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Consortium Standards Bulletin

A ConsortiumInfo.org publication

May 2004

Vol III, No. 5

THE REST OF THE NEWS

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.

What's Old is New

This month, we lead off The Rest of the News section with several items relating to New ICT Economy standards upgrading Old Economy areas of society. The following stories highlight the fact that there are few facets of modern life that cannot benefit from up-to-date technology – if the standards are there to bridge the gap.

Web Services gets down to nuts and bolts: While we are more likely to think of modern IT applications when we think of web services, this new approach is also applicable to the management of much more down to earth technical affairs. Thus it is that OASIS has just launched a new technical committee, formed to address emerging management needs relating to the everyday world of building-based mechanical and electrical systems. It may be a mundane standards job, but its still important, and someone's got to do it.

OASIS Forms Open Building Information Exchange (oBIX) Technical

The Cover Pages, May 11, 2004 -- An Open Building Information Exchange (oBIX) TC has been formed at OASIS to define a standard web services protocol to enable communications between building mechanical and electrical systems and enterprise applications. The oBIX web services interface will support the transfer of data in a simple and secure manner from HVAC, access control, utilities, and other building automation systems, enhancing enterprise facility and operations management....[Full Story](#)



Standards Convergence: Often, we think of "traditional" standards, like building codes and construction standards, as being a world apart from modern ICT standards. But there is convergence everywhere, including in the home, as our individual demands for ever more sophisticated domestic electronics, computer resources and broadband communications continue to increase. In the following press release, TIA reports on its effort to keep up with the burgeoning data demands of consumers.

TIA PUBLISHES NEW STANDARD TIA-570-B

TIA Press Release, Arlington, VA, May 5, 2004 -- The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) has published a new standard, 'Residential Telecommunications -- Infrastructure Standard,' TIA-570-B. The document is a revision of TIA/EIA-570-A. The purpose of TIA-570-B is to standardize requirements for residential telecommunications infrastructure. The requirements are based on the facilities that are necessary for existing and emerging telecommunications services. In this standard, voice, data and video services are correlated to grades of cabling for single-dwelling residences. The cabling infrastructure

specifications in this standard are intended to include support for voice, data, video, home automation systems, environmental control, security, audio, television, sensors, alarms and intercom. This document is intended for implementation of new construction, additions, and remodeled single-and multi-dwelling residential buildings. ...[Full Story](#)



Rural BroadBandification: *In the early part of the 20th century, government played a key economic role in the United States in bringing electrical and telephone services to rural Americans. Absent efforts such as the Rural Electrification Program, it would have been many decades before farmers on the prairie enjoyed many of the creature comforts of modern society. In a modern analog to those efforts of the last century, the USDA is now helping those farmers still hanging on in the prairie states to have equal access to this century's communications services.*

TIA ENCOURAGED BY USDA APPROVAL OF RURAL BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOANS

TIA Press Release, Arlington, VA, May 5, 2004 -- The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) applauds the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) effort to expand the availability of broadband technology in rural areas. USDA announced yesterday the approval of 20 rural broadband and telecommunications loans totaling \$190 million to expand access to advanced technology in 19 states. Of the \$190 million announced yesterday, \$150 million resulted from funding available through the 2002 Farm Bill. The remaining \$40 million in loans came from Rural Development's traditional program under which borrowers are required to ensure that all infrastructure built include broadband capability. The announcement supports President Bush's recent commitment to promoting innovation and economic security through broadband deployment. In two speeches, March 26 and April 26, Bush outlined a foundation for a national broadband strategy and ensured that every household in America will have access to broadband by the year 2007. ...[Full Story](#)



Story Updates

When is a standard not a standard? *The press is becoming sadly cavalier in its use of the word "standard," to the point where it is questionable whether the word will soon have any real meaning at all. While one might argue (and many do) over what the "essential elements" of a standard may be, all would agree that, at minimum, a standard is formed by an open process, may be implemented by anyone desiring to do so, and has an institution standing behind it that will maintain the standard for as long as it remains useful. With the explosion of privately conceived and promoted "standards" in areas such as web services (see, "A Retreat from Process Quality" <<http://www.consortiuminfo.org/bulletins/mar04.php#feature>>), the press is too-often succumbing to the temptation to use the word as individual companies would wish them to, rather than as readers should be entitled to expect.*

Yahoo sets up standard to combat spam

CNET News.com, May 18, 2004 -- The technique, if widely adopted, could help Internet providers more easily block the unwanted bulk messages that currently account for up to two-thirds of all e-mail traffic. Yahoo's proposed standard, known as DomainKeys, would embed outgoing messages with an encrypted digital signature matched to a signature on the server computer that sends the message. Internet providers could check the signatures on incoming messages and block those that do not match up. ...[Full Story](#)



The (Rambus) road goes ever on and on: Two new developments this month: In the first, Rambus has recycled its conspiracy theory-based defense in the FTC action against it into its own antitrust suit against the four hold-outs in its licensing campaign. In the second, the FTC has scheduled oral arguments in the appeal of the initial ALJ decision in favor of Rambus.

