



# IPTC Mirror

## Spring 2008 - Beijing

**Opening the Spring 2008 Meeting, IPTC Chairman Stéphane Guérillot said the members had started off with a good visit to the Olympic sites. He was happy to see that the first of the G2-standards had been released on time, but this was not the end of the work. The organisation was facing new challenges and there was a need to promote and support the standards.**

He went on to thank the Working Groups and the Standards Committee for completing an arduous and difficult task developing the G2-standards, and further thanked the individual delegates involved for their efforts.

### New Standards Chair

At the end of the Spring Meeting Henrik Stadler told members that he was stepping down as the Standards Committee Chair, since he was moving on from his position at TT and starting work with a systems supplier.

Thanking Henrik for his efforts over recent years - both as Standards Committee Chairman and as Honorary Treasurer and Management Committee member - IPTC Chairman Stéphane Guérillot said that when Henrik agreed to take on the responsibility there had been a lot of work to do.

He went on to tell delegates that Helge Viehoff (dpa) had agreed to take on the responsibility of the Standards Chairmanship. In addition Walter Grolimund (Keystone) would take over as Honorary Treasurer until the AGM.

The Spring Meeting was held in Beijing at the invitation of Xinhua News Agency, and Stéphane thanked them for their superb organisation and the wonderful programme of events they had organised. This was the first meeting to be held in Beijing and it had been a great success.

### Standards

During the first session of the Standards Committee, Chairman Henrik Stadler reminded delegates that there had been a special teleconference meeting in January, at which the G2 specification documents, and associated XML Schemas were approved for release.

However, there were already proposals for extensions to NewsML-G2, and there was a lot of activity in the other Working Parties and Groups.

The second session of the Standards Committee - after the Working Party sessions - saw a report from the Photo Metadata Working Group (see page 5) and a review of

the meeting technical activities, Formal approval was given to the XML Schema for NewsML 1 v1.2.

### Olympic standard

IPTC have been in touch with the International Olympic Committee about WNPAXML the new XML format that is being developed for results. It is expected that this will soon be released, and it will be tested 2010 at the Vancouver Winter Games. IPTC should receive a copy of WNPAXML following its release.

### News Architecture

Activity in the News Architecture Working Party is currently running at a relatively low level, following release of the first G2-standards, but there is still work to do on the News Architecture (NAR) itself. This includes registration of Mime types (which should be started soon), while consideration is being given to evolution of the NAR following requests from NewsML-G2 users who need additional properties.



*Helge Viehoff (dpa) has taken over as Chairman of the Standards Committee.*

## Summary

**Standards Committee.** New Chairman - **Page 1**; Olympic results standard - **Page 1**.

**News Architecture** - **Page 1**; Controlled vocabularies available - **Page 2**; Application of QCodes - **Page 2**; Rights considerations - **Page 2**; Development plans - **Page 2**.

**News Content** - **Page 2**; Hina events archive - **Page 2**; Other EventsML-G2 applications - **Page 2**; NewsML-G2 applications - Eurovision use - **Page 3**; Reuters - **Page 3**; Other

applications - **Page 3**; Tool developments - **Page 3**.

**NewsML 1** - **Page 4**; V1.2 XML Schema and documentation updates - **Page 4**; Tokyo presentation at XML conference - **Page 4**.

**NewsCodes** - **Page 4**; Sports and other specialised codes - **Page 4**; Taxonomy development system - **Page 4**; Delivery formats for new NewsCodes - **Page 4**.

**NITF** - **Page 5**; Text markup model - **Page 5**; IPTC "Soup" for user feedback - **Page 5**.

**Photo Metadata** - **Page 5**; Extended property specifications - **Page 5**; 2008 Photo Metadata Conference - **Page 5**.

ACAP Content Access Protocol - **Page 2**.

Beijing Founder Electronics - **Page 3**.

Boosting Information Globalisation - address by Xinhua Vice-President - **Page 6**.

Xinhua tour and symposium - **Page 7**.

Beijing Olympics briefing - **Page 8**.

## Controlled vocabularies

A set of NAR-specific controlled vocabularies has been made available, and following further testing will be made public.

