IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization

affiliated with IEEE and the IEEE Standards Association

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February 1999
IEEE Standards Bearer Article

IEEE Launches Industry Standards Organization
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New organization to provide IEEE societies, industry, and the standards development community with an increased level of choice and flexibility

On 15 November 1998, the IEEE Board of Directors (BoD) approved the establishment of the IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization, effective 1 January 1999. This new organization is formed as an independent not-for-profit corporation, tax exempt under Section 501(c)(6) of the U. S. tax code.

The IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization will function as a complement to the existing IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA). The IEEE-SA (governed by established guiding principles of consensus, due process, and openness) will continue its efforts to facilitate development of internationally recognized standards. IEEE societies and industry can sponsor programs under the IEEE-SA Standards Board, the IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization, or both, depending on the methods and resources required to achieve a particular project's goals. With these two organizations, IEEE is positioned to offer its societies and the industries it supports unprecedented choice and flexibility in their development options.

Industry, with the formation of various specification development groups organized as consortia, alliances, and special interest groups, has clearly signaled the need for alternative standards development processes and services. The IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization will enable developers to build a foundation tailored to the technology, the market, the participants, and all of the other factors pertinent to the challenge at hand. This new organization will provide industry and the standards development community with the kind of services the times require, while retaining IEEE's traditional commitment to technical quality and excellence.

"IEEE is uniquely positioned to establish new methodologies and means for producing standards, using its proven technical and organizational assets as a foundation for continued quality and much needed services," according to Richard Holleman, Director of Standards, IBM Corporation, and Chair, IEEE-SA Standards Board. "The formation of the IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization demonstrates IEEE's commitment to provide value-added services that will meet the standards development challenges and needs of industry today, and in the future."

The IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization provides the infrastructure under which industry-specific programs and related technology development activities (e.g., marketing, accreditation, certification, specification development, branding, and conformity assessment) can be organized. Participant groups can mobilize and maintain their unique identity without the need to develop their own infrastructure or legal entity.

Participant groups can organize themselves within the IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization and benefit from contractual arrangements for services from IEEE's experienced Standards staff. Services for timely development of standards and specifications are in place to ensure quality, provide intellectual property protection, and reduce the heavy costs involved in establishing, staffing, and operating programs. Timeliness and cost-effectiveness are two governing principles in this new organization. Staff will provide comprehensive management and operational services from formation to completion of each project's deliverables.

There are a number of examples where an industry group or trade association has been organized to support the development of a standard or technology within the formal standards development process. These groups often form to advance acceptance of the resulting standard in the marketplace. Industry has recognized that the approval or publication of a standard is only one piece of its strategy to develop market-relevant standards. Both development and post-development activities often require a significant commitment of resources by a motivated industry group.

Many standards developing organizations (SDOs) declare "victory" with the publication of the document. While the publication and approval of a standard certainly represents a milestone event, additional activities are often necessary to support and gain acceptance for the standard in the marketplace. The IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization provides the forum not only to develop specifications, but also to facilitate the activities that support a standard or specification in the marketplace.

Two examples of standards that have sparked organizations to support and promote them are IEEE Std 1394 and Gigabit Ethernet (IEEE Std 802.3). The 1394 Trade Association and the Gigabit Ethernet Alliance have been organized to promote, support, and provide technical resources to the resulting IEEE/Society sponsored standards. These efforts have been organized to gain market acceptance and to facilitate product development based on the standards.

Marketing (e.g., the development of the 1394 Trade Association's theme "1394 is here and it soon will be everywhere!"), certification, conformance testing, demonstrations at trade shows, and developers conferences are among the various activities that often take place in support of a standard or specification.

Previously, the IEEE has not been able to provide a forum for these types of services because of the category of its not-for-profit tax status. With this new organization, IEEE will be able to support and initiate the full range of development and post-development activities and services that industry and the standards development community require.

The IEEE Industry Standards and Technology Organization is in its start-up phase as of 1 January 1999. Opportunities for participant programs and partnerships are being explored. Requests for additional information or questions regarding this new organization should be directed to Peter Lefkin at p.lefkin@ieee.org or by telephone at 732.562.3802.

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