Oral Arguments Scheduled in FTC/Rambus Action

ConsortiumInfo.org, May 13, 2004 -- The Commissioners of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have issued an order accepting the four amicus curiae briefs filed in the Matter of Rambus, Incorporated, and have scheduled a time and date for oral arguments: 10:00 AM, on Tuesday, September 21, 2004. The order notes that the five month time period between the filing of the brief of Complaint Counsel and the Amicus Briefs reflects the extremely voluminous record of the case, which (to date) includes:

- more than 1,900 exhibits
- over 11,800 pages of trial transcript
- more than 3,000 pages of proposed findings of fact and reply findings of fact, submitted by the parties
- almost 450 pages of post-trial briefs and reply briefs
- the 334 page Initial Decision of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ)
- more than 1,650 findings of fact by the ALJ
- hundreds of additional pages of appellate and Amici briefs

As noted in our most recent update in the **Consortium Standards Bulletin** (see the April Issue), the Commissioners have a lot to read. [Full FTC order](#)

Rambus files antitrust suit

By: Stefanie Olsen

CNET News.com, May 5, 2004 -- The Los Altos, Calif., company filed an antitrust lawsuit in the Superior Court of California on Wednesday. The suit, which names Siemens, Micron Technology, Hynix Semiconductor and Infineon Technologies, alleges that the four companies together stifled competition in the computer memory chip market. "From substantial written evidence already in the public record, we believe that these memory manufacturers colluded illegally, thereby limiting consumer choice and depriving our RDRAM products of the opportunity to compete fairly in the marketplace," Rambus general counsel John Danforth said in a statement. ...[Full Story](#)



Misery loves company: Wi-Fi (see this month's <Trends> article about China, WAPI and Wi-Fi) is apparently not the only wireless standard being dissed for security deficiencies. According to this article in CNET, Bluetooth is having a bad month as well in the security area. The second article describes progress being made by the Wi-Fi working group on securities issues.

Expert: Gaps still pain Bluetooth security

By: Robert Lemos

CNET News.com, Vancouver, B.C., May 9, 2004 -- The latest specification of Bluetooth, a popular short-range wireless technology, has left serious security issues unfixed, according to a wireless researcher. The glitch in the Bluetooth 1.2 technology is related to how it deals with the personal identification number (PIN) that's used to protect data, Ollie Whitehouse, a researcher for digital security firm @Stake, said at the CanSecWest security conference here on Wednesday. ...[Full Story](#)

Wi-Fi security standard to require new hardware

By: Ephraim Schwartz

InfoWorld, May 7, 2004 -- In June the IEEE is expected to finally ratify the 802.11i security standard that uses for the first time AES (Advanced Encryption Standard) technology, a powerful 128-bit encryption technology. While AES, a standard currently approved for government use, FIPS 140-2, (Federal

Information Processing) will give the enterprise the kind of strong encryption and sophisticated ciphers it has been asking for, it will also require new access cards and in many cases new APs (access points), according to Frank Hanzlik, managing director of the Wi-Fi Alliance. ...[Full Story](#)



Quick - how many Web Services specifications has Microsoft and its varied array of partners privately offered to the industry in the past 18 months? Don't worry, we've lost track as well, but in any event -- here's another. This one is intended to augment the plug and play capabilities of devices and networks.

Web Services Find Way to Devices

By: Joris Evers

InfoWorld, May 05, 2004 -- Microsoft Corp., Intel Corp., Lexmark International Inc. and Ricoh Co. Ltd. on Tuesday detailed new Web services technology designed to make it easier for users to connect devices such as printers, digital cameras and digital music players over a network. The companies at Microsoft's Windows Hardware Engineering Conference (WinHEC) officially announced a Devices Profile for Web services, which describes how devices should use Web services protocols. The announcement builds on WS-Discovery, a Web services specification that Microsoft, Intel, Canon Inc. and BEA Systems Inc. introduced in February. WS-Discovery describes a way for devices to find and connect to Web services. ...[Full Story](#)



Who's Doing What to Whom

After you, Gaston: Too often lately, standards bodies have been dueling for particular initiatives, or have felt snubbed when a given effort has been offered to another standards organization. In contrast (at least according to this article in eWeek), the sometimes contentious rivalry between blog syndication standards RSS and Atom has given way to a decorous waltz that could end with either the W3C or the IETF becoming the home for a formal standard setting effort centered on Atom.

