



## IPTC AUTUMN MEETING 2009

# Attendees consider long list of industry issues at IPTC meeting in US

**At Autumn Meeting 2009, NewsCodes, surveys and new releases of G2-Standards among issues considered**

An ambitious agenda kept member representatives busy throughout the three-day Autumn Meeting 2009 in Arlington, Virginia — a suburb of Washington, DC. Topics under discussion ranged from the hNews microformat, to approvals of new releases of several standards, results of an industry survey about G2-Standards usage, and NITF discussions.



*Among issues discussed at the metro Washington, DC meeting were survey results on G2-Standards implementation and outcomes of the June Photo Metadata Conference.*

### **G2-Standards changes, releases**

Small, evolutionary changes that are based on wider use-cases were approved for NAR 1.6. (Developer version). Changes include using a sequence of QCode tokens to indicate the position of a concept in a hierarchical taxonomy, Hint and Extension Point Definition change affecting child elements, adding geographical location to the POIDetails wrapper, add a <same as> child element to the <scheme> entries of a <catalog>, as well as two additional instances.

In separate actions, NewsML-G2 Version 2.5 was approved as a Developer Release and NAR 1.6 adopted. Also, EventsML-G2 Version 1.4 was approved as a Developer Release and NAR 1.6 adopted. Publication of the NewsML-G2 and EventsML-G2 releases is expected in December 2009.



*An updated version of the "G2-Standards Guide for Implementers" was among topics considered.*

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## SUMMARY

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- 2 News agencies surveyed on G2-Standards use; targeted marketing planned
- 3 IPTC publishes "Newspaper Terms of North America"
- 4 Transtel's John Evans discusses G2-compliant software development
- 5 CV for image content task of Photo Metadata WG
- 6 First 'APA-IT Challenge' award winners announced; SportsMLG2 special session examines 'state of the standard'

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### Subject and Media Topic News-Codes

Locating a concept in a taxonomy's hierarchy, establishing numeric codes for the Media Topic NewsCodes taxonomy, and revising change management rules for NewsCodes were topics of discussion and subsequent action.

The need to tie the code of a concept to the location of the concept within the taxonomy's hierarchy while also using a code that identifies and persists over time was resolved and usage conditions established.

Although the terms and their hierarchi-

cal structure in the Media Topics News-Codes were approved at the AGM in June, the eight-digit numeric codes for each concept in the taxonomy were not. After discussion, it was resolved to accept the numeric codes as recommended initially by the NewsCodes Working Party.

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Meeting breaks inspired less formal work.

#### Hierarchy Information within a Concept Code

EXAMPLE: The concept "adoption" is a member of the Media Topic News-Codes. Its code is 20000781. Its parent is the concept "family" with the code 20000780. The parent of "family" is the top level concept "society" with the code 1400000. The defined separator of codes is a hyphen.

The resulting Hierarchy Information value for "adoption" could look like this: 14000000-2000780-20000781. This allows us to filter (and route) this concept by both its ancestor at the top level and its immediate parent. The exact format of the sequence is defined by the exchange format used: e.g., NITF, NewsML-G2, and so forth.

## Targeted marketing needed to promote G2-Standards usage, IPTC actions

New IPTC Public Relations Committee Chair John Evans of Transtel in the UK presented results of a survey of news agencies that he conducted to determine which agencies are using G2-Standards or expect to do so.

Of 34 agencies survey, 23 responded, he reported. Results showed that market penetration, while growing, is light. Participant comments perceive the lack of any business reason to implement the standards. The current world economy also was mentioned, with several pointing to lack of funding as a deciding factor.

Of the three standards, the greatest use or anticipated use reported was for NewsML-G2 and EventsML-G2. For NewsML-G2, three agencies reported current use, with another six planning to implement it in 2010. Eight more expect to implement it, but have set no dates. Six have no plans to implement.

