



IPTC Mirror

IPTC - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR NEWS

Roadmap 2003-2005



Stéphane Guérillot outlines plans for the next generation of IPTC Standards

The outline development plan covers work that will be carried out over the next three years. Main reasons for undertaking what will be a major effort are seen as: widening the use of IPTC standards; making implementation easier and simpler; ensuring that the latest technologies are used when appropriate; and making the IPTC standards into a consistent family.

It is anticipated that these aims can be achieved by producing a simplified version of NewsML as the core standard, with other standards being designed for use as payloads within NewsML. A common set of metadata will be identified with a consistent method being used for metadata representation.

In addition the metadata structures will be opened up to third parties, and work will be undertaken to investigate implementation of topic association. Support for Digital Rights management also needs to be enhanced.

An important question is whether XML Schemas should be adopted as the primary standards and the relative advantages and disadvantages will be investigated. If there is agreement to move to XML Schemas a time frame will be established for the change and a policy developed for mainte-

Prior to the IPTC 2003 AGM, a special session of the new Standards Steering Committee was held in Washington to work on the roadmap for future development of the family of IPTC Standards. An overview of the results of discussions was given by Standards Committee Chairman Stéphane Guérillot (AFP) at the opening Standards session at the AGM, leading to a wide-ranging debate with further refinement of the proposals

nance of the established DTDs.

As a first step, which should help achieve wider use of the standards, it is proposed to produce XML Schemas for all current DTDs by the Autumn 2003 Meeting. The intention is that this will be achieved by using conversion software to produce them from the DTDs, which will remain the reference standards, probably until 2005. A NewsML XML Schema has already been produced in this way, though some fine-tuning was found necessary to achieve full functionality.

Existing standards

Achieving this aims will need a series of modifications to the existing standards. Turning to NewsML itself, a first step is to identify who is using the standard, and how they are using it. This should make it possible to identify a preferred implementation, leading to the possibility of simplifying the standard without losing any functionality. One area needing specific attention is ways of handling the controlled vocabularies and non-IPTC metadata.

The NITF is seen as a mature standard (with a well-established user base) and it seems that only relatively minor changes will be necessary. However, there could be advantages in finding ways for the NITF to handle other metadata vocabularies - this might be helped by the adoption of XML Schemas, which would simplify the use of namespaces. A series of practical examples will be needed to help promote use of the NITF within NewsML - for example applications involving the use of text along with photos.

SportsML has a modular design but it is important to ensure that any plug-ins for

new sports will conform to a common structure.

ProgramGuideML is designed for use with NewsML, but the standard has to be finalised and validated before release.

EventsML is still in the early stages of development but as well as establishing requirements it will be important to consider how it will relate to the established IPTC standards.

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This PDF version of the IPTC Mirror has active links to both the content and to external web sites

Clicking on the red links - Standards - will take you to the appropriate page, while the blue links - www.iptc.org - will attempt to open your browser and connect to the appropriate site.

Public Relations Committee

There were two PR Committee sessions in Aarhus, one at the start of the meeting and one at the end - this the same arrangement as for the Standards committee and for similar reasons. In the first session attention was concentrated on plans for a major relaunch of the IPTC Web sites, which are seen as an important way of promoting IPTC standards and IPTC itself.

An initial proposal to update the sites had been discussed during the Spring Meeting, with work continuing at the Washington Standards Steering Committee and in a subsequent telephone conference.

Two designs were produced following these discussions, one by Allen Karben and the other by Michael Steidl and these were presented for consideration. Visually both designs were similar, with the main differences lying in the way the content is structured. Aims of both designs are to provide a new appearance, better navigation and access to data and improved documentation. The intention is that the same structure will be adopted for all of the standards documentation and it was recognised that achieving the aims within a reasonable timescale was likely to require the use of outside services.