IPTC intend to host a HTTP protocol based service for resolving scheme and concept URIs for the IPTC controlled vocabularies. This will provide the information in both human and machine readable forms. The service will be provided by APA-IT (who will also be hosting the IPTC Web site) and it has been agreed that G2 KnowledgeItems will be used to handle the data.

## QCodes

The controlled vocabularies are intended for use as QCodes, which provide a compact metadata handling mechanism. Working Party Chairman Laurent Le Meur explained that although at first sight this might appear complex, it is straightforward to apply. And in many cases the metadata values can be entered as literals instead of as QCodes.

A QCode has the structure *scheme prefix:code*, with the prefix identifying the scheme that the code comes from. For database applications it is possible to either store the QCode, or to expand the QCode and store the full code URI.

## Content Access Protocol

ACAP (Automated Content Access Protocol) is a project established by a group of publisher associations - the World Association of Newspapers, the International Publishers Association and the European Publishers Council. Its aim is to develop a global, open and flexible standard for the communication of rich information on access and use of content on the Internet - see [www.the-acap.org](http://www.the-acap.org).

IPTC has formally endorsed the ACAP project and are members of the Technical Working Group, along with afp, AP, dpa and Reuters. An application case for syndication has been provided by Laurent Le Meur (afp) and the participation of other IPTC members in ACAP activities, and the provision of use cases would be welcome.

If it is decided to store the QCode it is necessary to ensure that the same scheme alias is used for all instances, by normalising them. This is because each alias is specific to the news item it is used in (and identified in the catalog at the top of the item) so different news items may have different aliases for the same scheme.

For their application of NewsML-G2 Reuters have decided to normalise QCodes for internal distribution, but say that they also have to allow for imported data which may have clashing aliases.

## Rights handling

One area needing detailed consideration is Rights expression and usage terms. Delegates were told that ACAP already working in this area (see panel), but their main interest is in Web users, and new news applications may need extensions beyond the initial Web applications.

It is also necessary to take account of the PLUS (Picture Licensing Universal System) initiative. A small Working Group has been established to look into this area.

## Development

Detailed requests for the next version of the NAR include changes to make the copyright information more readable; addition of an Icon feature to content metadata; extending administrative metadata to part meta (so, for example, it would be possible to identify the creator for each part of a composite item - as in a video story); providing a way of indicating that a NewsItem is valid between a pair of dates; and providing a Credit element that will correspond to the IIM credit field.

During discussions it was pointed out that it is important for IPTC to take responsibility for its earlier standards, so the new standards should make allowance for "legacy" information systems. This concept was seen as being valuable, and it may be introduced at either NAR or NewsML-G2 level.

## News Content

Although the G2-standards were only formally released at the end of February 2008, a number of major applications are already well advanced and details some of these were provided at the Meeting.

At the moment only the specification document has been produced for EventsML-G2, with best practices and application guidelines to come, while extension of the cover-

age management features is under consideration. But, as with other projects, contributions are needed.

The EventsML-G2 (and NAR) specific NewsCodes will be made available when the IPTC resolution mechanism is fully operational.

## Events archive

The Croatian news agency Hina have acquired a hard copy (some 22 tonnes) newspaper database, and Darko Gulija (Hina and Working Party Chairman) said that they intend to create an archive of all the newspaper content that has been published in Croatia, updating it with news copy and integrating the archive with the news agency service.

A rich metadata model will be used to allow data mining analysis (this is seen as having a good potential for income generation). Since the database will "echo" the news agency services details of how agency information has been used will be available to fine tune the services offered.

Hina are adopting an event-centric view in the belief that what users want is information about a specific event that is as complete as possible, and so includes all available media.

Use of EventsML-G2 and NewsML-G2 together is seen as an elegant way of doing this. Metadata on the event and on news content will have the same structure and can be directly linked.

One area needing detailed consideration was how to deal with long-lasting events, and the method adopted is to create an event hierarchy within a KnowledgeItem - the approach also has to take account of the fact that it is not always clear that an event will become long-lasting.

It is also hoped that the system will make it easier to collect local news information by creating a partnership with local media using a distributed calendar. The local media will add event entries to the calendar, and the agency will then be able to order specific content from the local media (as NewsML-G2). In return the local media will receive the agency service.

