
ISO/IEC JTC 1 "Information technology"

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SC 34 Business Plan 2020

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Description

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BUSINESS PLAN FOR JTC 1/SC 34

PERIOD COVERED: from September 2019 to September 2020

SUBMITTED BY: Francis Cave, SC 34 Chair

1.0 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

SC34 continues to develop and maintain widely-used core standards in the field of document description and processing languages. During the period, SC 34 had four active Working Groups, and completed work on one new International Standard, two revised International Standards and two new multi-part Technical Specifications. SC 34 continues to collaborate closely with OASIS and Ecma International on the maintenance of the major office file format standards ISO/IEC 26300 OpenDocument Format and ISO/IEC 29500 Office Open XML File Formats. SC 34 manages the Joint Working Group (JWG 7) with ISO TC 46/SC 4 and IEC TC 100/TA 10 to pursue standardization of EPUB3 specifications in close collaboration with their originators in Publishing@W3C. A Study Group on Document Semantics Support has explored actual and potential use cases for enabling enriched metadata support in document applications, and has concluded that a Technical Report should be published that explores exciting opportunities for possible future standardization in this area.

2.0 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

2.1 Market Requirements, Innovation

Despite sometimes giving the appearance of being a mature area, with limited scope for technological innovation, document production and publishing continue to play a vital role in a wide range of human activities. With much of human knowledge locked up in documents, there is a growing realisation that much can be gained by making documents created by human authors more digestible for AI and machine learning applications, as well as for less sophisticated systems involved in publishing and digital preservation. Completing its work at the SC 34 2020 Plenary this September, the SC 34 Study Group on Document Semantics Support concluded that there appears to be a need in several application domains to enrich the amount of semantic metadata that can be associated with the content and organisation of documents, to make it easier for machines to interpret those documents in ways similar to those that human readers do. This could ultimately lead to new requirements for enhancements to existing document file formats, both for revisable formats, such as those currently within the scope of SC 34, and for non-revisable formats within the scope of other SCs and TCs.

SC 34 has responded to the demands from e-book publishers for an International Standard for EPUB Accessibility, which is to be published as ISO/IEC 23761. This will enable publishers to comply with the terms of the Marrakech VIP Treaty, to make all digital publications available in accessible formats.

2.2 Accomplishments

Given the size and complexity of the document file format standards for which SC 34 is responsible, a large proportion of its technical work continues to be focused on maintenance of existing standards. However, during the past year SC 34 has prepared a new International Standard on EPUB Accessibility and two new multi-part Technical Specifications on EPUB Digital Preservation and on Digital Rights Management (DRM) technology for digital publications. Two new editions of existing XML schema language standards (Schematron and CREPDL) were also published.

2.3 Resources

SC 34 has 16 P-member National Bodies (Armenia, China, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Poland, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States). SC 34 currently holds a single annual plenary meeting. Participation in the 2020 SC 34 Plenary online meeting, was satisfactory: 22 delegates/experts from six NBs and two liaison members participated in the 2020 Online Plenary and Working Group meetings.

2.4 Competition and cooperation

SC 34 collaborates closely with Ecma International on the maintenance of ISO/IEC 29500 Office Open XML File Formats, and SC 34 is particularly grateful to Ecma International for its strong cooperation on maintenance tasks, especially Defect Report resolution, and excellent participation in meetings. Since the publication of the first edition of ISO/IEC 29500, Ecma-376 (Office Open XML File Formats) and ISO/IEC 29500 have been maintained in step.

SC 34 collaborates with OASIS on the maintenance of ISO/IEC 26300 OpenDocument Format (ODF), under the agreement between JTC 1 and OASIS. Under that agreement, the text of ISO/IEC 26300 must remain technically equivalent to the approved OASIS standard: no technical changes are possible and editorial defects may only be corrected in parallel with publication of Approved Errata documents by OASIS. In the reporting period OASIS experts have continued to work on the preparation of ODF 1.3, and it is now expected that this will be published by OASIS in early 2021 and thereafter submitted to JTC 1 for PAS transposition.

We have greatly appreciated the collaboration of Publishing@W3C, the Radium Foundation and the DAISY Consortium in assisting SC 34 and JWG 7 to prepare ISO/IEC 23761 EPUB Accessibility and the first two parts of ISO/IEC TS 23078 Specification of DRM technology for digital publications, all due to be submitted for publication shortly. The collaboration continues and we expect this to lead to further publications in coming years.

SC 34 expects that the new project to develop a Technical Report on documents semantics support will provide opportunities for collaboration with other SCs, particularly SC 42 on defining the requirements of use cases relating to AI and machine learning, as well as possibly with ISO TCs concerned with document file format standardization, including ISO TC 46 Information and documentation, ISO TC 171 document management applications and ISO TC 130 graphic technology.

3.0 WORKING GROUPS

3.1 WG 4 Office Open XML File Formats

WG 4 is responsible for maintenance of ISO/IEC 29500. Ecma International provides secretariat support and there are currently 37 registered expert members nominated by 12 National Bodies and 3 Liaison Members.

WG4 has for some time been involved in the revision of OPC. This revision addresses defect reports, particularly relating to non-ASCII characters in part names, pack IRIs and digital signatures.

3.1.1 WG 4 Accomplishments

WG4 held 13 teleconference meetings since the SC 34 2019 Plenary in Fukuoka. Work has continued to focus on defect report processing and revision of ISO/IEC 29500-2 Open Packaging Conventions (OPC).