Response to the proposals were generally favourable and included a number of proposals for ways both the structure and the content could be developed. Comments made during the session will be taken into account in the next development stage, and it is hoped that a final design will be available for presentation at the Autumn Meeting. If an agreement is reached the update would be carried out as soon as possible

The second PR session was mainly concerned with promotion of IPTC activities and standards. Where possible the intention is to try and issue a press release within 24 hours of a Meeting and the press release issued on the day after the Aarhus Meeting featured the review and approval of ProgramGuideML, along with information on the redesign of the IPTC web site, pointing out that this makes IPTC Standards and documentation available at no cost. Emphasis was also placed on the international nature of IPTC.

SRS (Subject Reference System) development is seen as continuing as normal, as this is not seen as having a direct impact on the standards integration process.

Having looked at the aims agreed by the Working Party Chairmen, Stéphane Guérillot went on to consider ways in which they could be achieved. A first step was to establish who the users of IPTC standards are, and what they need. Following discussion of the proposals in Aarhus the intention was to produce a survey aimed at providing answers to these questions.

Since a good response is needed, distribution of the survey will be followed up by telephone. The hope is that comments from Members will be received by the end August and that sufficient information (including replies from non-members) will be available for the roadmap to be finalised at the October 2003 Meeting (in Leipzig).

It was appreciated that this work will have to fit in with the established pattern of three full IPTC meetings a year. This means that a lot of work will have to be carried out between meetings, imposing a high load on members of the Standards Steering Committee, who will need as much support as possible from other members.

In addition to this challenging technical programme there is a need to improve the

internal IPTC documentation, produce better marketing material and initiate an "Evangelism" strategy which will include liaison with other standards bodies and establishing a presence at appropriate trade shows.

A wide ranging discussion followed the presentation, and while there was considerable agreement on the need to ensure that the IPTC family of standards would continue to meet the needs of the news industry, there were some concerns about how

this could best be achieved.

For example particular attention was given to the possibility of making more use of XHTML (extensible Hypertext Markup Language) - mainly as a text format in NewsML.

One of the original requirements for NewsML was the ability to include other standards and the main question was how this should be done. Although direct incorporation of other standards has some practical attractions there is a danger that once something external has integrated, IPTC may find it has effectively lost control of its standard. Allowing the use of external standards by reference might avoid this but at the cost of increased complexity. Another consideration is that standards such as XHTML may not meet all the requirements of the news industry.

Requirements

Identifying requirements would be an important first step in the new development process - one of the reasons for the success of NewsML was that requirements were clearly identified at the outset. However, the potential user base is much larger than the traditional news industry with the growing importance of news aggregators and syndicators.

At the same time the needs of existing users have to be taken into account. For example it was pointed out that there is a large NITF user base in North America with a lot of development work under way to integrate the standard in users systems. Any suggestion that these users would have to move to a new standard would meet a lot of opposition

It was recognised that IPTC are not the only organisation producing standards for use by the news industry and that attempts should be made to see if the various organisations could work together to achieve at least a basic level of compatibility. First

Standards Steering Committee

A new IPTC Committee has been established to plan and undertake development of the new family of IPTC Standards. Known as the Standards Steering Committee(SSC) the group consists of the IPTC Chairman and the Chairmen of the individual Working Parties, and has already held a number of meetings to work on the roadmap.

Members of the Committee are:

Stéphane Guérillot (AFP) - Standards Committee Chairman
John lobst (NAA) - IPTC Chairman
Walter Barranger (New York Times) - PR Committee Chairman
Laurent Le Meur (AFP) - NewsML Support Working Party Chairman
John Minting (UPI) - News Metadata Working Party Chairman
Geoffrey Haynes (AP) - Specialised Content Working Party
Stuart Myles (Dow Jones) - News Management Working Party
Dominic Chan (Canada NewsWire) - EventsML Working Party
Alan Karben (XML Team Solutions) - NITF Working Party
Michael Steidl - IPTC Managing Director

steps in trying to achieve this have now been taken (see panel on page 3), but success will depend on the co-operation of the other bodies involved.

Overall the presentation and the subsequent discussion provided a lot of information for the delegates to consider - a process that continued during the rest of the meeting, both in the formal Working Party sessions and in less formal discussions. A further get-together of the Working Party Chairmen looked at the points raised by members and further refined the proposal ready for discussion during the second Standards Committee session at the end of the Meeting.

