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ATIS to Senate Subcommittee: Development of Technical Standards Key to Effective and Sound E-911 Service

March 5, 2003, Washington, DC - "Enhanced 911 (E-911) is an essential element for continued public safety…," said Susan M. Miller, president and CEO of ATIS, in written testimony to the US Senate Communications Subcommittee today. Miller detailed the establishment of the Emergency Services Interconnection Forum (ESIF), a joint venture of ATIS and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), and the recent release of ESIF's "Wireless E-911 Phase II Readiness Package." The ESIF Readiness Package is a standard evaluation method for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to utilize in determining and documenting their status for wireless carriers from whom they request Phase II implementation, and is available on the ATIS (www.atis.org) and NENA (www.nena.org) web sites.
To read Miller's testimony in its entirety, see: www.atis.org/pix/SM_Senate_Remarks.pdf.

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Alliance Urges Royalty-Free H.264 Video Standard

San Ramon, CA, February 20, 2003 - A group of over 20 companies, working in conjunction with the International Multimedia Telecommunications Consortium (IMTC), have formed an alliance to advocate the final approval of a royalty-free baseline profile for the upcoming H.264 Advanced Video Coding (H.264/AVC) standard. The royalty-free profile will enable industry to bring an open, internationally standardized video codec to market quickly, without time-consuming and fractious licensing negotiations, and avoids the market risks associated with proprietary codecs….The H.264/AVC standard is approaching completion by the Joint Video Team (JVT), which brings together video experts from industry and academia in the International Telecommunications Union's Video Coding Experts Group (ITU VCEG), and the International Organization for Standardization's Moving Pictures Experts Group (ISO MPEG). H.264 will be simultaneously known as H.264 and MPEG-4 Part 10 AVC…. [The]advanced performance is expected to create a revolution in how digital video is created and disseminated royalty basis.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.imtc.org/pressrel/press022003.htm

New Initiatives

Two new initiatives - one governmental and one SDO-based - were announced recently to facilitate international trade by promoting greater harmony among national product standards and standard setting bodies

Commerce Department Launches Standards Initiative

New York, NY, March 20, 2003 - Department of Commerce (DOC) Secretary Don Evans announced yesterday a new initiative aimed at boosting U.S. exports by harmonizing product standards around the world. Included in the program is an eight-point plan intended to augment current DoC activities to break down trade barriers. The goal is to create a more level playing field around the world and incorporates assessment, training, warning systems, dialogue with industry and more. The project acknowledges that foreign standards – and methods used to assess conformity to standards – can facilitate efficient

international trade and its benefits, or they also can be used intentionally or unintentionally to impede access to foreign markets. This observation mirrors statements included in the National Standards Strategy (NSS) for the United States that was approved in 2000. "The Bush Administration remains committed to promoting competition and opening new markets for U.S. goods," said Evans. "Standards and testing are key to our international competitiveness. But more and more we are hearing that foreign standards and testing requirements are keeping our products out of foreign markets. This is the wrong approach that reduces efficiencies, limits competition and increases prices for the consumer goods."

For the complete story, see:
http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=359

To access the National Standards Strategy, see:
http://www.ansi.org/standards_activities/nss/nss.aspx?menuid=3

New ISO/IEC Guide Aims to Improve Efficiency of International Trade

February 18, 2003 - A new ISO/IEC guide aims to reduce redundant, costly and time-consuming aspects of "conformity assessment" activities and, in doing so, contribute to the efficiency of the international trading system. As goods and services flow across borders, business partners or government agencies may require verification that they measure up to standards, regulations and other requirements. This verification is known as "conformity assessment". One of the main difficulties exporters face is costly, multiple testing and/or certification of products, services, systems, processes and materials. These costs would be drastically reduced if a product could be tested once and the results accepted in all markets. The new guide provides procedures for establishing and maintaining cooperation among the bodies that carry out conformity assessments and the "accreditation bodies" that verify their competence.

