



IPTC Mirror

The Way Ahead

IPTC Chairman Stéphane Guérillot looks back at the achievements of 2006, and looks forwards to the challenges facing IPTC in 2007



January is the time of the year to look into a mirror to see what was accomplished but also a time to prepare to face the challenges for the year to come.

Indeed 2006 was a year of intensified work and with contributions from every one of you, we made important progress on major issues for our community and I would like to express deep satisfaction about the work that has been already accomplished. We had a high level of activity in the development of the NAR plus the publication of new releases of NITF and SportsML and the extension of the IPTC NewsCodes.

We finally came to an agreement on a name for the new generation of standards to be released in 2007: the "IPTC G2 Standards". A Future NewsCodes as well as a Photo-metadata Working Group were formed. We took many initiatives to reinforce our efficiency including the decision to use a professional system for taxonomy management.

Complex task

Refining the NAR model and speci-

fications was a complex and time consuming task but as this is the heart of the IPTC G2 standards we had to accept an extension in our Roadmap 2005 timeline.

To consolidate our work and efforts we decided to make use of external consultancy to create and update XML Schemas and to apply a quality assurance cycle to our specification documents for internal consistency. This is a key element for the completion of our project in due time and with the expected quality.

Announcements

Yes, we have announced last year:

- A new family of XML standards to be released in 2007, expanding metadata and complying with the state-of-the-art XML technology, and "that will offer simplicity and a high level of interoperability".
- That IPTC NewsCodes taxonomies for news will become more powerful in 2007.

Those were strong announcements with a very tight schedule but the world and our environment is in a fast moving forward mode, and

we have to work hard not to get left behind.

Ambitious timeline

The start of the New Year brings the start of a new period for the development of the G2 standards. We have agreed on a "final" timeline and should conclude this year with an approval of G2 standards v1.0 at the autumn meeting in Prague. It is ambitious especially when we include NewsML, EventsML and SportsML but it is a commitment.

Established standards

Let me also say that we cannot forget what could be considered as "legacy" but is today still the core of the Information Exchange within or between our companies. The maintenance and the support of these Standards and Recommendations are still very important matters.

It would be wrong to reduce our efforts in refining them or adapting them to the market requirements just because they are no more in the public spotlight. We should keep high our support to those who are heavily involved in this work.

Summary

Organisation

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Anyway, as a first step, the NAR Release candidate is made available to the market ... we are on good tracks.

But this is not all. Companies will increasingly require solutions that can help them improving productivity and support their developments. IPTC with its G2 Family of Standards and the NewsCodes taxonomies will offer simpler and secure solutions to enable corporate media players to achieve this goal.

Promotion

To move forward we need to appeal to the "big players" by our solutions and their efficiency. This means that we need to release our Recommendations and Standards documents in due time but also to promote our achievements and convince the market of their relevance.

Therefore we have to organise ourselves to take these next steps which include the promotion of our standardisation efforts plus the support of the G2 standards implementation.

To back this marketing and visibility issue we have decided to create new logos for the G2 standards -- which will also result in a redesign of our website - and to invest in an easy to read and comprehensive documentation.

Visibility

We also have to be more visible by the means of "communications" meeting or conferences aimed at the end users as well as at the manufacturers.

For the photo domain exactly this is the goal of the Photo Metadata Conference 2007 to be held in June in Italy in conjunction with the CEPIC Congress to bring discussion opportunities to our users and partners on the development of Photo Metadata and implementation and support of the IPTC Core.

Meetings

As part of the consolidation of our communication effort, we also have agreed to organise this year our 3 meetings in strategic places:

First time ever in the Middle East (Cairo) and in Prague for our regular meetings - with a return to Tokyo, Japan, for our AGM at the invitation of the NSK.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that everyone at the IPTC has highly valuable inputs to make. Our value to the news industry is coming from your involvement and participation in the Working Parties

and Working Groups to specify and conceive the Recommendations and Standards awaited by the business, our companies, and our customers.

Membership

Out of our existing 64 members on January 1st 2007 (versus 56 at the end of 2005) we have 11 new members who joined in 2006. That is a record breaking number as the total number of IPTC Members and the number of new Members who joined during a single year have never reached such levels.

On top of this we see an extension of our membership in the Middle East as well as in Asia which is also very important for the IPTC image throughout the world.

Increased efforts

In 2007 we must extend and intensify our efforts and continue to bring in more resources implied as active Members involved in the Working Groups and Working Parties but also to enrich our internal culture and understanding of the various business cases to be taken into consideration in our developments.