Standards suite

Main features of the plan remain the same and it was agreed that the new standards suite would consist of: NewsML V2.0 (as the base standard); NITF V4.0; SportsML V2.0; ProgramGuideML V2.0; and EventsML V1.0 (if it is decided to proceed with this project).

Further work on the roadmap will be carried out, taking particular account of the results of the planned user survey with the aim of presenting final roadmap proposals for approval in Leipzig. If the proposals are accepted, the plan is to release new versions of the standards on the following schedule:

Spring 2004 - NewsML V2.0 released in Beta version.

AGM 2004 - NewsML V2.0 released complete with documentation and examples.

October 2003 - NITF V4.0 and SportsML V2.0 released in Beta versions.

Spring 2005 - final validation of the various standards including documentation and examples.

AGM 2005 - new IPTC Standards Suite released.

Agreement was reached on initial work for the survey. This involves preparation of a list of questions, which will then be refined into a formal survey (with assistance from a group of members including the NAA, New York Times and CCI). The survey will be distributed as soon as it is ready, and members are particularly asked to provide prompt and complete replies, along with other inputs where possible.

Any further comments would be welcome. IPTC members can use the Yahoo list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iptcmembers>) for further discussions, while formal proposals should be sent to the Managing Director for circulation.

Other developments

While planning and guiding the overall development and integration of the "new-generation" family of standards has now become a major part of the work of the Standards Committee, it also has to carry out the task of overseeing and approving changes to the established standards. Other matters dealt with by the Standards Committee included:

A proposal to appoint Vice-Chairmen for all Working Parties to ensure that work can continue normally if the Chairman is unable to attend a Meeting. It was agreed that the Working Party Chairmen should nominate the Vice-Chairman for their group, subject to approval by the Standards Committee.

A revised naming convention for IPTC documents - proposed by the Managing Director - was approved and will be applied to new documents and previously issued documents that are still available. Timing for the date of application of the convention

has been left to the discretion of the Managing Director.

Approval was given to a set of Motions from the News Metadata Working Party.

Working Parties

The AGM also saw a series of productive Working Party Sessions with the main features being as follows:

EventsML - mission statement agreed and initial steps taken to define requirements. Possibility of co-operation with OASIS to be investigated.

Special Content - interest in weather mark-up was confirmed so available systems will be investigated further. Update on ProgramGuideML project with aim for release of V1.0 in Spring 2004. Overview of Rights Management.

News Metadata - consideration was given to a series of additions to the Subject Reference System. A standard structure for Topics in IPTC TopicSets was agreed, as was a procedure for managing all language versions of the IPTC Subject Codes. Motions dealing with these points were moved forward to the Standards Committee for approval.

NewsML Support - evolution of the NewsML documentation under way with the first draft planned for Autumn 2003. Possible production of a NewsML V1.2 for Autumn. Consideration of the possibility of including information handled by vCard, possibly in co-operation with OASIS.

NITF - minor adjustments for draft NITF V3.2 were reviewed, including the handling of "Ruby".

News Management - no session held.

Full reports on the Working Party sessions will be given in the next issue of the IPTC Mirror.

News Summit

Following discussions at the Annual General Meeting, outline plans have been drawn up for a summit of interested parties to investigate interaction and compatibility between the various standards available for exchanging news.

These standards include:

NewsML and the NITF along with add-ons such as SportsML. Prism - Publishing Requirements for Industry Standard Metadata. Originally formed to develop standard metadata structures (primarily for magazine applications) but now starting to develop XML based DTDs for publishing production process and content exchange. Work is hosted by IDE Alliance.

RSS - XML based format for syndicating news. There appear to be several different initiatives, with the main ones including Rich Site Summary and RDF Site Summary.

ICE - Information and Content Exchange. An XML based protocol for automated content syndication. Hosted by IDE Alliance.