3.1.2 WG 4 Deliverables

The first DIS ballot for revision of ISO/IEC 29500-2 was successfully completed in May 2020. WG4 is actively addressing comments raised during this DIS ballot, but it is not easy to address all editorial comments from ISO. WG4 expects that the final IS will be published in 2021.

WG4 has to publish a new edition of 29500-1 and -4 for addressing many defect reports, but this is a significant challenge given the current requirements of the STS-based editorial workflow.

3.1.3 WG 4 Strategies/Opportunities/Risks/Lessons learned

Collaboration with XAdES and digital signatures experts in ETSI and the Japan Network Security Association (JNSA) will start again, since the addition of XAdES into OPC is expected to be submitted by Japan as an amendment proposal.

3.2 WG 6 OpenDocument Format (ODF)

WG 6 is responsible jointly with OASIS for maintenance of ISO/IEC 26300. There are currently 29 registered expert members nominated by 9 National Bodies and 3 Liaison Members.

3.2.1 WG 6 Accomplishments

With the OASIS ODF Technical Committee being focused upon preparing ODF 1.3 for publication and unable to allocate resources to the preparation of an Errata document for ODF 1.2, WG 6 held no meetings in the current period. WG 6 experts continue to collaborate with the OASIS ODF Technical Committee on the issues raised by SC34 members.

3.2.2 WG 6 Deliverables

There have been no deliverables. It is hoped that OASIS will be able to submit ODF 1.3 for PAS transposition during early 2021, following which WG 6 will be able to resume its role collaborating with the OASIS ODF TC on maintenance of the transposed IS.

3.2.3 WG 6 Strategies/Opportunities/Risks/Lessons learned

Joint work with OASIS on maintenance of ISO/IEC 26300 has been managed successfully in the past, but is dependent upon both sides having the will and resources to collaborate actively to ensure that the published standard is maintained to a high quality. There continue to be resourcing challenges for both the OASIS ODF Technical Committee and WG 6. There are potential opportunities for new work related to ISO/IEC 26300, but these need to be developed in close collaboration with the OASIS ODF Technical Committee.

3.3 JWG 7 EPUB

3.3.1 JWG 7 Accomplishments

JWG 7 is responsible for maintenance of EPUB3 standards and technical specifications, and in this work collaborates with experts from the Publishing@W3C. JWG 7 currently has 59 registered expert members nominated by 14 National Bodies and 3 Liaison Members. ISO/IEC TS 22424-1 and -2 were submitted for publication following successful resolution of DTS ballot comments in May 2020.

3.3.2 JWG 7 Deliverables

ISO/IEC DTS 22424-3 was approved with comments in July 2020, a comment resolution meeting (CRM) was held and final texts are expected to be submitted shortly for publication. ISO/IEC DIS 23761 was approved with comments in June 2020, a CRM was held and a final text is expected to be submitted shortly for publication.

ISO/IEC 23736-1 to -6 EPUB 3.0.1, submitted by the Korean NB to JTC 1 under the Fast Track procedure, was published in February 2020. If maintenance of any part of ISO/IEC 23736 is required, SC 34 would recommend that JTC 1 assign administrative responsibility for this to SC 34, so that SC 34 can assign technical responsibility to JWG 7.

3.3.3 JWG 7 Strategies/Opportunities/Risks/Lessons learned

JWG 7 having completed its current planned programme of work, the JWG 7 Convenors were asked by SC 34 to review over the next period whether there is additional work to be done related to EPUB and to present interim recommendations to a JWG 7 meeting planned to coincide with the next Plenary meeting of ISO TC 46 in May 2021, and final recommendations to the next SC 34 Plenary.

3.4 WG 8 Document processing and presentation

3.4.1 WG 8 Accomplishments

WG 8 completed its “tidying up” function, finishing outstanding work on the projects it was allocated, and was disbanded at the SC 34 Plenary in September. During the period WG 8 had 28 registered expert members representing 10 National Bodies and 1 Liaison Member. New editions of ISO/IEC 19757-3 Schematron and ISO/IEC 19757-7 CREPDL were published during 2020.

3.4.2 WG 8 Deliverables

Following the withdrawal of ISO/IEC 10036, WG 8 assisted the Project Editor to prepare ISO/IEC DTR 10036 for ballot, which was unanimously approved. Future work on this project, if any, will be handled by the Project Editor with direct support from SC 34.

3.4.3 WG 8 Strategies/Opportunities/Risks/Lessons learned

Having completed its work, WG 8 has been disbanded.

3.5 SG 1 / WG 9 Document Semantic Support

3.5.1 SG 1 Accomplishments

SG 1 completed its task of reviewing use cases for enhanced document semantic support in office file formats and proposing a new project to produce a Technical Report on the requirements of selected use cases and how these requirements can be met by existing and new features in the office file formats. SG 1 was disbanded at the SC 34 Plenary in September.

3.5.2 SG 1 Deliverables

SG 1 delivered an early working draft of a Technical Report, and this project was assigned to the new Working Group 9.

3.5.3 SG 1 Lessons learned and WG 9 Strategies/Opportunities/Risks

SG 1 initially struggled to reach a conclusion on potential new work, due to having too narrow a focus, principally on document preservation. During the final period of its work, SG 1 widened its focus and soon identified potential new work related to machine learning and publishing use cases. This led to an increase in the number of experts taking an interest in the work, and as a consequence other use cases are expected to emerge.

WG 9 was created by SC 34 to develop the Technical Report proposed by SG 1 and to be in a position to take on any subsequent work in the same area. Wide participation is crucial to the success of this activity, and SC 34 will be supporting WG 9 in attracting expert participation from National Bodies, established liaison members and new liaison members (e.g. SC 42).