The growing demand in images

NewsCodes

Following the decision of the NewsCodes Working Party to recommend use of the Schemalogic system for taxonomy management, the Management Committee have agreed a contract to use the system for three years.

This system will simplify collaborative development (and maintenance) of the NewsCodes, with initial efforts being concentrated on development of a new generation of the Subject NewsCodes.

For the time being changes and additions to the established NewsCode sets will be carried out using the established system. However, when the new system is fully implemented it is anticipated that it may be appropriate to introduce new working practices.

Photo Metadata Working Group

The Photo Metadata Working Group was established at the 2006 AGM in response to increased interest from IPTC members (and from the wider news and photo industries).

One of the first steps was to investigate the availability of packages that support the existing IPTC photo metadata standards (both the original "IPTC Headers" and the IPTC Core).

Details are available on

<http://www.iptc.org/photometadata/software-support-list1.php>.

Current efforts are concentrated in two main areas:

- Production of a "White Paper" to describe the photographic process chain from camera to publisher, establishing the metadata requirements for each stage.
- Preparation of a Photo Metadata Conference with the theme "Working towards a seamless photo workflow" - see <http://www.phmdc.org>. This Conference is planned to take place on June 7 in Florence - in conjunction with the Copic Congress 2007.

High Activity

This group is very active with well-attended regular weekly teleconferences - details of the meeting schedule, and how to join in are available in the "Members Only" section of the IPTC Web site (www.iptc.org). These meetings are complemented by an internal IPTC discussion group while there is also a public discussion group - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iptc-photometadata> - where information will be posted when appropriate.

IPTC Core

Along with these efforts the group are also looking at possible extensions to the IPTC Core (for Adobe XMP) and further co-operation with Adobe in this area.

and video contents, in multimedia products for the web or the mobile world is part of the challenges we have taken into account in our vision. This should give us good reasons to go forward with confidence.

Resolution

Today we don't need any more promises. We need to start keeping the already made ones. Let's all make that our New Year's resolution.

Details of the (main) current activities of the IPTC Working Parties and Working Groups are given below

low and in the panels. In many cases there are internal development discussion groups for use by IPTC members only - typically these have "-dev" as the last part of the group name. For example - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iptc-news-architecture-dev>.

Information on all the IPTC discussion groups is available in the "Members Only" section of the IPTC Web site (www.iptc.org).

Registration is required to access the "Members Only" zone. Contact IPTC Managing Director Michael Steidl - mdirector@iptc.org - for further details.

News Architecture (NAR) and G2-Standards

A resolution passed by the Standards Committee - at the 2006 Autumn Meeting - requested "that all Working Groups in the IPTC News Content WP and the News Codes WP evaluate the new draft of the News Architecture (NAR) and provide written feedback".

However extensive feedback on the draft released for the Autumn Meeting meant that further work was needed to prepare a revised draft.

Release Candidate

The resulting NAR Release Candidate was publicly released on the

15 January 2007 see - http://www.iptc.org/std-dev/NAR/DRAFT-NAR_1.0-RC_20070115.zip

In addition to specific work on the new Standards - NewsML-G2, EventsML-G2 and SportsML-G2 all IPTC members, and parties invited by members, are asked to apply their current use cases.

Participants are particularly asked to look at additions and changes to the specification that have been made since the previous test phase (EP#2) and to report on any practical issues that have not been identified by the NAR development team.

NAR Test Package

Contents of the NAR test package include:

Specifications:

- News Architecture Model introduction document;
- News Architecture Core Model document;
- News Architecture Power Extensions Model document;
- A set of XML Schema files for both the Core and the Power Conformance Level:
 - Framework-0.14-Core/Power.
 - NewsItem-0.14-Core/Power.
 - ConceptItem-0.14-Core/Power.
 - KnowledgeItem-0.14-Core/Power.
 - PackageItem-0.14-Core/Power.
 - NewsMessage-0.14-Core/Power.
- (XML Schema documentation files are available as HTML files)
- File containing IPTC metadata code scheme URIs and recommended aliases.
- Draft IPTC NewsCodes required for NAR functionality.

Documentation:

- News Architecture Glossary.
- News Architecture "About Release Candidate 1" document.

NITF

Consideration is being given to development of "core" and "power" versions of the NITF - in much the same way as the NAR profiles.

