areas/consortium.shtml>, which sponsors the CSB, helped form the two new consortia noted below. The first, the Cyber Security Industry Alliance <<http://www.csialliance.org>>, was one of the new organizations announced in San Francisco at this year's RSA conference, and marks a new direction for the technology industry: banding together to influence legislation - a practice heretofore largely the province of non-technology companies. The second new organization, the Near Field Communications Forum <<http://www.nfc-forum.org>>, announced its launch at CEBIT in Hanover, Germany. The NFC Forum addresses a new use for wireless communications: the "touch" space, where two devices (one of which might be a camera, cell phone or smart card), need only touch, or be placed next to, another device in order to communicate with it.*

LEADING CYBER SECURITY FIRMS FORM NON-PROFIT GROUP FOR PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY, EDUCATION

CSIA Press Center, San Francisco, CA, February 25, 2004 -- The Cyber Security Industry Alliance (CSIA) was launched today at the RSA® Conference 2004 by a group of 12 innovative security software, hardware and service vendors. The CSIA is a non-profit corporate-membership organization, whose mission is to improve cyber security through public policy initiatives, public sector partnerships, corporate outreach, academic programs, alignment behind emerging industry technology standards and public education. The CSIA also announced the appointment of Paul Kurtz as its executive director. Most recently, Kurtz served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Critical Infrastructure Protection on the White House's Homeland Security Council (HSC). He was responsible for developing the White House's strategy and policy for protecting the nation's critical infrastructure. [...Full Story](#)

Nokia, Philips and Sony Establish the Near Field Communication, NFC, Forum

NFC-Forum News, Hanover, Germany, March 18, 2004 -- Nokia Corporation, Royal Philips Electronics (NYSE: PHG, AEX: PHI) and Sony Corporation today announced that they will establish the Near Field Communication (NFC) Forum to enable the use of touch-based interactions in consumer electronics, mobile devices, PCs, smart objects and for payment purposes. Touch-based interactions will allow users to access content and services in an intuitive way by touching smart objects and connecting devices just

by holding them next to each other. The new forum will promote implementation and standardization of NFC technology to ensure interoperability between devices and services. [...Full Story](#)

New Standards/Specifications

Convergence is everywhere: Just as physics is seeking a unified theory of everything, it seems as if the ITC world's goal is to connect everything with everything. It's a rather breathtaking goal, and some of the component pieces are impressive as well. As reported in the following press release, the W3C is taking steps to "give voice to the Web" with the granting of full Recommendation status to two new specifications. Utilizing such standards, telephones will be able to add another two billion nodes to the Web.

World Wide Web Consortium Issues VoiceXML 2.0 and Speech Recognition Grammar as W3C Recommendations

w3c.org, March 16, 2004 -- Giving voice to the Web, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has published VoiceXML 2.0 and Speech Recognition Grammar Specification (SRGS) as W3C Recommendations. The goal of VoiceXML 2.0 is to bring the advantages of Web-based development and content delivery to interactive voice response applications. SRGS is key to VoiceXML's support for speech recognition, and is used by developers to describe end-users responses to spoken prompts. Today's announcement marks the advancement to Recommendation status of the first two specifications in W3C's Speech Interface Framework. Aimed at the world's estimated two billion fixed line and mobile phones, W3C's Speech Interface Framework will allow an unprecedented number of people to use any telephone to interact with appropriately designed Web-based services via key pads, spoken commands, listening to pre-recorded speech, synthetic speech and music. [...Full Story](#)



Intellectual Property Issues

Over the past year, there have been a number of cases where patents have been asserted against important technologies as well as less significant, but still pervasive, technical features. This has raised concerns relating not only to the disruption that would occur as a result of the patents asserted, but also over the system that allowed the patents in question to have been granted at all. On the "left" of the IT thought spectrum, there are those that think that certain enabling areas of technology ought not be subject to private ownership at all, even if they are otherwise valid and eligible for patent protection. More conservative participants would settle for greater consistency and care by the USPTO. We covered this situation in detail in the November issue of the Consortium Standards Bulletin, entitled "[Do IT Patents Work?](#)" The stories continue to issue briskly in this area, as evidenced by those that we have selected from this month's news, and included below.



