



2009

IPTC Spectrum

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR NEWS



G2-Standards prepare you for the multimedia challenge

NewsML-G2



EventsML-G2



SportsML-G2



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dpa

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20 Garrick Street
London WC2E 9BT
United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (20) 3178 4922
Fax: +44 (20) 7664 7878

Managing Director

Michael Steidl
mdirector@iptc.org

Editor

Sue Sherrard Fine
editor@iptc.org

IPTC OBJECTIVES & GOALS

IPTC is a consortium of the world's major news agencies, news publishers and news industry vendors. The IPTC develops and maintains the technical standards for improved news exchange that are used by virtually every major news organisation in the world. Membership is open to organisations and companies concerned with news collection, distribution and publishing, as well as to system vendors supporting the news industry.

IPTC MEMBERSHIP

Reasons for being an IPTC member include:

IPTC is the only organisation that addresses the news industry concerns for standardisation of information-transfer formats.

IPTC is an organisation concerned with news agencies and their customers' information-transfer problems.

IPTC fosters exposure to business ideas used around the world to distribute news.

IPTC encourages personal relationships among peers from around the world.

IPTC provides a world news lobby voice for standardisation of telecommunications services.

IPTC allows members to request research and development in areas of specific interest to their business activities.

www.iptc.org

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IPTC standards will help the news industry forge new business models

Friends and colleagues:

With this 2009 edition of the *IPTC Spectrum* we have modified the way the IPTC reports on itself, its achievements and its members. The new look of the *Spectrum* is the last one of the changes begun a year ago and which includes a redesigned Web site — www.iptc.org — a new layout and content structure for the *IPTC Mirror* (our periodical) and a new IPTC Editor. The articles that follow reveal a lot about the IPTC's new look and communication style.

The past year was very good for the organisation. It was a year of intense work that produced clear results. Our membership has grown, and with the addition of ANGOP (Angola), we welcome our first member from sub-Saharan Africa.

When the world faces a financial crisis, successful companies invest in research and development for the future. We know that the newspaper industry has always been slow to react and to invest in new editorial or production systems. Yet all around us, we can see that, because of pressures from the crisis and from the development of the Web in general — and Web 2.0 in particular — the industry's newsrooms are now merging their print and web editions.

Multimedia or rich media is asked for and managed on a standard basis. Video content is becoming a must-have product. Third-generation (3G) mobile and the high speed internet have become the norm.

Our standards should allow for those new developments to blossom. This

is an opportunity for our member organisations and our industry.

For several years, we put a lot of pressure on the Standards Committee and the working parties, but today we can be proud of their achievements. Now we have to "sell" these accomplishments to the market. Their adoption by a large number of organisations should be our goal.

In spite of the industry crises, which were reflected in lower than normal attendance at our AGM in Seoul, our members remained very active, through discussion forums on Yahoo! Newsgroups and during weekly conference calls.

Our work this year focused on:

- achieving the technical specifications of the IPTC G2-Standards and writing the "G2 Guide for Implementers", in which we demonstrate how NewsML-G2, EventsML-G2 and SportsML-G2 can easily be used side by side
- producing the "Media Topic NewsCodes" (the updated version of the Subject NewsCodes)
- enhancing the IPTC Photo Metadata standards and recommendations.

In Seoul, the NewsCodes Working Party won member approval for the first stage of its work covering the hierarchy, terms, and definitions of the Media Topic NewsCodes.

The *G2 Guide for Implementers*, including business cases, was released early in 2009. We are now in the implementation phase and have received the first feedback and initial



Stéphane Guérillot, IPTC Chairman

requests for minor adjustments.

The Photo Metadata Working Group is considering video metadata and controlled vocabularies for images. The conclusions of its work were presented at the 3rd Photo Metadata Conference, which we held in conjunction with the CEPIC annual conference in June. This interaction with potential users of an eventual standard underlined the conversion tasks involved in meeting the metadata requirements of photo and video content. IPTC and Adobe work closely on enhancing the use of XMP-based metadata. We are also in touch with the Metadata Working Group.

All those issues and more are detailed in this edition by our committee, working group, and working party chairs or their representatives.

In addition, we look at organisations that are already reaping business benefits from implementing specific G2-Standards.