For the complete press release, see:
http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/commcentre/pressreleases/2003/Ref845.html

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OASIS Members Collaborate to Define Web Services Management

Boston, MA, USA, 10 March 2003 - The OASIS interoperability consortium today announced plans to define a standard way of using Web services architecture and technology to manage distributed resources. The new OASIS Web Services Distributed Management (WSDM) Technical Committee will closely align its work with related activities at other standards groups, including the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Services Architecture Working Group and the Distributed Management Task Force (DMTF), and with other OASIS security and Web services efforts. "As the number of Web services deployed across the extended enterprise increases, the ability to effectively manage those services will become critical to building out a comprehensive services-oriented architecture," said Winston Bumpus of Novell, co-chair of the OASIS WSDM Technical Committee. "By collaborating with other ongoing industry standards activities in this area, this new technical committee will play a important role in defining how services should be managed."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.oasis-open.org/news/oasis_news_03_10_03.php

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Standards Group Takes Aim at Spam

CNET News.Com, March 6, 2003 - An influential Internet standards-setting body has begun a close scrutiny of the mounting problem of e-mail Spam, in an effort that could have broad-ranging implications for future e-mail use and security. [In this article, Staff Writer John Borland reports on the formation of the Anti-Spam Research Group (ASRG) under the aegis of the Internet Research Task Force, an affiliate of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). The ASRG will be a research, rather than an action, group.]

For the complete story, see: http://news.com.com/2100-1032-991305.html?tag=fd_top

For the official description of the ASRG, see: http://www.irtf.org/charters/asrg.html

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OASIS Members Advance Reliable Message Delivery for Web Services

Boston, MA, USA, 26 February 2003 - Members of the OASIS standards consortium announced plans to collaborate on the development of a generic and open model for ensuring reliable message delivery for Web services. The new OASIS Web Services Reliable Messaging (WS-RM) Technical Committee will work to establish a standard, interoperable way of achieving reliability at the SOAP messaging level and potentially with other messaging protocols. The WS-Reliability specification, published by Fujitsu, Hitachi, Oracle, NEC, Sonic Software, and Sun Microsystems, will be submitted as input for the OASIS WS-RM Technical Committee. Other contributions are welcome. The group plans to work closely with related OASIS Technical Committees, such as the ebXML Messaging Services and the Web Services Security teams, and with relevant efforts of other organizations, such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Services Architecture Working Group.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.oasis-open.org/news/oasis_news_02_26_03.php

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NFPA Technical Committee Holds Meeting to Address Code Writing Concerns

New York, NY, March 17, 2003 - The Technical Committee on Assembly Occupancies of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) held an emergency meeting on March 13, 2003 to address code writing and enforcement concerns underscored by recent tragedies in Chicago and Rhode Island nightclubs. Immediately prior to the meeting, NFPA opened the floor to a 90-minute public forum that included passionate testimony by victims' families, groups that work with fire and burn survivors, and representatives from key organizations such as the International Fire Marshals Association and Society of Fire Protection Engineers. In February, 21 people died during a stampede in a nightclub in Chicago. The West Warwick, RI nightclub fire at The Station erupted during a pyrotechnic display on February 20, and claimed 99 lives. NFPA has been asked by Rhode Island fire officials to assist with investigation and analysis of the accident.

For the complete story, see:
http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=353

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New Standards/Specifications

Distributed Management Task Force Releases Final Status of WBEM Specifications

Portland, OR, March 18, 2003 - Distributed Management Task Force, Inc. (DMTF) today announced the final release of three Web-Based Enterprise Management (WBEM) Specifications. The status, "final release," indicates that the Specifications are stable and have been successfully used in multiple, independent implementations. Web-Based Enterprise Management (WBEM) is a set of management and Internet standard technologies developed to unify the management of enterprise and Internet computing environments. This release provides the ability for the industry to deliver a well-integrated set of standard-based management tools leveraging Web technologies. WBEM relies on HTTP and XML to offer a Web-based approach for exchanging Common Information Model (CIM) data across otherwise disparate technologies and platforms. In this way, WBEM is a forefather of today's Web services, as it anticipated the use of Internet standards and protocols to facilitate a more consistent approach to sharing information.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.dmtf.org/newsroom/releases/2003_03_18.php