Not over yet, but a step in the right direction: Microsoft in particular, and webmasters in general, got a much needed boost when the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) made a preliminary judgment against certain patent claims of Eolas Technologies and the University of California. Last year, the two patent owners had won a \$521 million judgment that Microsoft said would lead it to make changes to its Explorer Web browser. Following an appeal by Tim Berners-Lee of the W3C to Undersecretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property James E. Rogan to initiate a reexamination of the Eolas patent, the USPTO agreed to review the patent claims in question. The process is not over yet, but the first inning goes to Microsoft...and grants a reprieve (at least) to Webmasters everywhere.

Eolas Patent Invalid

By Matt Hicks

eWeek, March 5, 2004 -- A federal patent examiner's initial review has found the Web browser patent at the center of a major verdict against Microsoft Corp. to be invalid. Eolas Technologies Inc. won a \$521 million jury verdict last year in its patent-infringement lawsuit against Microsoft, prompting an outcry from the Web's major standards body. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) asked the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to re-examine the patent, which it did starting in November. [...Full Story](#)



This Can't be Good: As noted in the story above, a great hue and cry was raised in the Web world as a result of the patent infringement claims brought by Eolas Technologies against Microsoft. Now it's Microsoft that is playing the heavy, as noted in the following story: Microsoft has been granted a patent covering certain aspects of using XML, one of the core technologies of the Web. The immediate questions arise: how will Microsoft wield this patent, and what will be the reaction of the IT community?

Microsoft Locks Up XML Patent [InternetNews.com, February 12, 2004](#) -- The speculation as to whether Microsoft intends to patent XML technology is over. Microsoft has been granted United States patent 6,687,897 for "XML script automation." The patent, awarded by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on February 3, appears to deal with basic XML functionality. Specifically, it describes a method for unpacking multiple scripts contained within a single XML file. According to the application filed by Microsoft, the patent involves "systems, methods and data structures for encompassing scripts written in one or more scripting languages in a single file." "The scripts of a computer system are organized into a single file using Extensible Language Markup (XML)," Microsoft's patent document continues. The document explained that each script is delimited by a file element and the script's instructions are delimited by a code element within each file element. When a script is executed, the file is analyzed to create a list of script names or functional descriptions of the scripts. [...Full Story](#)



Towards a more perfect patent policy: Over the years, a number of investigators have endeavored to contrast the intellectual property rights policies of standard setting organizations for various purposes. Recently, **GTW Associates** <<http://www.gtwassociates.com/>>, an international standards and trade policy consultancy with expertise in the strategic role of standards in competitiveness of businesses, organizations and countries in the global marketplace, was commissioned by the Japan New Energy and Industrial Development Organization and the Japan Strategic Program for the Creation, Protection and Exploitation of Intellectual Property to create a set of criteria for the "Evaluation of a Patent Policy for a Standard Setting Organization." The first draft of those criteria has been posted at the GTW website. Comments are invited through April 15, 2004.

DRAFT Criteria (in development) for the Evaluation of a patent policy for a Standards Setting Organization

GTWAssociates.com -- This First public DRAFT Dated Monday, March 15, 2004 is intended only for stimulation of discussion and comments...[and is] intended to be helpful to compare and contrast the patent policies of standards developing organizations in a consistent and logical manner....The preparation of a list of criteria for comparison of IPR policies hopefully will represent a step towards such clarity and transparency. GTW Associates requests comments and feedback on the list by April 15, 2004 in order to refine and improve it before applying the criteria to evaluate the patent policies of several standards developing organizations. Comments may be sent to gtw@gtwassociates.com or may be posted to an on line discussion web GTW welcomes additional criteria that may be helpful and editorial suggestions or revisions of the preliminary criteria to improve their wording. [...Full Story](#)

Standards and Society

Regrettable but necessary: As we have reported on a regular basis, while the war on terror plays out in vivid detail across television screens and in newspaper headlines, a large number of standards bodies are working quietly behind the scenes to set diverse standards that help lower risk, and facilitate response to emergencies when they occur. The following three stories cover the adoption of nine different standards by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in the areas of radiological and nuclear detection, an OASIS first-responder equipment specification, and a NIST security standard for government computer systems.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Adopts First Responder Equipment American National Standards

