



# IPTC Mirror

IPTC - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR NEWS

## NewsML - The Way Ahead

**Laurent Le Meur (afp), Chairman of the NewsML Support Working Party takes a look at the progress to date in developing the next generation of NewsML - and explains what some of the factors that will have to be taken into account to ensure a successful conclusion.**



Although the Leipzig brain-storming sessions showed that many IPTC members have a strong interest in NewsML, it still appears that - so far - relatively few members have implemented NewsML on a large scale.

Limitations of the existing documentation were identified as being one of the barriers to adoption and a major effort has been made to deal with this. A group of members participated in creation of the new NewsML documentation (which will soon be made available on-line), and Laurent considers that this process has also been helpful in helping to identify weak areas in the current NewsML model and syntax.

### Suggestions requested

As part of the planned development process a request form was produced to encourage users (and other interested parties) to put forward suggestions and requirements for NewsML V2. The form was published on the IPTC Web site in January and publicised directly through the IPTC members mailing list and to the NewsML group. However, this approach has only resulted in a few requests.

Laurent believes that many people are not particularly willing to make direct requests for new features and structures, and that they would prefer to express their opinions on specific proposals - possibly by choosing from a number of options.

### Requirements

To allow this he has put together a first draft of NewsML V2 requirements, as a paper (NMLS 0402) to be presented during the Spring 2004 Meeting. These requirements are essentially an extension of the original NewsML requirements, supplemented by suggestions that came out of the Leipzig brain-storming sessions and by items that were raised during production of the

NewsML V1.1 documentation.

Establishing detailed requirements for the new-generation standard, and meeting them in the final version, will be time-consuming and this means that it may be necessary to extend the timescale for NewsML V.2 development.

### Approach

A possible approach would be as follows:

- Requirements established during the Spring Meeting and in subsequent discussions could be formally presented for approval at the AGM;
- A meeting of Working Party Chairmen might be held during September 2004, with the main aim being to establish a new controlled vocabulary mechanism, which will be common to all IPTC standards;
- The Conceptual Model and the Processing Model could be ready for

the Autumn 2004 Meeting;

- The final structure could then be delivered for the 2005 Spring Meeting.

### Considerations

Finally, Laurent believes that there are a number of important factors that IPTC members should be aware of when considering the development proposals:

- Development plans can only be achieved if work is undertaken by more contributors than is currently the case. In particular there is a need for more XML experts.
- Other "XML communities" appear to be more dynamic than the IPTC community: this is especially the case of

## Spring Meeting Presentations

**A series of presentations scheduled for the Spring Meeting will provide additional information for several of the areas under consideration:**

- Takahiro Fujiwara will be demonstrating the NewsML format checker and NewsML webservice developed by EAST Co.
- Opening up NewsML to external metadata resources is seen as an important development, and a speaker from Adobe will give a presentation on their XMP (eXtensible Metadata Platform) and which is intended for capturing metadata, embedding it in files and content management.
- Alan Karben will show how XML Team are using SportsML to power a sports data web service.

In addition an extra day has been devoted to the **2004 Olympic Games** with briefings from Mr Costas Vernikos, the Athens Olympic Committee Director for Media Affairs and a Technical Director being complemented by visits to some of the venues.

- the Atom and RSS groups, while the PRISM group is also active.
- Some XML technologies are currently gaining a wide acceptance - this is especially the case with RDF (RSS1.0, XMP, etc), XSLT and the W3C XML Schema language.
- Requirements for NewsML V2 and associated mechanisms (controlled vocabularies, associations between topics) are high level requirements: the use of other XML standards seems

unavoidable if IPTC is to reach its goals without reinventing the wheel (especially if some observers may think that the wheel we have created is slightly flawed or lacks detailed explanations).

# An ambitious work programme

**The 2004 Spring Meeting (in Athens from the 14 to 18 March) is the first general working session of the year and efforts will be concentrated on the continued development of the new IPTC Standards Suite.**

**R**esults from the IPTC Standards Survey will be available and should help provide a clearer view of how the standards are being used along with additional requirements expressed by users - for NewsML, the NITF and the other standards. The Survey results will be complemented by feedback from the News Standards Summit held last December while the prospects for, and value of, further events of this type will be looked at.

Establishing the current usage of the standards, how they meet user needs, and any reasons for non-use, represents a substantial part of the first stage of the planned development. This should make it possible to review the overall development plan, adding further detail and revising the timetable as appropriate.

## NewsML V2

Core element of the Standards Suite is NewsML V2 and a major priority is to establish the requirements. Laurent Le Meur (NewsML Support Working Party Chairman) gives his thoughts on how to proceed with the development of this Standard overleaf, and has produced a first set of requirements as a basis for discussion.

A major, sustained, effort over the past months has substantially completed the new NewsML documentation and this should soon be available. Associated with this is a proposal to provide regularly updated NewsML samples on the on the IPTC

web site to help new implementers.

## Processing Model

Production of a Processing Model for NewsML (initially for the News Management functions) is the current aim of the News Management Group. This may be linked to the production of a Conceptual Model - an informal brainstorming meeting has been proposed to carry this forwards.

Special content remains a very active area with several projects under way:

**ProgramGuideML** Development continues, with the NSK group responsible having decided to cooperate with the TV-Anytime Forum to ensure compatibility of the standards.

The TV-Anytime Forum ([www.tv-anytime.org](http://www.tv-anytime.org)) aims to encourage development of TV and related multimedia services based on personal media storage systems. The first phase is intended to let users select, acquire and use (legally) broadcast and on-line material.

Much of the information used for this corresponds to the information needed for ProgramGuideML applications so there are clear advantages in ensuring that the two systems can work together. Cooperation is likely to delay final approval of the standard - probably to Summer 2004.

**SportsML** is now firmly established and specific efforts are under way to extend the coverage of Olympic Sports, to deal with Horse and Harness racing, and cover Aus-

tralian Rules Football.

Initial requirements have been circulated for a system to handle **Weather Data**. This development is also planned to be used as a trial for the application of Project Management Methodologies to the IPTC Standards development process. A Project Review Board (reporting to the Management Committee) has been established and will provide support to the relevant Working Parties as well as reviewing and guiding the development progress.

**EventsML** - it now appears that the possibility of establishing a cooperative venture with OASIS to produce an events listing program will have to be re-considered, and a closer look may be taken at the alternative approach of going ahead with an internal IPTC development programme. A detailed Business Requirements Specification has been produced for consideration and it is hoped that agreement will be reached on a rapid development program as a number of members have indicated that they have an immediate need for a system to handle events information.

## Metadata

Growth of the IPTC Subject Reference System (SRS) continues. A series of requests for additions to the Subject Code System have been submitted for consideration by the News Metadata Working Party, while a series of (third-level) Subject Detail have been approved under the "fast-track" procedure over the past months.

The SRS consists of a set of five TopicSets and the SRS guidelines include a specific update procedure. However, there is a larger group of TopicSets which were developed for use with NewsML, and a formal procedure has been proposed for making changes and additions to these TopicSets.

## Promotion

Redesign of the IPTC family of websites was completed following the Autumn Meeting and the results will be reviewed by the Public Relations Committee, which will also be looking at the more general questions of Promoting IPTC Standards and the organisation itself.