Hina also have plans to implement a NewsML-G2 feed in the near future.

## Other applications

The Danish agency Ritzau have offered simple events data for some years, and EventsML-G2 is being used in a project to enhance the

service. The aims are to improve data capture, integrate the application with the editorial process and apply metadata.

Simple events feeds will be launched later in 2008, and three of Ritzau's largest customers are already asking for such feeds. Niels Hojor-Pederson (Ritzau) said that the adoption of EventsML-G2 had been a very smooth process, with it being easy to integrate data from the existing system.

Another organisation working on an EventsML-G2 application is the German agency dpa, who are starting to modify the planning tool of their news system to use the standard - they report that the first customers are already looking for XML feeds.

### Added interest

During discussions on the above applications it was suggested that EventsML-G2 might be a particularly effective way of increasing customer interest in the G2-standards as it offers them something new. By comparison NewsML-G2 may only be seen as better way of doing the same thing as NewsML 1.

However, some users are well aware of the benefits to be obtained from NewsML-G2, so applications are already coming into use. Laurent Le Meur told delegates that afp would soon be able to provide users with NewsML-G2 feeds for text and pictures, with an extension to video content following later. They are using a style sheet to generate

NewsML-G2 from an internal afp format.

### Eurovision adoption

The EBU (European Broadcasting Union) has provided co-ordination and physical links between its members since 1963. Eurovision is the EBU operational service and is a major news provider. Their Xtraneet is a satellite service for content delivery to users' POP (point of presence) servers, with broadcast quality video being stored ready for immediate use.

Eurovision's adoption of NewsML-G2 is well advanced, and Benoit Sergent provided an overview of their activities. Eurovision are running applications for the generation of dopesheets (which provide editorial and technical information about an item), keyframes (reference still images from video content) and video.

Currently the EBU are offering NewsML-G2 output as this encourages their members to work with the standard (using a client-side transform), but they hope that they will soon be receiving feeds in the format from members, and importing NewsML-G2 from news agencies. A user group has been set up within the Eurovision network to help promote the standard.

### Screen news

One of the applications being developed by Reuters - and demonstrated by Mischa Wolf - is for screen-based news, which is based on the visualisation of a Knowl-

edgetem which has been heavily extended (using the power profile) to give extra features.

At present it is available in Japanese and English, with further versions to come. The service has gone live before the NewsItem has been brought into use, and the "same-as" metadata concept is being used to handle legacy code schemes.

### Core system

Systems currently in use by Reuters use a variety of different formats for both content and metadata, and Dave Compton explained that the intention is to move to a NewsML-G2 based system for text content - picture and graphic handling will continue to be based on the IIM - and for a globally applied packaging system. It is anticipated that the new system will involve a lot less processing using internal transforms. However, although NewsML-G2 will be used internally it will still be necessary to apply transforms for delivery.

In addition to the above applications PA will soon have a system that will be capable of generating NewsML-G2 (when requested by customers). Similarly systems suppliers Transtel say they are technically ready to implement G2-standards as soon as their customers ask for it.

### Tools

In the long run the success of NewsML-G2 will depend on the availability of tools, and Laurent Le

## Beijing Founder Electronics

Beijing Founder Electronics is a main subsidiary of the Founder Group, and the market leader in the Chinese press market, with their pre-press systems being used by some 85% of newspapers in China. They are now developing the international market with the introduction of English Language versions of their products. See [www.founder.com.cn](http://www.founder.com.cn).

IPTC delegates visiting the Founder offices in Beijing (pictured right) were given a brief overview of the company's products, which was followed by a series of presentations. These started with a welcome from Beijing Founder Electronics Vice President Mr Bin Jianguo who explained that a high commitment to research and development in new technology, was complemented by the aim to increase development of the business market, while attention is also being given to the cross-media market.