The intention is that the "power" version would be generally similar to the existing standard, while the "core" version would be simpler and more appropriate for use as a text markup standard with the forthcoming G2-standards. A spreadsheet showing a possible split of the existing NITF elements is available at www.nitf.org/dev.

As normal, due attention will be given to any changes or additions to the NITF proposed by users. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nitf>

NewsML 1

Work is continuing to finalise the NewsML 1.2 XML Schema, and it is hoped to propose formal release of the standard at the Spring Meeting.

Feedback

Test results and comments should be sent to the public newsml-2 discussion group - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/newsml-2>.

Contributions would also be very welcome, such as sample instances based on the NAR, software to process XML instances based on the NAR, and XSLT stylesheets to transform XML instances based on the NAR. All feedback and contributions should be sent by the 21 February 2007.

It is recognised that this only allows a relatively short test period, but the aim is for the NAR development group to review the feedback and propose any appropriate changes and additions to the specifications for presentation at the Spring Meeting in Cairo (12-14 March 2007).

Final Specification

Agreed changes will be implemented following the Meeting to give a final NAR v1.0 specification which then be implemented as a set of XML Schema. A package of NAR

v1.0 specifications and documentation will then be prepared for consideration at the 2007 AGM in Tokyo (28 - 31 May 2007), when it is hoped that the NAR structure specification will be approved.

At the same time work on the G-2 standards will be under way, with the aim of approval at the Autumn 2007 Meeting.

Anyone intending to take part in this test phase is reminded that

contributions are assumed to be provided under the IPTC Intellectual Property Policy (IPP):
http://www.iptc.org/download/public/IPTC-IntellectualPropertyPolicy_2006.2.pdf

Korean Press Foundation NewsML Seminar

The Korean Press Foundation (KPF) has launched a new round of discussions about the adoption of NewsML among its national news industry.

To add some outside experience the KPF organised a "NewsML Seminar" on 21 November 2006 in Seoul.

About 35 participants from the national news agency Yonhap, newspapers, magazines and broadcasting stations took part with guest presentations from IPTC Managing Director Michael Steidl and Takahiro Fujiwara, Vice-Chair of the NewsML 1 Working Party of the IPTC.

NewsML Forum

The adoption of NewsML has been considered since the early 2000s and a NewsML Forum was formed as the body to guide all discussions on this issue. Jung Tae Sung, Yonhap's Customer Tech Support Manager and chair of the Forum gave an overview of its most recent activities at the start of the Seminar.

In 2006 the KPF joined the IPTC as a member and took the opportunity of more access to internal information to propel the discussion.

Issues

At the Seminar a Questions and Answers session addressed the most moving issues:

- what is the advantage of NewsML over other news exchange standards,
- how are streaming media, in particular audio and video, handled by it,
- how to apply NewsCodes to achieve the best value.

The statements at the public discussion and an internal follow up of the NewsML Forum members after the seminar showed that many persons in the news industry are at-

tracted by the features of NewsML as a news exchange standard for multimedia content. But they are also aware that using it in regular business requires enhancements of many editorial systems and also a convergence of media in a company's product strategy at the management level.

Guideline requirements

Mr Fujiwara and Mr Steidl recognised requests from the Korean news industry for more details and improved guidelines for implementing NewsML and some enhancements to the documentation to clarify any ambiguity, and said the IPTC internal working groups will consider these issues.

IPTC's Managing Director emphasized to the KPF members that they are welcome to ask questions, either on the standard specifications or any implementation issue, and pointed at the NewsML 1 support forum on Yahoo which can be accessed from the www.newsml.org web site.

Initial problems

Discussions at the Korean NewsML Seminar also showed the most obvious problem when introducing a new exchange standard: where to

NewsML Seminal Panel. From left to right: Tae-Sung Jung (Yonhap News Agency, Chair of the KPF NewsML Forum), Michael Steidl (IPTC Managing Director), Prof. Dong-seop Kwon (Interpreter), and Takahiro Fujiwara (East Co. Ltd, Vice-Chair IPTC NewsML 1 Working Party).

start. Virtually all news companies have to adapt their news processors for sending or receiving content to be NewsML compliant. As a first step Yonhap have already introduced NewsML 1 as an optional format for delivering news to its customers.

Media convergence

A second focus is the convergence of media, which can not be overlooked: having such industry heavyweights as Samsung or LG as local suppliers the mobile telecommunication is on a constant rise in Korea, and business models are developed to allow easy access to news content regardless of the current location.

For such business models NewsML could help a lot was the mutual understanding of the representatives of the Korean news industry and the guests from the IPTC.