XMP - eXtensible Metadata Platform from Adobe which makes it possible to embed data about a file in the file itself. It is supported by some Adobe applications and available under an open source

licence.

The aim is to hold a one-day meeting with presentations by representatives of the various standards organisations and from users of the standards. These would be followed by a discussion with the aim of identifying what can, and should, be done to provide the best possible interaction between the standards. This could then lead to formation of a Liaison Committee to make appropriate recommendations. If possible the meeting will be held in conjunction with a suitable event, such as XML 2003.

OASIS - Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards - is a not for profit consortium with a mission to drive the development, convergence, and adoption of structured information standards in the areas of e-business, web services, etc. IPTC is a member of OASIS and it is hoped that OASIS may be able to host the Liaison Committee. Contact is being made with other standards bodies and OASIS to try and make the necessary arrangements for the summit.

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Chairman's Report

John Iobst (NAA)

It is my privilege as the Chairman of the Management Committee of the International Press Telecommunications Council to say a few words at this 38th Annual General Meeting.

I must first thank Peter Müller for handing over a company that is in good working order. However, unlike Peter's report of last year, I am unable to report that it was a quiet year, with activities including the appointment of a new Managing Director and the passage of a major new Standard. In order to accomplish the business of the company, the Management Committee had three regular meetings and one special meeting (to deal with the appointment of the new Managing Director).

Change in the Company

The major change of the last year has been the retirement of David Allen and the appointment of a new Managing Director - I would like to formally welcome Michael Steidl to his first Annual General Meeting, and hope he will be with us for many more. Michael has successfully moved the IPTC offices to Vienna, Austria, from England, although the company continues to be registered in the United Kingdom.

The IPTC has also seen the largest amount of change in Committee Chairs that I have experienced during my membership. Stéphane Guérillot now chairs the Standards Committee, John Minting the News Metadata Working Party, Laurent le Meur the NewsML Working Party, and Walt Banger the Public Relations Committee.

IPTC has had a number of active members leave due to retirement and other reasons, these included Irving Levine, Tony Allday, and James Hartley. IPTC is also going to lose the services of Walter Grolimund as Honorary Treasurer although he will continue to be active in the Council's work.

Finance

I am happy and pleased to report that, overall, the finances of the company are good. This being said, I need to alert you of future events. While the current financial reserves are at slightly more than 100% of the annual

budget, in 2004 we are budgeted to operate at a small deficit. The current operating rules require the Management Committee to consider a dues increase if the reserves fall below 90% of the annual budget.

In addition to watching it's spending, IPTC needs to continue to solicit new members and encourage associate members to become full members in order to maintain financial stability.

IPTC might also need to look for other means of income.

Membership

Membership this year is up slightly and stands at 27 full members and 24 associate members, representing 36 full shares and 24 fractional shares. This is down one share from last year.

We have added six new associate members: ANA (Athens News Agency), Harris, ifra, Inxight Software, XML Team, and MCM.

While there are a few members in arrears, and there are indications that several members may be lost for 2004, overall membership is in good shape. I would still encourage members to encourage membership of any companies they know who are in the news business, or develop systems that use IPTC standards.

Standards

The council has approved one major standard this year, SportsML - an exciting standard for information about sport. I think that this will be one of the most widely used IPTC standards and will expose the work of IPTC to many new individuals and companies. It is probably the first IPTC standard that will actually be used by the general public in addition to the normal business-to-business activities that we are used to.

NewsML continues to spread around the world: The Chinese continue to fast track their development with major seminars in Beijing and Hong Kong; similarly the NSK NewsML Team continues to work on accelerated implementation of NewsML in the Japanese news industry.

The Subject Reference System (SRS) continues to grow with a significant number of new terms - both general and specialty-



John Iobst completed his first year as IPTC Chairman at the 2003 AGM.

specific - being added. In addition, the Public Relations Committee has distributed press releases relating to the standards the IPTC has been developing and other related IPTC activities. Finally, the IPTC Mirror has converted from a mailed paper publication to a completely electronic publication.