Dong Zaidong, General Manager, Internet Business provided an outline of the Founder engine for cross-media publishing which combines the company's editorial and digital asset management systems with their paper, web and broadcast publishing systems. Following this Walter Baranger (New York Times) examined some of the challenges currently facing newspapers; John lobst (NAA) provided details of the Integrated Content Management Framework project (see Mirror 145); Mrs Juanzi Li from the Knowledge Engineering Group, Tsinghua University described the application of Chinese NewsML to intelligent news services; and John Evans (Transtel Communications) looked at the News Management process.





Meur told delegates that some were under development by afp and would be available under an open-source licence. These are a NewsML 1 to NewsML-G2 transform (for afp style NewsML 1) and a NewsML-2 to RDF/XML transform.

Work is under way on the production of processing-oriented "Best Practices" documentation which should include mapping between the IPTC Core (for XMP) and NewsML-G2 along with a model for news stories that will be compatible with the NITF.

## NewsML 1

A teleconference had been held prior to the Spring Meeting to discuss updates to the NewsML 1 documentation and the status of the XML Schema for NewsML 1.2.

Testing of the XML Schema had shown that there were problems associated with the use of namespaces, in databases created using the XML Schema. Attempts to import documents without a namespace resulted in errors. This was specifically the case with documents created using the NewsML 1 DTD, and was seen as a significant issue.

A number of ways of dealing with this problem were looked at, with the solution adopted being the provision of an XSLT template to add namespaces to instances where necessary.



*Kanagawa Newspapers (Japan) have produced demonstration copy for use on the iLiad epaper terminal (made by iRex Technologies, Netherlands). The content is in PDF format and East Corp - who have a business relationship with iRex - are ready to generate PDF output from NewsML 1 content.*

## Documentation updates

A series of modifications had been made to the NewsML 1 specification and guidelines, including: changing the DOCTYPE in examples so that it did not show a public identifier; updating the NewsML 1.2 URI to the new URL; changing the IPTC address to the new (London) one; and updating examples.

Following discussion the XML Schema (and associated XSLT transform) for NewsML v1.2 were approved.

## NewsML presentation

Delegates were informed that Working Party vice-Chair Takahiro Fujiwara (East Co) was a speaker at the XML 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event "XML Today and Tomorrow" hosted by the XML Consortium, Japan.

His presentation was on NewsML adoption, during which it was pointed out that more than 50 newspaper in Japan are using NewsML 1, while Kyodo News - who have been using NewsML 1 since 2002 - have over 80 members. This level of interest is reflected by the fact that NewsML 1 is an official JIS Standard. Takahiro went on to outline aspects of the NewsML 1 XML Schema, and looked at current electronic news projects, where NewsML 1 is being used in e-newspaper production.

## NewsCodes

An initial draft of the "new Subject NewsCodes" had been made available to delegates before the Spring Meeting, and were briefly considered. Work on the draft will continue, with the aim of having a full set of the new Subject NewsCodes available for formal consideration at the AGM (in Glasgow at the end of June).

## Sports codes

Working Party Vice-Chair Honor Craig-Bennet (PA) told delegates that one issue that needed specific consideration was how to deal with the Sports entries. At the moment these essentially consist of a series of individual sports names, and (because efforts have been made to ensure that the list is as comprehensive as possible) these entries are a significant proportion of the total Subject NewsCodes set. It was suggested that the best approach would be to separate out the sports list as a separate taxonomy.

The Sports heading would be retained in the main Subject NewsCodes, along with general entries

covering such areas as competition news, events, personalities, and doping. During discussions it was pointed out that the use of a separate Sports scheme would be relatively straightforward with the NewsML-G2 (and other G2-standards). The proposal to create a separate set of Sports NewsCodes met with general agreement, and the precise split will be determined by the taxonomy group.

## Specialised Subject Codes

It was also suggested that this approach might also be applicable to the Business section, again with general headings being retained in the main Subject NewsCodes, and the detailed entries in a separate set. With further development of the system a separate Medical set of NewsCodes might also be appropriate.

Since the established Subject NewsCodes will continue to be available the "new Subject NewsCodes" will have to have a distinguishing name. Proposals for this will be considered at the AGM.

## Taxonomy system

Some concerns were raised about the way the SchemaLogic taxonomy system presented the NewsCodes, as it was felt that the available views were limited - especially with large taxonomies. However, it was pointed out that this mainly related to presentations for general viewers, with additional features being available to registered users working on NewsCodes development.