Happy reading!

— Stéphane Guérillot
Chairman, IPTC

My rearview mirror shows IPTC and its members achieved a great deal this year

IPTC is a membership organisation, and all its achievements are generated by the representatives of its members. IPTC is a worldwide organisation with members from all continents; this demands a lot of communication to meet our goals. IPTC's Management Committee acts as a Board of Directors, and my role as Managing Director is to keep us sailing in the right direction.

My primary goal is to keep our business active at a high level. Therefore, I act as a communication hub inside the IPTC, which included hosting member delegate conference calls totaling 135 hours 12 months. Further I support IPTC member activities whenever required, and also act as a spokesperson, representing — and marketing — IPTC to the public.

As the one running the IPTC office, I also take care of all the formal and legal duties and obligations of the IPTC.

Major activities of the past year

The last year was full of successes, but also was marked by serious challenges. We succeeded in improving our business around news industry

standards. The challenges came from the global economic crisis that many of our members are enduring. The major achievements in the work programme centred on seven areas:

The G2-Standards matured. Following the release of the specifications in early 2008, the *G2 Guidelines for Implementers* document was written by Kelvin Holland, IPTC's Technical Editor. IPTC's News Architecture developers formed the think tank behind it, and I enjoyed orchestrating this effort.

G2-Standards are lively. At all meetings from Autumn 2008 to AGM 2009, new minor versions of the NewsML-G2 and EventsML-G2 standards were approved, all of them based on an evolved News Architecture version. My job was managing the internal endorsements and providing the dozens of specification documents for public use.

Introducing Media Topic NewsCodes. Hours of work on updating the Subject NewsCodes culminated in member approval of the "Media Topic NewsCodes" at the AGM in Seoul. As a kind of "online editor", I worked with the core NewsCodes developer group to create this new vocabulary.

NewsCodes Management. Management of the NewsCodes underwent a complete revision this past year. For maintenance, the IPTC is using a SchemaLogic system; for delivery to the public, a brand new repository was built around the server — <http://cv.iptc.org>. This change necessitated the creation of a complete, new workflow that addressed everything from creation and maintenance, to improved distribution and, finally, delivery to the end user. Currently, the workflow implementation has progressed to uploading NewsCodes to our web-based

repository. The final leg — delivering the vocabularies in a user friendly way to a desktop — is still under construction.

Photo Metadata Working Group. My work with the Photo Metadata Working Group turned to new horizons. The group began discussing metadata for video this year and broadened its focus to visual content at large.

Photo Metadata Conference. This year, I again had the pleasure of organising the Photo Metadata Conference with Ifra and CEPIC. It was held in June in Dresden, Germany. CEPIC helped by providing meeting space and registration system services. Ifra publicized the conference for us. My responsibilities included finding speakers, conducting all communications and coordination, and running the conference web site.

IPTC's new website. Let me not forget: IPTC introduced a completely new Web site last autumn. It was my duty to oversee the redesign and to migrate content from the existing pages to the new CMS. The result is a functional, up-to-date site that is easier for visitors to use.

In Summary

This year, it was again my pleasure to work with our many active member representatives on a robust and vigorous IPTC. I would like to thank all who contributed work time, involvement, new ideas and frank warnings to our IPTC efforts.

Being at the centre of these activities, I can assure everyone: you are the heartbeat of the organization; you make the IPTC strong and successful.

— Michael Steidl
Managing Director, IPTC





Philippe Huguen © AFP

G2-Standards ease industry race to media convergence

Technology may set the pace, but IPTC's G2-Standards position the news industry to profit from fast-morphing change.

The days of incremental change are over. Evolution in the news industry has gone from gradual to the fast-morphing worlds of the Internet, the World Wide Web, the Semantic Web and Web 2.0.

Citizen journalists vie with traditional, photo and video journalists for breaking news. The news itself may be delivered to mobile phones through SMS feeds and tweets or by wireless via e-ink on e-paper. Amid all the change, however, the industry still must turn a profit.

The IPTC's G2-Standards were designed by the news industry for the news industry, with profitability the

over-arching concern. NewsML-G2, EventsML-G2, and SportsML-G2 make up the G2-Standards family. They are the foundation for moving and managing multiple delivery streams of news content and meta-

data irrespective of the media used.