Only one respondent currently uses EventsML-G2, but four more will implement it in 2010 and 10 expect to implement it at later date.

SportsML-G2 is not used by respon-

dents at present, but three plan to do so in 2010 and another three have not set a date. SportsML-G2 is the most recently released G2-Standard.

"I think our most immediate need, something that can speed standards adoption", Evans said, "is for a repository of business cases, ideas and explanations that can be published, referenced and reused". Another need is for a search engine-friendly Web site area to hold the repository's content.

Recognizing the need for marketing, IPTC has created a new Yahoo! Group for members so that ideas can be discussed and plans made. Members can ask to join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/iptc-prc/>.

**23** of 34 news agencies responded to a survey about G2-Standards implementation plans.

Respondents shared why they are or are not adopting G2-Standards.

"NewsML 1 and XHTML handle everything we need to do at the moment and I don't think the company sees any benefit.

"Our new editorial system is based on NewsML-G2: that is its internal storage format. We hope to be able to offer package services using G2 by the end of the year, and wire services next year.

"The standards are very complex and would require major changes to our systems and also to the systems of our customers/partners.

"We will be transmitting images in NewsML-G2 End of 2009, text in 2010. We have decided to establish G2 as the strategic platform; every product will be migrated towards G2.

"For introducing new standards earlier we would need a strong request from our subscribers or the management.

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Representatives approved the UN regional divisions as World NewsCodes, modified to list South America as a separate region, but declined to divide the

world any further. The the NewsCodes Change Management Rules revision was deferred for further study.

**NITF: a new release**

NITF Version 3.5 was approved. Chang-

es include allowing unlimited media-producer elements within the media element. Among other issues is the possibility of planning a new version of NITF: 4.0. Considering such a project will start at the IPTC Spring Meeting 2010 with creation of a 'road map'.

**hNews and IPTC standards**

A Standards Committee special session on hNews — an annotation format proposed by the Associated Press and the Media Standards Trust — was held in conjunction with the October meeting. hNews is a data format for HTML pages displaying news content. Using it is a way to enrich HTML with fields so as to describe a journalistic work on the web with more accuracy and greater precision.

hNews is only meant to be used directly within HTML pages; IPTC standards are not. However, hNews might be with HTML inside NewsML 1 or NewsML-G2. HTML might also be enriched with hNews metadata derived from NITF or G2-Standards metadata properties. Exploring the possibilities will be an ongoing project.



Networking and collaboration thrive at IPTC meetings



**Page One**

The objects that make up a newspaper page are often collectively called Furniture.

Multiple pages folded together form a Book or, if they contain related news (such as sports), a Section.

**Which 19th century newspaper terms live on in IPTC's NITF standard (and elsewhere)?**

An industry's jargon may live on long after the original object or condition it describes has disappeared. Graphic design software programs still use units of measure from the 1800s like *point* and *pica*, which refer to "hot metal" font sizes, or call the white space between lines *leading*, even though thin strips of metal (lead) no longer physically separate lines of metal type from each other. IPTC's NITF standard references newspaper terms that are common in North America. A just-released IPTC publication — a graphical glossary of terms — illustrates where those terms originated and what they still mean. "Newspaper Terms of North America" is available for [download](#).

# Transtel: Developing G2-compliant software has benefits and challenges

**G2-Standards, developed for a media-convergent business landscape, hold great promise for the news industry, but right now there are few guideposts on the way to implementation.**



Photo courtesy Words2Gold LLC. Used with permission.

*The target market for Transtel Communications Ltd. is the broadcast side of the news industry, where customers may or may not have a print product.*

Almost as soon as IPTC members approved them, Transtel Communications in the UK announced that it would integrate G2-Standards into its news editorial products. It was a vote of confidence in the young standard. "The potential for the use of G2-Standards is huge," said Managing Director John Evans. "Our applications have supported every IPTC standard since 7901 and we are very excited about the potential of the G2-Standards platform".