For presentation purposes the approved NewsCodes will be made available in a more readily usable format such as Excel and the system makes it relatively straightforward to output the NewsCodes in a XML format. Overall it appears that in this area - as in some other areas - the IPTC requirements are close to the limits of available tools.

## NewsCodes format

It is anticipated that several of the established NewsCodes - such as colourspace, genre and role - will be of use with the G2-standards, but in their present format not all of these NewsCodes are compatible with the QCode mechanism.

This is because their names include white spaces (which are not allowed in QCodes), but simply removing the spaces might cause problems for existing applications. One solution would be to deprecate the existing sets (leaving them

available for existing applications) and create new sets with names that do not include spaces.

At the moment the NewsCode sets are available as TopicSets, and it is intended that new sets will take the form of KnowledgeItems. This raises the question of how the existing NewsCodes will be maintained. Should this be as TopicSets, or would it be better to release them as KnowledgeItems, with an XSLT to create TopicSets where required?

## NITF

Proposals had been made for a NITF v4.0 that would be easy to use with the G2-standards, and provide "Core" and "Power" profiles. As part of the process spreadsheets were produced to show the mapping between the NITF and G2-standards metadata, and a proposed split of elements and attributes into profile.

Detailed consideration of the requirements showed that there was no real requirement for the proposed profiles - and no requests had been received for additions or changes. Accordingly it was decided to keep the standard at the current v3.4.

However, it was suggested that it would be appropriate to provide specific documentation covering the use of NITF with G2-standards, with a first step being to establish requirements.

## Article model

A number of initiatives - including various microformats and the proposed HTML5 - are looking at ways to express text in a semantic manner, and the NITF has to be considered in this context.

As a starting point it was suggested that a "universal" article model should be generated, and the possible structure of such a model was described. One of the advantages of such an approach was that as information consumers, the news industry could not expect all suppliers to provide NITF, but it would be reasonable to ask them to conform to the universal article model.

During discussion delegates were reminded that development of the NITF had been based on such a model, but that the details were no longer included in the NITF documentation. It was hoped that early versions of the NITF documentation might include some useful information, and a small Working Group has been set up to work on the article model.

## IPTC Soup

Working Party Chairman Stuart Myles (Dow Jones) pointed out that even though IPTC is about "news exchange" much of the communication tended to be one way - from the organisation on the IPTC Web site. So he had been looking at ways to get increased feedback.

The result was "IPTC Soup", a website which pulls together information about IPTC standards, with the sources including bookmarks, photographs, videos and blog posts.

Starting with various sites, including as flickr, DeLicio.us, twitter. and YouTube, Stuart applied key tags (such as "IPTC", "newsml" and "nitf") to identify relevant contributions. This content was then fed to "Soup" and converted to give a RSS feed of the comments to twitter. Interested members can try the results themselves by subscribing to <http://iptc.soup.io> or <http://twitter.com/iptc>.

## Photo Metadata

Efforts of the Photo Metadata Working Group have been concentrated on development of the photo metadata properties specification outlined in the White Paper (approved in June 2007) and dealing with other outstanding issues from the Paper.

Working Group Chairman Harald Löffler (IFRA) summarised the issues as: establishing mappings between the properties of different schemes; introduction of write-once metadata values, and metadata versioning; pre-setting metadata values in cameras, which should also be able to provide additional metadata to the Exif set (which is mainly technical); and the provision of globally unique identifiers. The work also needs to take account of the fact that cameras are no longer the only imaging device in widespread use.

## Extended property set

An extended IPTC set of Photo Metadata properties has been developed for general use and will form the basis of an IPTC Standard (see below).

It is hoped that the new photo metadata properties can be included as custom panels in the forthcoming Adobe CS4 suite. Unfortunately Adobe are only able to provide limited support for this, so the work will have to be undertaken by IPTC, or commissioned by IPTC.

Contact has been established

with the camera makers association CIPA, who have asked for details of what IPTC would like to see included in the Exif camera data. These properties had been removed from the Photo Metadata document as they could not be controlled by IPTC.