ANSI News and Publications, Washington, DC, February 26, 2004 -- U.S. Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary Charles McQueary and Under Secretary Mike Brown announced today the DHS adoption of five American National Standards for personal protective equipment for first responders. The standards were developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and subsequently approved by ANSI. [...Full Story](#)

CAP v1.0 Approved by OASIS Emergency Management TC The Cover Pages, February 26, 2004 -- Members of the OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee have approved a Committee Draft specification for the Common Alerting Protocol Version 1.0 and have recommended its advancement for approval by OASIS as an OASIS standard. The Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) is "a simple but general format for exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts and public warnings over all kinds of networks. CAP allows a consistent warning message to be disseminated simultaneously over many different warning systems, thus increasing warning effectiveness while simplifying the warning task. [...Full Story](#)

Federal Standard Issued For Improving IT Security

NIST.gov, February 13, 2004 -- Computer security specialists at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) have developed a new standard to help federal agencies better protect their computer networks. The standard provides a new way to categorize government information and information systems...The standard was developed following passage of the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002. Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 199, Standards for the Security Categorization of Federal Information and Information Systems, introduces significant changes in how the federal government protects information and the computerized networks that store information by giving detailed guidance on how to categorize systems....The mandatory standard will be a critical component of an agency's risk management program. As required by FISMA, NIST is also developing a companion standard that will specify minimum security requirements for all federal systems. A copy of the standard is available at <http://csrc.nist.gov>. [...Full Story](#)



Story Updates

Convergence is not for wimps: Three of the themes that we have been reporting on over the past year come together in the following story: the rapid evolution and deployment of wireless standards; the convergence of IT and communications standards; and the need for new standard setting methodologies capable of making all this happen in the rapid fashion that modern technological innovation and product deployment demand. The following article suggests that the reach of product introductions may be exceeding traditional standard setting's grasp.

Wi-Fi Interoperability Problem on Rise

Washingtonpost.com, Hanover, Germany, March 18, 2004 -- Increasing complexity and stronger security is making it harder for new wireless computer networking products to hook up with each other, an industry group promoting the technology said Thursday at the CeBIT tech fair. The Wi-Fi Alliance said

that 22 percent of the devices - such as wireless networking cards for computers, access ports and printer servers - submitted for testing at its four partner laboratories failed to work on a network on the first try. [...Full Story](#)



On the other hand, what about the Patriot Act? Legitimate concerns as well as off the wall rumors (see **Dan Mullen, Andrew Jackson and the Dark Side of the Web** [<link to article in this issue>](#)) have swirled around the topic of RFID tags for some time now. In this article, security expert Jay Cline suggests that the industry would do well to nip this PR issue in the bud, before privacy concerns become so embedded in the public consciousness that a promising standards-based technology becomes the "fluoride in the water supply" issue of the decade.

The RFID Privacy Scare Is Overblown **By: Jay Cline**

ComputerWorld, March 15, 2004 -- The privacy scare surrounding radio frequency identification tags is greatly overblown. No company or government agency will be secretly scanning your house to find out what products you've purchased, because there's no feasible way to do so. But if RFID chipmakers don't soon allay these fears, the escalating public emotion about this issue may effectively ban the most valuable implementations of this remarkable technology. [...Full Story](#)



Pieces of the PDS: In the February, 2004, issue of the Consortium Standards Bulletin, we envisioned the "Personal DataSphere" [<link to the "introducing the personal datasphere article from the Feb. issue">](#) In the following article, Intel CEO Craig Barrett comes out in favor of one key element of the PDS: worldwide agreement on digital rights management. While it's comforting to see Intel embrace one important feature of the PDS, it's disappointing to see the evolution of the PDS, as feared, continue to evolve in piecemeal fashion.

Intel's Barrett Calls for More Flexible DRM System **By: Martyn Williams**

InfoWorld.com, February 24, 2004 -- Intel CEO Craig Barrett says consumers should be allowed to manipulate the content they own. Speaking in Tokyo to promote Intel's vision of the future digital home, Barrett called for the adoption of a worldwide DRM (digital rights management) system that allows consumers the flexibility to manipulate the content they own in ways of their choosing....At the heart of the company's envisaged digital home is a set of standards that allow computer and consumer electronics devices to interconnect and communicate with each other. [...Full Story](#)



WS-I turns two: In the May, 2003 issue of the Consortium Standards Bulletin, we profiled the Web Services Interoperability Organization (*"New Wine - Old Bottles: WS-I Brings a New Dimension to the Art of Making Standards Succeed"*) With its base set of specifications now complete, the WS-I is turning its attention to prioritizing second level specification objectives. We will continue to cover this intriguing organization as it embarks on phase two of its development program.