In an early application of NewsML-G2, Transtel helped The Times of Oman, an English language

daily, become an early adopter of the standard when it partnered with Layout Ltd. in Beirut, Lebanon, to use the G2-Standards to transfer news content at The Times from the Transtel editorial system to Layout Ltd's page layout system.

## **G2-Standards at work**

Today's news industry is buffeted by epochal change. Mastering these challenges demands powerful tools. The IPTC G2-Standards — NewsML-G2, EventsML-G2 and SportsML-G2 — are blueprints for making tools that work. Here is one of an occasional look at how media companies are using them.

"The new standard is perfect for us", Evans said of the experience. "We can send out a package of news, including the headline, slug, text and different renditions of various images, and keep all of the valuable metadata associated with both text and image. We can

handle version changes and track the content of a print story to versions

of the same story produced for the Web site.

"What the customer wants will drive us", Evans continued. "The problem is that the customer is often unaware of the possibilities a new standard offers them. Educating customers about the potential business opportunities is very important to us and something we are keen for IPTC to embrace.

"For example, reducing the bandwidth required to move large video files is an obvious cost saving to news agencies and subscribers alike. The G2-Standards make this very simple to achieve by describing all of the video renditions available from the Agency's server, and allowing the subscriber to download only one rendition of the video when they require it. We are incorporating this on-demand pull mechanism not just for video but for audio and images".

The full potential of the G2-Standards is a work in progress, however, and it may stay that way for some time. "It is a long process", said Evans. "That's what happens when you go from the theoretical, development stage of a standard to the in-the-field testing stage. When theory meets the real world, it becomes quite complex."

He sees two main problems in this initial phase.

First, the standard was designed by news agencies to allow them to send news out. "Companies like Transtel that aggregate news received by a client from many news agencies are seeing different interpretations of the 'best' way to use the G2-Standards."

Second, the standard has a large number of possible ways in which it can be used. "Creating software that can parse any possible permutation of a G2-Standards file is a huge task, one that in practice many aggregators will not attempt", said Evans.

An example is the use of controlled vocabularies. "They are one of the  
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trumpeted benefits of G2-Standards. IPTC members have spent hours and hours determining what, for example, the Media Topics News Codes are. There are over 1100 of them, yet a number of major agencies do not use them. They prefer their own”, said Evans.

“Ideally we would have a copy of the news codes from each agency, and even then we have no way of knowing if the code that one agency assigns to a topic has the same meaning as a code assigned by another agency. Therefore, we can’t easily allow our customers to search on news codes and be assured that they are finding stories with the same topic”.

Until the industry acquires more experience with the new standards family and sorts itself out, Transtel’s approach is to sift through NewsML-G2 to decide what to use right away and what to implement later. “The customer is our guide.

It doesn’t make sense to develop features they won’t use”, Evans said. “We pick out the bits that our knowledge of the market says are most valuable to the customer.

“What we love about the G2 standard though, is the simplicity of the G2 architecture. Having spent some time in modelling the architecture, we now find that anything we wish to attempt, either ingesting or publishing news, fits into our model very easily” Evans concluded.

Transtel markets to any news organisation, especially those with several distribution channels. The company is as at home with broadcasters as with newspapers. A reputation with right to left languages has ensured a strong Middle East presence, and they now are targeting various parts of Asia.

TranstelCommunicationsLtd.designs, develops and implements computer-based gathering, distribution and

John Evans is Managing Director of Transtel Communications Ltd..



management systems for news and media. The company has a 35 year history as a supplier to the international news industry, with clients in over 50 countries world wide.



## CV for image content ‘a work in progress’

The IPTC Photo Metadata Working Group reported to representatives attending the Autumn Meeting 2009 that the IPTC-sponsored [Photo Metadata Conference](#), held in Dresden, Germany in June, was pronounced a success by attendees. The conference examined “Metadata in a Multi-Media World” — the first time video needs have been discussed at the now-annual conference.