SCTE Establishes New Standard for Cable Industry Graphic Symbols

Exton, PA, March 17, 2003 - SCTE has approved a comprehensive series of HFC symbols for the cable telecommunications industry in a new standard titled Graphic Symbols for Cable Telecommunications Part 1—HFC Symbols (SCTE 87-1 2003). The Graphic Symbols Working Group—part of SCTE's Construction and Maintenance Subcommittee (CMS) chaired by Fred Wilkenloh of CommScope— developed the new standard. SCTE Board member Sally Kinsman chairs the Graphic Symbols Working Group. "The new Graphic Symbols standard provides consistency for all cable operators by using common symbols on their cable system plant maps," said Kinsman. "It allows vendors, construction contractors and operators to immediately understand any map they use during construction and maintenance of cable infrastructure without first trying to interpret unique symbols."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.scte.org/news/detail.cfm?ID=163

Liberty Alliance Project Completes Federated Network Identity Architecture

Liberty Alliance Project, March 11, 2003 - The Liberty Alliance, a consortium formed to develop open standards for federated network identity, today released details outlining the Liberty Alliance Federated Network Identity Architecture, a complete infrastructure that the Alliance expects will resolve many of the technology issues currently hindering deployment of identity-based web services. This new identity architecture outlines the direction the Liberty Alliance will follow to accomplish its vision of enabling a networked world in which individuals and businesses can more easily interact with one another while respecting the privacy and security of shared identity information. The complete Liberty Alliance federated network identity architecture provides an open, standards-based foundation for building and supporting identity-based web services. The architecture enables companies to increase the security of their information systems, lower infrastructure maintenance costs, and more easily adapt to new business models and new technology. Consumers and employees will also benefit by having more choice and convenience in how they share and manage personal information over the web.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.projectliberty.org

PICMG Ratifies First AdvancedTCA Fabric Specifications, for Ethernet/Fibre Channel Infiniband

Wakefield, MA, March 3, 2003 - The Executive membership of the PCI Industrial Computer Manufacturers Group (PICMG®) has voted to adopt the first two Fabric specifications in its new AdvancedTCA™ family of specifications, PICMG 3.1 Ethernet/Fibre Channel and PICMG 3.2 InfiniBand®. AdvancedTCA (for Advanced Telecom Computing Architecture) is the first open industry specification for carrier grade equipment incorporating high speed switched fabric technology, capable of switching and processing 2.5 terabits per second in a single shelf. The two new documents are the first to be completed of several AdvancedTCA fabric-specific specifications underway within the PICMG organization. The new specifications build upon the PICMG 3.0 Base Specification, and they are not intended to stand alone or to be used separately from the base specification. The various fabric specifications will offer system developers and users flexible choice of high speed interconnects for various applications from high speed routers to storage systems. The electronic keying features of the AdvancedTCA base specification allow interoperability of different fabric solutions in the same shelf or chassis.

For the complete release, see: http://www.picmg.org/news.stm#pr030303

I3A Announces Release of CPXe Specification Suite and New Online Directory Service

Harrison, NY, February 27, 2003 - The International Imaging Industry Association (I3A) today announced the availability of a suite of CPXe interoperability specifications and the creation of the Picture Services Network (PSN). Working in concert, CPXe specifications and the PSN Directory Service will simplify for consumers and businesses the process of finding, accessing and using Internet-connected and retail photo services…CPXe is providing the industry with an extensible and open technology platform on which any imaging device can seamlessly exchange digital images and order and commerce information with any networked imaging application or service, regardless of manufacturer, service provider or geography. The combined impact of CPXe specifications and the PSN Directory Service will simplify for consumers the process of finding and using Internet-connected and retail photo services.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.i3a.org/pr_02_27_03.html

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GTIN Allocation Rules Published