WS-I Casts Eye on New Profiles **By: Darryl K. Taft**

eWEEK.com, February 16, 2004 -- As the Web services Interoperability Organization turns 2 this month, the group is looking forward to releasing new drafts and tools. Since establishing a base set of specifications for creating interoperable Web services in the past year, the group is now looking at how it will handle attachments and security. [...Full Story](#)

What to do about "quagmires": over the past year, we have followed the evolution of Web services standards -- and the multiple standard setting organizations involved in this area -- very closely (see, for example, "[Who Should Set the Standards for Web Services ?](#)"). In this article, the IBM representative who is perhaps most in the middle of what he refers to as the "quagmire" of Web services standards describes the tunnel that he finds the IT world in -- and also talks about the light he sees at its end.

Q&A: Tom Glover, IBM and WS-I Web Services Exec

InternetNews.com, February 13, 2004 -- There's a lot of interest in Web services and the processes to create them. By most estimates, the market for applications that talk to one another to render services is a multi-billion-dollar affair. But it's also rife with uncertainty because of a quagmire of standards developed to solve barriers like interoperability, security and manageability. Tom Glover wears two Web services hats: senior program manager, Web services standards for IBM; and IBM director, president, and chairman of the board within the Web Services-Interoperability (WS-I) Organization. [...Full Story](#)



Open Source

Marching to an open source drummer: Governments have always had their own way of looking at technology (after all, who else still gets to use WordPerfect besides U.S. agency staff?) That's something for the technology establishment to keep in mind, as a tipping point may be approaching in the open source area. The following article in InfoWorld surveys government open source adoption and attitudes, and concludes that 2004 may be a critical year for open source in the public sector.

U.S. Government Seeks the Open Road **By: Grant Gross and Ed Scannell**

InfoWorld, March 12, 2004 -- 2004 may be the year for open source software to catch on in a big way in government agencies. Government agencies have implemented open source solutions that range from Linux-running, data-collection computers on Naval Oceanographic Office survey ships to a Web-based tool that allows the U.S. Agency for International Development(USAID) to quickly process the visas of foreign workers scheduled to train in the United States. [...Full Story](#)



Other New Work Product

All kinds of output: Collaborations can result in all types of useful results besides standards: best practices, white papers, studies, awards, and so on. The following press release summarizes a report commissioned by International SEMATECH that looks into the multiple sources upon which semiconductors are based - which are often exotic, sometimes have single geographical sources, and often can be found only in volatile parts of the globe. The results of any study of this supply chain are often sobering, especially in light of the increasing dependency of just about everything on chips.

Techcet Group Releases Reports on Critical Semiconductor Materials Sematech.org, Genoa, NV, and Austin, TX, March 11, 2004 -- Techcet Group, LLC has released its 2003/2004 Critical Materials Reports highlighting resource and supply issues for raw materials vital to the semiconductor industry. The reports were commissioned by International SEMATECH and subsequently have been made available to other customers. [...Full Story](#)



Miscellaneous

Chaos (?) and the art of standard setting: In the feature article of this issue, we review various centrifugal forces that are jeopardizing the stability of standard setting. One of those forces is the rise of informal, ad hoc, standards, evolved through. ..Blog posts (and sometimes flames). The following is representative of the news emanating from the realm of content syndication. For more, see [A Retreat from Process Quality](#)

Google Spurns RSS for Rising Blog Format: Atom **By: Paul Festa**

CNET News.com, February 11, 2004 -- Google's Blogger service is bypassing Really Simple Syndication in favor of an alternative technology, a move that has sparked more discord in a bitter dispute over Web log syndication formats. The search giant, which acquired Blogger.com last year, began allowing the service's million-plus members to syndicate their online diaries to other Web sites last month. To implement the feature, it chose the new Atom format instead of the widely used, older RSS. [...Full Story](#)