Another activity of the Working Group has been preparation for the second international Photo Metadata Conference, which is being held in conjunction with the 2008 Copic Congress. The first conference was very successful with more than 100 attendees.

## Specifications

Michael Steidl outlined the work carried out to refine and provide proper specifications for the extended Photo Metadata properties. Some changes were made to the existing "IPTC Core", mainly to take account of how the properties were actually being applied.

Additions were made in the areas of descriptive, administrative and rights metadata, along with extended generic components. Further details are given in IPTC Mirror issue145.

Consideration has been given to the handling of controlled vocabularies with provision of a placeholder property, though the Working Group are still discussing the scope and development of ap-

## Second international Photo Metadata Conference

5 June 2008

St. Julien, Malta

Theme of the conference is "Metadata for Better Business" with specific consideration of the relative advantages of Keywording and Controlled Vocabularies; improving software support for metadata input; and identification of photographs (and copyright protection).

The conference will also see the first public presentation of the IPTC extended set of photo metadata, while the Stock Artists Alliance will look at the use of metadata by major stock distributors.

See <http://www.phmdc.org/>



appropriate taxonomies.

The agreed properties are wider than those specifically needed by the news industry, as they take account of the requirements of the stock photo industry (representatives of which have been active in

the development process). For example, specific provision is made for recording model age and model release details.

Following further detailed work on the specifications – including the addition of G2-Standards imple-

mentation - the paper will be used as the basis for a standard draft, which will be publicly released for comment.

It is then intended that the standard will be put forward for approval at the 2008 AGM.

# Boosting Information Globalisation



**Opening address  
at the IPTC spring  
meeting given by  
Mr Lu Wei, Vice  
President of  
Xinhua News  
Agency**

The Spring meeting of the IPTC is a magnificent assembly in the sphere of international media technology. Experts from 18 countries and 33 news organizations and research institutions will be sitting together to discuss new technical standards and plan future development of the media industry. I believe the meeting will yield rich fruits and have a significant and far-reaching influence on the international media.

Since its founding in 1965, the IPTC, with the concerted efforts of all countries concerned, has made great contribution to developing and applying media technical standards worldwide, boosting the reform and development of the international media industry, and promoting the free international flow of news and information.

## Technical standards

The Xinhua New Agency joined the IPTC in 2005 and has since been an active promoter for the development and application of media technical standards. As early as 2002, Xinhua took the lead in developing the technical standard for Chinese news and information. The standard passed the examination of the State Standardization Administration of China on November 11, 2005. The standard filled in a gap in the field of Chinese media technology, and laid a good foundation for global exchanges, sharing and further use of Chinese information.

Meanwhile, we have also dedicated ourselves to generalizing technical standards and putting them into wide use. Xinhua's multimedia database and the Xinhua 08 financial trade and service platform were built on the basis of the standard. The establishment of these important technical platforms not only reorganizes Xinhua's news resources in a more efficient way, expands its business and improves its domestic and overseas services, but also plays a positive role in boosting the reform and development of the whole media industry.

As an international news agency of a developing

country, Xinhua has always dedicated itself to promoting information globalization. Its news gathering network spans more than 100 countries, releasing news about the latest events around the world 24 hours a day in eight languages. Xinhua provides reporting services in three forms to more than 70,000 media and non-media organizations in more than 200 countries and regions.

Apart from traditional forms, Xinhua has made some important attempts in the field of new media in recent years, resulting in prominent achievements in website, cell phone messages, cell phone TV, cell phone WAP and mobile media. All these combine traditional reporting with digital and web technologies.

Economic globalization is irreversible. Economic globalization is based on information globalization in the first place, while global integration of information technology is prerequisite to information globalization. Technology guarantees information globalization and standards also play a crucial role.

## Technical incompatibility

However, global information integration is, to some degree, restricted by the fact that different countries classify and deal with information by different standards and means. The fact leads to technical incompatibility and hinders content sharing. Therefore, it is essential to formulate and generalize normative, efficient media technical standards. As a IPTC member, Xinhua will always fulfil its duties to support and take part in standards development and application.