February, 2003 - EAN International and the Uniform Code Council, Inc. (UCC), leaders in facilitating efficient international business, announced today the launch of the latest annual update (Version 4.0) of the General EAN.UCC Specifications, which includes a brand new section on Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) Allocation Rules….The aim is to reduce costs in the supply chain for all trading partners. Harmonizing the rules globally eliminates the historic variations that have crept into national interpretations over the years. Now manufacturers will benefit from having just one set of rules for all their retailer customers and conversely retailers will benefit from having the same set of rules used by all suppliers. Additionally the GTIN rules provide a glide path into the 1st of January 2005, the 2005 Sunrise initiative, when GTINs encoded in EAN-13 and EAN-8 symbols will be accepted in the U.S. and Canada and one set of rules for applying GTINs will ease the transition.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.uc-council.net/news/ne_022503.html

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Antitrust

Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2003 Introduced in House

New York, NY, March 14, 2003 - In an effort to support the development and use of voluntary consensus standards, H.R. 1086 - Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2003 was introduced into Congress on March 5, 2003. The bill is sponsored by House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and is co-sponsored by the ranking Democratic member of the Committee, John Conyers (D-MI), as well as the leadership of the House Science Committee and a bipartisan group of fourteen other Members of Congress. The broad bi-partisan sponsorship of the bill indicates that wide support for standards development activities that exists in the Congress. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 1086 aims "To encourage the development and promulgation of voluntary consensus standards by providing relief under the antitrust laws to standards development organizations with respect to conduct engaged in for the purpose of developing voluntary consensus standards, and for other purposes." The text of the bill notes that technical standards developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies have replaced thousands of unique federal standards and specifications. Standards developed by government entities generally are not subject to challenge under certain antitrust laws, yet private developers of technical standards are often not similarly protected, and are vulnerable to legal prosecution. In most cases, the likelihood of their being held liable is remote, and these private entities often have limited resources to defend themselves in such lawsuits.

For the complete story, see:
http://www.ansi.org/news_publications/news_story.aspx?menuid=7&articleid=354

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General

CompTIA Survey Reveals Human Error Most Likely Cause of IT Security Breaches

Washington, DC, March 18, 2003 - At a Washington briefing with government officials today, the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) revealed results from its new security survey Committing to Security: A CompTIA Analysis of IT Security and the Workforce. The survey shows human error – not technical malfunction – to be the most significant cause of IT security breaches in the public and private sectors. With an overwhelming majority of respondents stating that IT training and certification have improved network security, the survey's results strongly suggest that more training and certification for IT professionals will help America become better protected against mounting cyber threats. "We think the results are pretty staggering," said Brian McCarthy, CompTIA's Chief Operating Officer. "Where agencies and companies have looked primarily to technology for network safety, in over 63 percent of identified security breaches, human error looks to be a major, underlying factor."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.comptia.org/pressroom/get_news_item.asp?id=207

Critical Materials need IC Industry's Attention, Study Says

AUSTIN, TX, March 10, 2003– Chip manufacturers and suppliers must focus more attention on "critical materials" to ensure a dependable and affordable supply of such substances to the semiconductor industry, a study by International SEMATECH (ISMT) has concluded. These critical materials – which include elements and compounds as diverse as tantalum, helium, quartz, and etching gases – all face a variety of economic, environmental, and political risks that could disrupt the long and complex supply chain that feeds the $1.1 trillion "electronics ecosystem," adds the study, which was published electronically in March by Semiconductor International magazine.

For the complete press release, see:
http://www.sematech.org/public/news/releases/criticalmats.htm

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Path Towards Information Society for All Takes Shape

Geneva, Switzerland, February 28, 2003 - The second meeting of the preparatory committee for the World Summit on the Information Society (PrepCom-2) concluded with two working documents for a draft declaration and action plan. The results from the second in a series of United Nations-backed preparatory conferences lays the groundwork for the first-ever global summit on information and communication technologies (ICTs). The World Summit on the Information Society will be held in Geneva 10-12 December 2003 and in Tunis 16-18 November 2005. The document focuses on ways to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing nations, created by an explosion of ICTs during the past two decades. "The enthusiastic participation of more than 1500 participants is reflected in the comprehensive nature of the work produced, and in their collective belief in developing new and innovative partnerships between Member States, civil society and the business sector in order to bridge the divide," says Mr. Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary-General of ITU. "However, to achieve the vision of the information society we've outlined, we need to do more work as well as gain the support and political will of the leaders of the world."