XML Syndication Supporters Mulling W3C Move

By: Matt Hicks

eWeek, May 14, 2004 -- The effort among Atom supporters to create a standard XML syndication format took a new turn this week as the Web's leading standards body suggested a new route. The World Wide Web Consortium invited the Atom community to form a working group under its auspices, rather than within the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Atom proponents since have been pursuing the formation of a working group in the IETF, a first step toward creating a formal standard. Following the W3C proposal, the IETF's Internet Engineering Steering Committee on Thursday delayed voting on the Atom working group proposal that was before it, said Tim Bray, a contributor to Atom who is director of Web technologies at Sun Microsystems Inc. ...[Full Story](#)



Intellectual Property Rights

The European patent pendulum swings back: In the United States, many have already forgotten that software was deemed ineligible for patent protection not so very long ago. Last year Europe debated whether or not to follow the U.S. lead and permit software to become eligible patentable. Initially, the answer was largely "no." But now the European Parliament has voted to take a more liberal approach.

EU approves software patent changes

By: Munir Kotadia

ZDNET, May 18, 2004 -- According to a spokesman at the United Kingdom's Department of Trade and Industry, which backed the changes, the vote removes many of the changes introduced last year by the European Parliament that would have limited the degree to which software programs could be patented. "The text that was approved is very close to the original (European) Commission proposal," said a DTI spokesman, though he said the DTI had not yet seen the final amendments. The directive will now be sent back to the European Parliament for another vote there in the autumn as the different bodies of the EU engage in a game of legislative ping-pong. ...[Full Story](#)



***That old Frontier spirit:** In the old west, Washington was far away and not much help with issues of coping and survival. When danger threatened, you defended yourself. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that the Electronic Frontier Foundation has decided not to wait for Washington to adopt any of the patent reforms that have recently been proposed (see: *Patents: Too Easy to Get, Too Hard to Challenge?* in our November, 2003 issue <<http://www.consortiuminfo.org/bulletins/nov03.php#newscluster>>). Yee-ha!*

The Patent Busting Project: An EFF Initiative to Protect Innovation

Electronic Frontier Foundation, May 3, 2004 -- Every year numerous Illegitimate patent applications make their way through the United States patent examination process without adequate review. The problem is particularly acute in the software and Internet fields where the history of prior inventions (often called 'prior art') is widely distributed and poorly documented. As a result, we have seen patents asserted on simple technologies... The harm these patents cause the public is profound. Both the Federal Trade Commission and National Academy of Sciences have issued a series of recommendations for reforming the patent system, each of which provide a useful start. However, there is no guarantee that these reforms will be adopted or that they will be considered on any specific timeline. To help fill this gap, EFF is launching a Patent Busting Project to take on illegitimate patents that suppress non-commercial and small business innovation or limit free expression online. The Project has two components: (1) documenting the damage; (2) challenging the patents. ...[Full Story](#)



Standards and Society

***Drip, Drip, Drip:** While the Western press has ignored the story, the ITU has released press release after press release detailing the ongoing progress of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a major UN-sponsored initiative directed at bringing the benefits of information and communications technology to all people everywhere. We support this initiative, and apparently the vast majority of those answering a recent ITU survey on the topic do, too. It will be interesting to see whether the U.S. pays more attention to specific calls for concrete action that are apt to result from the culmination of the process next year.*

'Global' Support for Information Society Targets Cyberspace seen as a Shared Resource for the Global Public Good

ITU Press Release, Geneva, 17 May 2004 -- Targets set for improving access and connectivity to information and communication technologies (ICT) by 2015 at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) have received strong support in a global ITU survey. The Summit approved a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action that set forth a roadmap to bring the benefits of ICT to underdeveloped economies. The Summit was organized by ITU under the patronage of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to ensure that social and economic development, which is increasingly driven by ICTs, will result in a more just, prosperous and equitable world. The survey shows overwhelming support for the belief that if the information society is to be one in which all citizens throughout the world can

equally access and use information resources for sustainable economic and social development, that cyberspace should be declared a resource to be shared by all for the global public good. ...[Full Story](#)



Security Standards + n: *A seemingly unending supply of Homeland Security standards continues to issue from consortia and SDOs. These standards have had a meaningful impact in improving emergency response capabilities, as acknowledged by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, in the first story below. The latest in this stream of work product comes from OASIS (which has already issued many other standards for similar purposes), and addresses the need for emergency information to be issued and usable across all devices everywhere.*