Spring is evident everywhere in Beijing in March, which is refreshing. Tonight we have a great gathering of distinguished guests on a happy occasion. But we should not neglect those living in hunger and poverty in developing countries. Without access to information, they know little about the outside world.

For the lack of money, they cannot afford the equipment, without which they cannot receive information. And without knowledge, they do not know how to use the equipment. All this makes these regions isolated islands. Media organizations, especially internationally influential ones, are obligated to boost the global dissemination of information and enable information globalization to benefit all the people in the world.

Here I have some suggestions. Firstly, communication among media organizations around the world should be further strengthened to boost the global sharing of information and technology. In the world today, various barriers hinder the sharing of technology and technological advances. We should discard ideological differences

and take down boundary, racial and linguistic obstacles. We should eliminate technical barriers to bridge the information gap and gradually make the global sharing of information and technology possible. Only through sharing can we make progress side by side and make concerted efforts to promote technological advances and the application of technologies so as to let the world benefit from technological advances.

### New Technologies

Secondly, we should step up efforts to develop new technologies and serve news media with the most advanced technologies. Science and technology, especially web and information technology, are improving every day, and have had an unprecedented effect on the news industry. As a result, all forms of new media have become increasingly dependent on technical support. They cannot develop without technological advance just as man cannot survive without fresh air.

Therefore, we should work together to accelerate technical advancement and keep developing technical standards that are comprehensive, distinctive, malleable and easy to generalize so as to give media organizations more diversified communication channels and more convenient communication means, and enable them to spread facts, truth, information and knowledge promptly.

### Common benefits

Thirdly, we should work harder to spread the latest technology to developing countries in order to achieve common prosperity and make common progress. Technological advances are the common wealth of mankind and should benefit the whole world. Equality, development and progress for creating a harmonious world are our common aspiration.

We should provide learning opportunities and access to information and technology to those ill-informed, economically backward developing countries that need information to change the status quo. We should adhere to the principle of equality, not apply double standards or propose any political and economic conditions when helping them relieve "information poverty" and use information and technology to change the backwardness and achieve social and economic development so as to realize the common prosperity of the whole human society.

### International co-operation

Fourthly, we should strengthen international co-operation and continuously boost the upgrading of media technical standards. Co-operation is the mainstream in economic globalization, though both competition and co-operation exist among counties and companies, including media organizations. Strengthening co-operation conforms to the current of the times and is an inevitable choice for us who seek common prosperity.

The news industry is full of changes and technical standards must keep up with the times. Only through strengthened co-operation can media technical standards keep upgrading and can the world news industry develop better and faster.

With us for the IPTC spring meeting are senior media people and accomplished scholars and experts. I sincerely hope that all of you present here will feel free to express your ideas, offer advice on boosting technological advances in the world media industry, and make intellectual contributions to information globalization.

*In reply IPTC Chairman Stéphane Guérillot (afp) said that in December 2002 some IPTC members and the previous Managing Director had presented NewsML1 which was the latest development from IPTC, to Chinese media experts, including representatives from the Xinhua Press Agency.*

*Now IPTC has the opportunity to hold a meeting in Beijing during 2008 -not only is this the year of the Beijing Olympics, it is the year that IPTC released the first members of the new G2-standards family. And now Xinhua are full members of IPTC – a very important development.*

*Information globalisation is at the heart of IPTC activities, while the spread of information technology and the reduction of barriers is also important. As an international organisation IPTC values the richness that comes from its members, and welcomes Xinhua's help in introducing IPTC standards, and particularly in the great country of China.*

## Xinhua Tour and Symposium

During the Spring Meeting delegates toured the Xinhua Beijing headquarters. Xinhua provide a normal agency service in a number of languages, including Chinese, English, Spanish, French, Russian and Arabic. There are 33 domestic bureaus, along with over 100 overseas offices, with information being supplied to both domestic and international customers. [www.xinhua.org](http://www.xinhua.org).

