

## U.S. Department of Commerce ICT Services Roundtable (6/26/2003)

The International Trade Administration and Technology Administration hosted the ICT Services Roundtable on April 28, 2003. Ben Wu, Deputy Under Secretary for Technology Administration, opened the Roundtable by describing Secretary Evans' Eight-Point Standards Initiative. Linda Conlin, Assistant Secretary for Trade Development, continued by outlining Trade Development's efforts on standards issues.

Representatives from various trade associations made the following points:

### ATSC Forum:

The Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) is a U.S.-based international standards body developing standards for digital television (DTV) broadcasting. ATSC DTV broadcasting is now deployed throughout the U.S. The ATSC Forum is an affiliated organization that promotes the rapid introduction of digital television and adoption of the ATSC (U.S.) family of DTV standards throughout the world, especially the Americas.

#### o Top priority issues:

- o Cable compatibility for terrestrial DTV broadcasts
- o Standards harmonization for interactive services
- o Promoting a common DTV standard in the Western Hemisphere

#### o General concerns:

- o Intense competition from Europe and Japan (China is up-and-coming competitor)
- o Standards process in foreign markets is often not clear and competition is unfair

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#### o Goals:

- o Working to win adoption of their DTV standard in other markets; Brazil is top priority right now

#### o Desired government assistance:

- o Would like help developing interactive service prototypes from NIST
- o Would like continued help promoting their standard from State, Commerce, FCC, and TDA

### Information Technology Association of America (ITAA)

ITAA is a leading trade association representing the information technology industry. ITAA's over 500 direct member companies create and market products and information services associated with computers, communications, and data.

#### o General approach to standards:

- o Standards aren't usually a problem for the IT services industry; usually promote voluntary, industry-led, global standards
- o They discourage the development of standards by governments and are opposed to mandatory standards
- o They are also involved in issues that have the effect of standards (e.g. foreign ownership restrictions)
- o Privacy and online content protection:

- o On privacy and content protection, ITAA opposes any mandatory standards and supports voluntary standards.

#### U.S. Council for International Business (USCIB)

USCIB has built an unparalleled global network of industry affiliations as the U.S. affiliate of the International Chamber of Commerce, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD and the International Organization of Employers that enables their members to bring their collective views to bear on regulatory issues and business practices around the world. USCIB works on a variety of fronts to smooth the way for American commerce abroad, promoting practical business services such as international commercial arbitration to resolve disputes swiftly and the ATA Carnet for temporary duty-free imports of many goods.

- o General approach to standards:

- o Advocate international, voluntary, consensus, market-led standards

- o Respond to technical standards that would affect IT, telecom, or e-commerce sectors

- o Opposed to regional standards that can circumvent international standards

- o Get involved in standards issues when members are concerned the standard will adversely affect their businesses

- o Issues:

- o Privacy

- o Electronic signatures

- o Online alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

- o Concerns:

- o European Telecommunications Standards Institute's (ETSI) electronic signature proposal ([http://www.etsi.org/frameset/home.htm?/technicalactiv/Electronic\\_Signature/ElectronicSignatures.htm](http://www.etsi.org/frameset/home.htm?/technicalactiv/Electronic_Signature/ElectronicSignatures.htm))

- o Alternative Dispute Resolution: advocate International Chamber of Commerce's ADR best practices and recognizes the important work of GBDe on this issue; oppose ISO's work program because ADR is evolving rapidly and ISO's work could stifle innovation in evolving services and business models

#### Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC)

ITIC represents the top U.S. providers of information technology products and services. ITI advocates policies that: advance industry leadership in technology and innovation; open access to new and emerging markets; promote e-commerce expansion; protect consumer choice; and enhance the global competitiveness of its member companies.

- o General approach to standards:

- o Voluntary standards must be industry-led, with little to no government involvement (except perhaps as that of a major consumer)

- o Standards for use in regulations must be created in an open, balanced process; must be technology neutral and based on performance

- o Compliance/certification requirements should ensure safe, legal products; shouldn't be used to create barriers or to abuse/obfuscate regulations

- o supports 1 standard-1 test and the Supplier's Declaration of Conformity (1-1SDoC )

- o Issues:

- o Data privacy
- o Target countries/regions:
  - o China
  - o Mexico
  - o EU
- o ITIC's recommendations for Standards Initiative:
  - o Create a high level standards and technical regulatory position in ITA (Note: this has been done - interim person is Jon Menes)
  - o Standards attache program should be expanded (to Geneva, China and other parts of Asia) and enhanced to focus solely on standards and technical regulations, and not on other trade issues.
  - o Provide information services. Analyze key policy issues and create an early warning system to detect and alert industry to global standards and technical regulatory issues.
  - o Launch an industry dialogue. Host regionally focused roundtables to define specific issues. Support an industry-wide conference on standards and technical regulatory policy issues
  - o Coordinate with industry. Commerce's role on standards and technical regulatory issues would be limited and clearly defined, responsive to industry needs, and performed in partnership with industry.

The presentations were followed by a discussion session. Highlights are described below:

- o VeriSign noted that there is a lack of legal remedies for those aggrieved in the standards process and that they are concerned about the European signature standards, which are voluntary but become mandatory when referenced by the member states.
- o Both ITIC and USCIB support the 1-1 SDoC effort.
- o Corporate code of conduct standards (e.g. SA 8000: <http://www.uscib.org/index.asp?documentID=1357>, [http://www.citinv.it/associazioni/CNMS/archivio/lavoro/Presentazione\\_SA8000.html](http://www.citinv.it/associazioni/CNMS/archivio/lavoro/Presentazione_SA8000.html)) are an issue as well; concerned that these will become mandatory in some markets.
- o ITIC suggests an "early warning system" to let industry know about potential standards issues.
- o USCIB noted that U.S. firms are disadvantaged in the ISO and IEC because the U.S. has only one vote, while each European country has a vote. They further pointed out that information dissemination is key and Commerce can help.
- o TIA affirmed the position of industry-led, consensus-based standards where they are deemed necessary.
- o VeriSign reiterated the need for consistency in our messaging within bilateral and multilateral fora.