In other activities, Working Group Chair Harald Löffler of Germany reported on the Photo Metadata Standard July 2009 release and on IPTC work with Adobe Systems Inc. on XMP panels for Adobe Creative Suite 5. Also, a new “Content Warning” field (in draft status) indicates the presence of content not suitable for some audiences. In 2010, work will be done on a controlled vocabulary for image content.

Video clip of 3 children on a trampoline

EXAMPLE VIDEO CLIP

METADATA TIMELINE

0	72	200	386	640	860	942	1007
Katie+		Jerry+			Katie+		
		Bob+					

0..200: KATIE 386..860: BOB  
72..942: JERRY 640..1007: KATIE

Timeline diagram of children jumping; each color block is an IPTC stationery clip.

Can “Metadata Stationery” be applied to video clips? According to [Dennis Walker](#), president of Camera Bits in the US, “Application of IPTC Metadata that was extended for still photos can be extended to video in a dynamic way”.

Graphics © by Camera Bits. Used with permission.

## PUBLISHER’S STATEMENT

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## 'Video Explorer' and multimedia blog 'soup.io' win first 'APA-IT-Challenge' awards

In May, IPTC member APA-IT from Austria announced its new "APA-IT Challenge" awards for IT innovations in improved display, handling and management of content.

Projects could be submitted in two categories: projects from academic research and projects already under implementation by a start-up company. The prize money for each category was €2,500.

After review by a high profile jury, the first winners received their awards in Vienna on 17 September. Klaus Schöffmann won for his Video Explorer in the "Academia" category.



Credit: APA/Thomas Preiss

*Pictured here, l-r, are Gerald Klima (CEO APA-IT), Lukas Flittl (soup.io), Christopher Clay (soup.io), Klaus Schöffmann, Michael Lang (Editor-in-chief APA, APA)*

Christopher Clay and Lukas Fittl won for their multimedia-blog "soup.io" in the start-up company category .

Mr Schöffmann's Video Explorer enables the user to quickly and visually browse video content by special characteristics of the moving pictures, such as by their mix of colours, or typical pattern. The user can even save such visual search parameters for applying to any piece of video content.

Mr Clay's and Mr Flittl's "Soup.io" is an improved aggregation engine: for specific persons it collects and re-distributes content from many media types: text from web pages, blogs or Twitter, as well as photos or video.

Incidentally, NITF Chair Stuart Myles presented soup.io to the IPTC membership in April 2008 and since then a special aggregation is available at <http://iptc.soup.io>.

## SportsML-G2 special session focuses on market strategies to increase usage

A special IPTC session to examine the state of affairs for SportsML-G2 was held in October in conjunction with the Autumn meeting. The goals of the meeting were to lay the groundwork for improvements to the standard and generate ideas for increasing adoption.

Historically, businesses that exchange sports statistics have done so using in-house, sports specific data formats. The session provided detailed feedback on various alternative approaches undertaken by news agencies, and resulted in a framework for further improvements to SportsML-G2.



*The special session was hosted by the Newspaper Association of America at NAA headquarters, in Arlington, Virginia USA.*

Many IPTC members participated in a pre-meeting survey about data formats their organisations use to exchange sports news. Results showed SportsML-G2 now is being used by nine agencies or sports organisations. The world of sports reporting is huge, so the possibilities for increases in the use of SportsML-G2 are numerous.

Sports leagues or organisations tied to specific sports often use an in-house markup language that they can extend freely. Others accept whatever their partner generates, which also is

likely to be in an in-house format.

"SportsML-G2 is still the only open, international standard that aims to address the needs of sports data publishers and their user base", said meeting Chair Alan Karben of the US. "The IPTC working group remains committed to improving the specification and its marketing."

The day-long meeting succeeded in gathering information, clarifying the needs of potential users, and generating ideas for marketing.