Work Ahead

The Standards Committee has embarked on a major review of the IPTC standards. The Roadmap project will begin to harmonize the IPTC standards especially in the area of metadata. There will also be work to improve the technical and marketing documentation with more useful examples, which will help to make the standards simpler and easier to implement. This will be a significant step forward. Part of this project is also the development of NewsML V2, which will be a simplified version.

Work continues on specialized content development with the expectation that at least one new specification will be completed. There is also an expectation that the SRS will continue to grow at a reasonable pace. IPTC will evaluate the possibility joining with other standards bodies to undertake projects of common interest.

The Standards Committee with the help of the Public Relations Committee will undertake a survey of the membership and other interested parties to identify what is restricting the implementation of the current IPTC standards and what can be done to get broader adoption.

Finally the Public Relations Committee will undertake to review and update the IPTC web sites to make them consistent and have them provide more information

Managing Directors Report

Introducing his report Michael Steidl explained that this year it had to cover the duties of two people - himself and David Allen.

Following his (Michael's) introduction to the organisation at the Autumn 2002 Meeting in Amsterdam, he took over ready for the Spring Meeting in Nice, which also saw a formal farewell to David Allen.

Work on the roadplan for future development of standards has been an important feature with an initial teleconference of the Working Party Chairmen taking place in February. This was followed by a session in Nice, with a third meeting taking place in Washington in preparation for the AGM

The basic structure of the organisation remains unchanged despite the change in the Managing Director and the consequent move of the communications centre to Vienna, where Michael works from home. Headquarter office services remain with the service provider in Windsor. Most of the business of the organisation is conducted by e-mail and it is intended to improve the web-based communication system.

A reorganization of the IPTC web sites is under way with consolidation of the various domain names. In addition significant use is being made of public (Yahoo-group) mailing lists with some 600 members of the NewsML group, around 400 for the NITF group and more than 110 for SportsML. Promotion of IPTC standards at appropriate events continues, with the last major presentation being by David Allen in Beijing at the end of 2002. The registration of NewsML as a trademark in Japan has now been completed.



2003 was the first AGM for new Managing Director Michael Steidl.

Management Committee

Following normal practice an election was held for membership of the Management Committee even though there were fewer candidates than positions. Scrutineers appointed for the election were Geoffrey Haynes (AP) as Chairman along with Darko Gulija (HINA) and John Minting (UPI).

All standing members were voted in and the Management Committee is now:

Chairman - John Iobst (NAA)
Vice Chairmen - Stéphane Guérillot (AFP), Naoshi Hashimoto (NSK), Rudi Horvarth (APA), Peter Müller (STS/ATS), and Klaus Sprick (dpa).
IPTC Managing Director - Michael Steidl.

The election left two vacancies on the Committee and immediately following the AGM the Management Committee decided that it would be appropriate to co-opt Henrik Stadler (TT) and Geoffrey Haynes (AP) to fill these positions

2004 Meetings

An invitation has been received from CINTEC (the Chinese NewsML Community) to hold the 39th IPTC AGM in Hong Kong from the 24th to 27th May 2004, and this was warmly accepted at the AGM.

The Spring meeting is to be held in Athens from the 15th to 17th March, with an additional day - the 18th March - being devoted to preparations for the 2004 Olympics. Arrangements for this meeting are being made with the help of the Athens News Agency (ANA).

The Autumn Meeting will be held in Amsterdam in early October, though the precise date still has to be finalised.

No proposals have yet been received for the 2005 AGM and any member who would like to host the Meeting should contact the Managing Director.

Financial Report

It was announced that Walter Grolimund has decided to step down as Honorary Treasurer, though he will continue to support the work of IPTC.

In the 2002 accounts the revenue is up due to increased membership. In addition the substantial provision that had been made for recruitment of a new Managing Director was not needed, and the release of this sum has helped to improve the cash flow and the organisation's reserves. Some minor changes have been made to the way the budgets are presented so they now correspond to the accounting practice adopted by the auditors. The audited accounts to December 2002 were formally approved.

