

**ISO/TC 211 Geographic information / Geomatics
Newsletter No 3 December 2003**



Dear Colleagues,

This ISO/TC 211 Newsletter is intended for the members of ISO/TC 211 and its Class A Liaison organizations.

As this Newsletter, a service provided by the ISO/TC 211 Advisory Group on Outreach, develops and evolves, we hope it will also become informative to the global geographic community and eventually to the public at large.

Our mission is to provide information on the standardization of geographic information and related activities.

Sincerely,

Henry Tom, Editor
ISO/TC 211 Newsletter.



**Provocative article
about OGC**

<http://www.opengis.org>

In early November, 2003, ***“OGC: Near a Tipping Point”*** by market analyst David Sonnen appeared as a featured article on the Directions Magazine website:

<http://www.directionsmag.com/whatsnew.php>

“In my opinion, OGC is nearing a tipping point between remaining a successful, consensus-based standards organization, and being seen as ineffective and a poor business investment for its members.” [David Sonnen](#) (Appendix 1)

David Schell, President, OGC provided an immediate response for the Directions Magazine website, ***“In Response to Mr. Sonnen's Article on the OGC”***.

“I am particularly concerned with the column's assertions that OGC is in conflict of interest with its members and may have violated antitrust laws. Such accusations, groundless as they are, create doubt and mistrust.” [David Schell](#) (Appendix 2)



***European
standardization
committee on
Geographic information
revived***

Comité Européen de Normalisation

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR
STANDARDIZATION**

After a period of ‘sleep’ CEN/TC 287 ‘Geographic information’ held its first meeting in several years. In November 2003 over 30 representatives of 15 European countries and 4 liaison organizations attended the meeting in Delft (The Netherlands).

Withdrawal of existing CEN pre-standards and reports

An important resolution was made about the existing ENVs and CRs: they will all be withdrawn. This creates the way for the harmonization of the ISO 191xx suite of standards within Europe.

Acceptance of ISO standards and future standardization process

Simultaneously, the ISO 191xx suite of standards will be subject for an UAP (Unique Acceptance Procedure) within CEN, following the Vienna Agreement between ISO and CEN, to adopt the ISO 191xx suite of standards as ENs. Possible outcome of this UAP that will take place beginning 2004 will be that some standards will be subject for a European profile according to ISO 19106 conformance level 1 (being a subset of the respective ISO standard) or conformance level 2 (being an addition to the respective ISO standard). As far as new standards from ISO/TC 211 are concerned parallel voting is proposed within ISO and CEN to accept new ISO 191xx standards also as ENs at the same time.

Liaisons

Also, CEN/TC 287 decided to create liaisons with ISO/TC 211 (Geographic Information), CEN/TC 278 (Road Transport and Traffic Telematica),



Eurogeographics, OGC (Open GIS Consortium), JRC (Joint Research Council of the EC) and with the IHO (International Hydrographic Organisation), European Commission Directorate General

Enterprise and AGILE (Association of Geographic Information Laboratories in Europe), if they will accept this.

Working groups

Seeing the need for standardization within the INSPIRE project, CEN/TC 287 installed a Working Group 1, on "European Spatial Data Infrastructure Coordination" with the following scope:

Identify material required to implement the European Spatial Data Infrastructure by drafting:

Technical Report: "Standards, specifications, technical reports and guidelines required to implement the European Spatial Data Infrastructure"

Support the implementation of the INSPIRE initiative

Stimulate interoperability between national and European SDI developments by drafting:

Technical Report: "ESDI Cookbook with technical interoperability guidelines"

The Secretariat was asked to find a convenor and members for this working group to be appointed by the CEN-members in the first month of 2004 and have this working group start with its developments as soon as possible.

An Ad hoc Group on Outreach was formed with Dr. Hans Knoop serving as a Co-Chair and to work "in close cooperation with ISO/TC 211 Outreach group".

Dr. Henri J.G.L. Aalders was appointed as Chairman, CEN/TC 287.

CEN/TC 287 Resolutions: ([Appendix 3](#))

Submitted by:

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WSIS: THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY FIRST PHASE: GENEVA, 10-12 DECEMBER 2003

The World Summit on the Information Society is held in two phases.

The first phase of WSIS takes place in Geneva hosted by the Government of Switzerland from 10 to 12 December 2003. It will address the broad range of themes concerning the Information Society and adopt a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

The second phase will take place in Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005.

<http://www.itu.int/wsis/>



New book on ISO Standards for Geographic Information

The latest ISO/TC 211 meetings in Berlin in late October included the launch of a book entitled 'ISO standards for geographic information'. Its authors are Wolfgang Kresse and Kian Fadaie and its ISBN is 3-540-20130-0. The book provides an overview of the work of ISO in this area.

Submitted by: Iain Greenway, Chair of the FIG Network on Standards



***Global standards
for the global
information society
World Standards
Day Message 2003***

**Mr. Sei-ichi Takayanagi
President of IEC
Mr. Oliver Smoot
President of ISO
Mr. Yoshio Utsumi
Secretary-General of ITU**

Today, we have access to more information than ever before, and, as the cost to access that information plummets, its audience increases. Sociologists no longer refer to the technology, computer or even the electronic age. The society that this generation is building is the Information Society, promising fundamental change in all aspects of our lives. But for its benefits to be truly equitably distributed, its reach must be global.

Digital electronics - computer networks, digital TV, 3G phones and a host of related, hardware, software, and services - provide the key building blocks for the Information Society. Collectively, they are known as Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Without ICTs - the technologies that are essential to disseminating information and/or knowledge electronically - a global Information Society

would not be possible. ICTs have a direct impact on almost every aspect of social development - from education through healthcare, public administration, economics, finance and banking, commerce and business, international relations, and technology transfer to poverty reduction.