For the complete press release, see: http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2003/10.html

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Commerce's NIST Reports Significant Advances Made in Facial Recognition Technology

Washington, DC, March 13, 2002 - Computers have become much more adept at "recognizing" human faces during the past two years, states a report released today by the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Scientists from NIST, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and DoD Counterdrug technology Development Program Office have completed the most comprehensive evaluation to date of commercially available face recognition systems, and concluded that the technology has made significant advances. The study, Face Recognition Vendor Test 2002 (FRVT 2002), was performed in response to the USA PATRIOT Act and the Enhanced Border Security Act. The primary objective of FRVT 2002 was to provide performance measures for assessing the capability of automatic face recognition systems to meet real-world scenarios—verification of identity, identification of an unknown individual and detection of an individual on a watch list. Key findings of the study include new data about verification, demographics, and indoor and outdoor matching abilities. The study shows that there has been a 50 percent reduction in error rates since comparable tests were conducted in 2000.

For the complete press release, see: http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/releases/n03-04.htm

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RosettaNet Standards Organization Extends Global Presence With Launch Of Consortium's Newest Asia Affiliate

Santa Ana, CA, March 12, 2003 - RosettaNet, the high technology industry's leading e-business process standards consortium, today announced the expansion of its Asia-based operations with the addition of a new affiliate organization in the Philippines. This move further extends RosettaNet's capabilities for adoption and implementation of its open supply chain standards that enable companies in Asia and throughout the world to engage in dynamic B2B trading partner relationships via the Internet. The electronics market sector is acknowledged as a primary driver of the Philippine economy and accounts for more than 70 percent of the country's total exports. RosettaNet Philippines' charter will be to drive global implementation of RosettaNet's internet-based business standards to further strengthen the country's global competitiveness

For the complete release, go to www.rosettanet.org

Comment on Final Draft of Royalty-Free Patent Policy

www.w3.org - March 19, 2003 - The [World Wide Web Consortium] Patent Policy Working Group has released a Working Draft of the Royalty-free Patent Policy for review by the W3C Advisory Committee and the public. The draft governs the handling of patents in the process of producing and implementing W3C Recommendations. Comments from both W3C Members and the public are welcome through 30 April. *[This policy has been watched with great interest by many industry participants during the three year process of its origination, as the W3C has functioned as the battleground upon which the forces of commerce and a free Internet, patent ownership and free software have thrashed out the issues that divide them, but which collide in the context of the further evolution of the World Wide Web. The current draft of the policy is a political compromise between the disparate forces, under which it is hoped that the W3C can move forward. Says Daniel J. Weitzner, Patent Policy Working Group Chair and Leader of the W3C's Technology and Society Domain: "Developing policy in this complex and often contentious area is difficult. I commend all of the participants in the Working Group for working hard to build consensus around this proposal. No single group -- patent holders, open source developers or users -- got everything it wanted. But with this final draft, the Working Group believes it has found a common, workable path that will encourage the widespread adoption of W3C standards across a wide range of business models, from proprietary to open source."*

For the complete press release, see: http://www.w3.org/News/2003#item55

For an article on this story, see:
http://www.dmreview.com/editorial/dmreview/print_action.cfm?EdID=6489

For a summary and history of the policy, see: http://www.w3.org/2003/03/19-patentsummary.html

For the text of the draft Patent Policy, see: http://www.w3.org/TR/2003/WD-patent-policy-20030319/

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Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Working Drafts Published

www.w3.org - 18 March 2003 - The [World Wide Web Consortium] Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines Working Group has released the first public Working Draft of Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and its companion Implementation. Authoring tools can enable users ("authors") to create accessible Web content through prompts, alerts, checking and repair, help files and automation. Resulting content can be read by a broader range of readers. Read about the Web Accessibility Initiative…

For a variety of information and links relating to the Web Accessibility Initiative, see:
http://www.w3.org/WAI/