For 2003 the subscriptions from Nominating Members are less than expected, but there are additional Associate Members. The budget shows an operating deficit, but at the moment the reserves are reasonable as they stand at 145% of the operating expenses. Because of this it has been considered appropriate to cover the deficit from the reserves. However, this is not seen as being healthy in the long term. The initial budget for 2004 is essentially the same as for 2003, but shows a lower projected income.

At the moment the IPTC accounts are based on the pound sterling, but the Managing Director is based in Vienna and transferring money tends to be difficult and incur relatively high charges. Because of this the Management Committee believe that it would be sensible to look at changing the accounting currency from the pound sterling to the Euro by the end of this year. Investigations show that accounting in Euro, and auditing by the present auditors can be carried out without any particular problems.

A resolution empowering the Management Committee to change the currency by which the membership subscription is charged, and to change the currency of accounts, to Euro from the 1st January 2004 was approved, with the final decision on the exchange rate to be used for the change being left to the discretion of the Management Committee. However, the present structure of IPTC as a British company limited by guarantee has some structural advantages and will continue.

The current auditors, R A McLeod & Co, were appointed as auditors for 2003.

Aarhus 2003 - Productive and Enjoyable

Held in Aarhus at the invitation of publishing systems supplier CCI Europe, the Danish Newsagency Ritzaus Bureau I'S and the Swedish Newsagency Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå., the 2002 IPTC AGM proved highly productive and enjoyable

Particular credit for the success of the meeting is due to the hosts: Nils Hojer-Pedersen (Ritzau), Christian Ratenburg (CCI), and Henrik Stadler (TT), who ensured that delegates were able to enjoy a pleasant working environment, a set of stimulating presentations, and some relaxing social events, all of which contributed to a highly productive and enjoyable AGM.

Keynote presentation for the AGM was by Ulrik Haagerup, Editor-in-Chief of NORDJYSKE Media, who took the theme "The media future has begun - but where are we going?", in which he discussed the challenges posed by multimedia convergence, with a particular look at redefining the newsroom.

Preben Mejer, senior Vice President TDC, has been nominated as the most creative and ground-breaking IT individual in Denmark, and his presentation (given in the CCI building) dealt with Pervasive Computing. This is seen as the next generation of technology and will have wide-ranging effects on most aspects of life.

In the third presentation Ulrik Cahn, Content Manager for "3" - a 3rd generation mobile phone company - looked at the way the new generation phone networks will affect service providers, users and content providers like the news industry.

Events also included a visit to the premises of CCI Europe (see below) where Carsten Christensen (CCI CEO) outlined development of the parent company Stibo A/S from its foundation in 1794 as a print shop in Aarhus. The company is now a foundation under a Danish Royal charter and has three main businesses: Stibo Graphic, which supplies solutions within print and electronic publishing for catalogues, telephone directories and magazines/periodicals; Stibo Catalog develops and implements solutions for media-independent catalogue management, content management and e-publishing; and CCI Europe who are providers of newspaper solutions. This was followed by a presentation on the new CCI NewsGate system which is designed for content creation and management through the complete news publishing cycle.



Delegates were welcomed to Aarhus by Mr Uffe Riis Sorensen, Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of Ritzaus Bureau, who is also the current President of the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA). In a brief speech he emphasised the importance of technical development to the news industry, pointing out that smaller news agencies rely on the importance of technology, and can be early developers and implementers. Although journalists often have conflicts with technology (technologists build things - journalists write) there is now an appreciation of the need to work with it, as it is the means by which their output is delivered.



The CCI building was opened in 2001 and has been described as a physical manifestation of CCI Europe's values - it can certainly be seen as an impressive example of modern Scandinavian design.

Intended to give an impression of a village the building has two zones, an external one for visitors and an internal one for CCI staff (and accompanied visitors). It also incorporates such features as a brainstorming room and a games room - for use during the day to let staff clear their minds.

An intelligent office environment that includes automatic lighting and cooling systems that operate when a room is occupied, with adjustments being possible via a web site. Other aids to comfortable working include variable height desks and the use of wood flooring throughout.