ICTs mostly had their origins in mature industrial societies, and now play an increasingly important role in helping developing countries and economies in transition to fulfill their potential. The challenge is how best to employ the tools of the Information Society to achieve development goals on a global scale, maximizing the benefits while minimizing obstacles and barriers.



Key to making ICTs work for developing countries are the international standards created by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). International standards simplify the use of existing and new

technologies, reduce costs and complexity, open markets and foster broader access to products and services. In today's age of converging digital technologies, the three organizations are working ever more closely across the entire ICT spectrum.

International standards are agreements on best practices that are shared and adopted worldwide. They result from a process incorporating six principles defined by the World Trade Organization (WTO) - they are open, transparent, impartial and consensus-based, effective and relevant, coherent, and have a development dimension.

The development dimension is critical to bridging what is often termed the "Digital Divide" between the "haves" and "have-nots" of ICT and information. The potential benefits of international standards for developing economies and those in transition include significantly better opportunities for developing local industries and internal markets. They help lower costs, broaden the choice of partners and suppliers, create products with worldwide market coverage and acceptance, and expand export opportunities by reducing technical barriers to trade. Participation in the standards making processes of IEC, ISO, and ITU gives stakeholders the opportunity to shape standards according to their views and specific needs - whether in the developed or the developing world.

This year, the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) sets out not only to address a broad range of social,



economic and technical questions but also to draw up an action plan to bridge the Digital Divide. ISO, the IEC and ITU are actively involved in the preparatory process for WSIS to ensure that the critical role played by international standards in offering the best tools to support both growth of the Information Society and more equitable

development is fully appreciated by the heads of state that will be attending the Summit in Geneva, Switzerland from 10-12 December 2003.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America estimates that it took 70 years to span the radio divide and 40 to overcome the television divide. ISO, the IEC and ITU aim to ensure that international standards bring about a far swifter end to today's Digital Divide.

Each year on 14 October, the members of ISO, the IEC and ITU celebrate World Standards Day, which is a means of paying tribute to the collaborative efforts of the thousands of experts worldwide who develop the voluntary technical agreements that are published as international standards.



AFRICA GIS '03 – MEETING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF NEPAD

AfricaGIS '03 was officially opened by Senegal's Minister for the Environment and Sanitation, Mr. Modou Diagna Fada, on behalf of the Prime Minister of Senegal. The theme for the meeting was reinforced by a presentation on NEPAD by Mme Maguette Wade in the opening plenary session. Africa GIS '03 followed the traditional blend of technical plenary sessions and discussions focusing on a conference sub-theme, technical sessions and workshops. Conference goers also availed themselves of the opportunity to spend time in the exhibition halls throughout the week.



Keynote speakers and discussants raised challenges facing the geo-information community in Africa. These include the need to shift their focus to the usage of information for development in Africa, particularly at the local level, rather than dwelling on technical complexities; to define how information technology can be used to support development and work towards this; to think in terms of making information useable, rather than simply considering its availability and the need to pool knowledge and skills, in order to make effective use of information resources.

Over 100 presentations were made, in both oral and poster form. 10 workshops during the conference allowed for in-depth discussions on topics such as policy and partnerships for building spatial data infrastructure, geo-information standardization and interoperability, the use of a geo-statistical database in supporting development and tools for improved management and use of geo-information.

Recommendations deriving from the meeting include the following:

- Working towards wider access to both socio-economic and natural resource data, to facilitate the implementation of NEPAD;
- A participatory approach to identifying information needs with respect to improved resource management;
- The need to develop spatial data infrastructure;
- The harnessing of geo-information as a tool for NEPAD's peer review mechanism and monitoring development progress, particularly through exploiting existing initiatives and projects which are developing relevant data and information products;
- The need for investment in the information and communication infrastructure in African countries.

<http://www.eis-africa.org> Liz Gavin



Economic benefits of standardization – Summary of results Final report and practical examples

Among the core findings of the joint research project on the "Economic benefits of standardization" undertaken by the Technical University Dresden (TUD) and the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovations (ISI) are:

- The benefit to the national economy amounts to more than US\$ 15 billion per year.
- Standards contribute more to economic growth than patents and licenses.
- Companies that participate actively in standards work have a head start on their competitors in adapting to market demands and new technologies.
- Transaction costs are lower when European and International Standards are used.
- Research risks and development costs are reduced for companies contributing to the standardization process.

(Appendix 4)

The study was initiated by DIN, the German Institute for Standardization, and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology (BMW) in 1997 and completed in May 2000.

<http://www2.din.de/index.php?lang=en>



Successful ISO/TC 211 Working Group meetings and Plenary in Berlin, Germany

October 27 – 31, 2003 - DIN, German Institute for Standardization, hosted the ISO/TC 211 Working Group meetings and Plenary.

For Monday evening, there was a wonderful reception for the delegates and opening of the Technical Exhibition. During Wednesday afternoon, the Advisory Group on Outreach sponsored the Class A Liaison Seminar followed by the Standards in Action Workshop.

We would especially like to recognize the efforts of the entire German Delegation and DIN staff. Especially, Dr. Hans Knoop, Head of Delegation – for arranging the outstanding Dinner at Rotes Rathaus (Berlin City Hall) Thursday evening.

On Friday, DIN and the Advisory Group on Outreach sponsored the Standards Tutorial for the local GIS community.



Malaysia to host next ISO/TC 211 Working Group meetings and Plenary in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia May 24 –28, 2004

Registration and travel information will be posted on the ISO/TC 211 website.