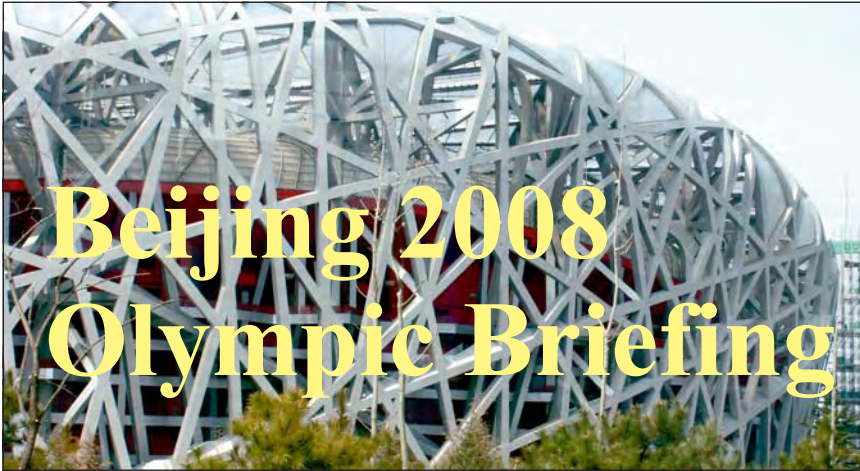
Xinhuanet was launched in 1998 and offers multi-lingual services, while Xinhua also provide mobile and financial information services (recently launched and very popular).

In Beijing 300 to 400 staff are on duty 24 hours a day in the main editorial hall (*right - which was extensively refurbished about three years ago*). A dedicated audio visual centre provides 24 hour support to broadcasters.

The tour was followed by a symposium with staff from the Telecommunications and Technology Bureau of Xinhua, and officials from the Standardisation Administration of the People's Republic of China (simultaneous translation facilities were available). Subjects covered included technical features of Xinhua operations; NewsML-G2 in action at Reuters; the development and application of XinhuaML and the Chinese News Markup Language (CNML); and the technical framework of Agence France Presse and its use of standards.







# Beijing 2008 Olympic Briefing

**During the Spring Meeting IPTC delegates toured some of the venues for the Beijing Olympic games and received a briefing by Sun Weijia, Director of BOCOG Media Operations.**



*Mr Sun Weijia (left), with IPTC Chairman Stéphane Guérillot and IPTC Managing Director Michael Steidl.*

Opening Ceremony for the Games is on the 8 August, with the Olympic Village opening on the 27 July. There will be some 302 events in 28 sports, taking place in 37 venues (32 of which are in Beijing).

Media Services are responsible for liaison with news organisations on behalf of BOCOG (Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad); retaining a close working relationship with BOB (Beijing Olympic Broadcasting) and IOC (International Olympic Committee) media operations to oversee the delivery of all services to the media; and coordinating Chinese Government policies for media

coverage, before and during the Games themselves.

Beijing Olympic Broadcasting are host broadcasters for the Games and will have a staff of around 4000 to produce some 3800 hours of live Olympic coverage.

## Press Centre

The Main Press Centre (MPC) is located in the Olympic Green, within easy walking distance of the main competition venues, and there are two hotels in the MPC building. Services in the MPC includes a 980 seat main

workroom, along with separate office spaces for 120 organisations. The main conference hall can accommodate 800 and provision has been made for interpretations in eight languages, while there are also a

*Delegates at the Aquatic Centre (top) and beside the countdown clock at the BOCOG headquarters.*



200 seat and three 80 seat briefing rooms.

Official opening for the MPC is planned for the 8 July, with 24 hour operations starting on the 25 July. Games operations continue until the 26 August, with a transition period being followed by the Paralympic Games from 2 to 18 September.

Media services at the venues include press work rooms and conference rooms, photo workroom, and a media lounge. All the venue media work areas will be served by a wireless LAN, which will also offer access to the Games information system.

## News Services

Intended to provide a balanced news service, independent of external influences, the Olympic News Service will provide stories in English, French and Chinese. Information provided will include pre-games biographies and historical data; and games previews and reviews, flash quotes and press conference highlights.

Photo services will cater for around 1100 photographers with the provision of photo positions at each of the venues. At the MPC there is an Image Centre (in association with Kodak) and a dedicated photo work room. Individual venues also have photo work areas with workstations and equipment storage facilities.

Published by the **International Press Telecommunications Council**

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