9-11 Commission Hearing Calls for Standards in Areas of Emergency

ANSI.org, New York, NY, May 19, 2004 -- Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge emphasized the importance of standards in his testimony to the 9-11 Commission during its eleventh public hearing held in New York City today. The two-day hearing, which included testimony from various civic and federal leaders including former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, former New York Police Commissioner Bernard B. Kerik, and former New York Fire Commissioner Thomas Van Essen, addressed emergency preparedness and crisis response in the context of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. "The American National Standards Institute and the National Fire Protection Association have developed national emergency preparedness standards that the Department of Homeland Security encourages businesses and organizations to adopt," said Ridge. ...[Full Story](#)

CAP Ratified as OASIS Standard

Oasis-open.org, Boston, MA, 5 May 2004 -- The OASIS standards consortium today announced that its members have approved the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) version 1.0 as an OASIS Standard, a status that signifies the highest level of ratification. CAP enables the exchange of emergency alert and public warning information over data networks and computer-controlled warning systems. By limiting transport-specific nomenclature, CAP remains fully compatible with existing public warning systems, including those designed for multilingual and special-needs populations, as well as with XML applications such as Web services. ...[Full Story](#)



Regulation, Legislation and Advocacy

Is this is, or is this ain't a trade barrier? As earlier noted in this issue, what Americans sometimes choose to regard as a trade barrier is another country's greater commitment to responsible standard setting. Is the following story an example of European social responsibility in standard setting, or an effort to disadvantage U.S. trade? Or is the true answer perhaps somewhere in between?

U.S. Industry Alerted to European Union Framework for the Setting of Eco-design requirements for Energy Using Products

ANSI News and Publications, Washington, D.C., May 17, 2004 -- The European Union Framework for the setting of Eco-design requirements for Energy Using Products (EuP) will soon be law. Moving rapidly though the legislative process and wider in scope than any related existing Community legislation, this Directive has the potential to create burdensome requirements for manufacturers of products selected by it's "implementing measures" to prove their designs are environmentally efficient. However, if U.S. industry sectors can coordinate with their European counterparts to generate voluntary agreements, they will likely be able to keep from being named as a target of the Directive's implementing measures. The European Commission published its Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a Framework for the Setting of Eco-design Requirements for Energy-Using Products and amending Council Directive 92/42/EEC in August last year, and it may become law at the end of this year or early next year. ...[Full Story](#)



Miscellaneous

Why can't we be friends: *While more ink is spilled in the press on conflict than accord in any category of news, the fact is that Europe and America sometimes do get along, especially when there is something that both sides can agree on, and from which all can derive a benefit. The following press release announces the renewal of a durable example of cooperation across the water.*

United States and Europe working together on telecoms standards

ETSI.org, Sophia-Antipolis, France, 13 May 2004 – Today the ink is drying on a renewal of the commitment by the European and the U.S.A. standards bodies to the principles of cooperation and partnership. The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) of the United States and the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) used the occasion of their participation in the Global Standards Collaboration (GSC-9), meeting this week in Seoul - Korea, to renew the TIA/ETSI cooperation agreement for another three years. The agreement was last renewed at the GSC meeting in Sydney Australia in 2001. Both organizations were created in 1988 and there has been ETSI/TIA cooperation since 1990. This renewal will allow for further cooperation at the committee level. More than 60 Working Groups have been identified as having areas of mutual interest. ...[Full Story](#)



Even different types of convergence are converging: *While you may not stay awake at night worrying about why you can't crunch spread sheets on your cell phone, it would appear that there may be some who do. The following press release tracks another step along the road to that nerd heaven of everything working on anything, and being able to trade files, pictures, video, and Pokemon cards with everything else. As convergence continues to converge, however, some activities seem to have little attraction on some devices. The purchase of ringtones, for example, is still the only significant financial transaction being negotiated over handheld, wireless devices.*

The WiMedia Alliance Announces Support for the MultiBand OFDM Alliance UWB Specifications

WiMedia Press Release, San Ramon, CA, May 5, 2004 – The WiMedia Alliance today announced its endorsement of the MultiBand OFDM Alliance (MBOA) ultrawideband specifications for use with the WiMedia Convergence Platform. This will pave the way for wireless Connectivity between electronics products in consumer electronics, PC, and mobile segments. The endorsement pairs the MBOA's (www.multibandofdm.org) efforts to deliver a high data-rate, short-range wireless UWB radio with the convergence architecture being developed by the WiMedia Alliance. The endorsement pairs the MBOA's (www.multibandofdm.org) efforts to deliver a high data-rate, short-range wireless UWB radio with the convergence architecture being developed by the WiMedia Alliance. ...[Full Story](#)