Together, they help businesses control costs, develop new products and services, and enhance investments in IT that can help recover expenditures.

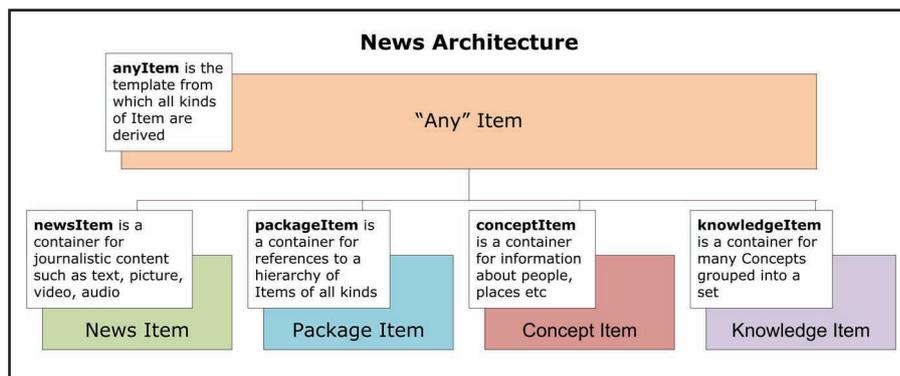
Using G2-Standards, news agencies and publishers can address the urgent need for interoperable metadata to manage the information created by the approaching intersection of multiple news formats.

The G2-Standards are built on a common news architecture or framework.

NewsML-G2 is a media-independent, news-exchange format for general news. It efficiently wraps up multi-media news content and associated metadata, whether for single news items or for structured packages that contain multiple types of related content.

EventsML-G2 is a standard for exchanging news event information in order to plan coverage better. The standard can be used to improve the efficiency and quality of news production, since an estimated 50-80% of events that receive coverage are known about in advance. EventsML-G2 also can generate new products.

Sports coverage is a major news agency activity, and SportsML-G2 offers a flexible, extensible framework that can handle all types of sports information using standard technology. Since sports do not all fit into a single generic model, special plugins allow widely-differing sports, such as golf, baseball and motor racing, to be accommodated within the standard framework.



News Architecture (NAR), the shared framework and components of the G2-Standards

G2-STANDARDS AT WORK: NEWSML-G2

'G2' helps Reuters manage the coming cross-media future

The Reuters "Newsroom Initiative" that launched in 2008, has one overriding goal: to prepare the news agency for a media-convergent future and the increased demands for metadata. Achieving that feat will allow Reuters to fully realize the value of the information produced.

NewsML-G2 implementation is the starting point for the Reuters program. The company already plans to migrate to the full suite of G2-Standards.

Roger Bacon, Reuters' media product manager, London, says, "It was clear that in preparing for convergence, the old approaches would not work".

So Reuters set about creating a new model. It did so by changing the nature of relationships with customers and their system vendors, ultimately enlisting vendors to identify customer needs in a convergent news world. The approach works.

"The G2-Standards enable us to put all our assets together. Customers once received multiple feeds from us, depending on content. With the introduction of *Reuters Media Connect*,

clients will have only one feed to go to, the content is all digital and metadata is embedded in XML format".

Dave Compton, a senior media technologist at Reuters and an active co-developer of NewsML-G2, told *Spectrum*: "We're now at the point where Reuters can provide rich content association and navigational links. This enables many opportunities, but can only be maximized by cooperation between providers and system vendors – this is where the Newsroom Initiative is positioned".

Migrating to the G2-Standards did not pose huge challenges for Reuters, though it did require careful mapping of properties plus an in-depth understanding of the standard. "In fact, said Bacon, "if there is any advice I have to give others who plan to implement the G2-Standards, it is to have someone on the implementation project who knows everything about them. The best way for a company to ensure this is to be an active IPTC member."



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G2-STANDARDS AT WORK: EVENTSML-G2

dpa launches new product based on EventsML-G2

"Deutsche Presse-Agentur began thinking about adopting EventsML-G2 in 2008, as the model and ideas behind G2 became clearer and the standard stabilized", says Robert Schmidt-Nia, head of application development for dpa mediatechnology in Hamburg.

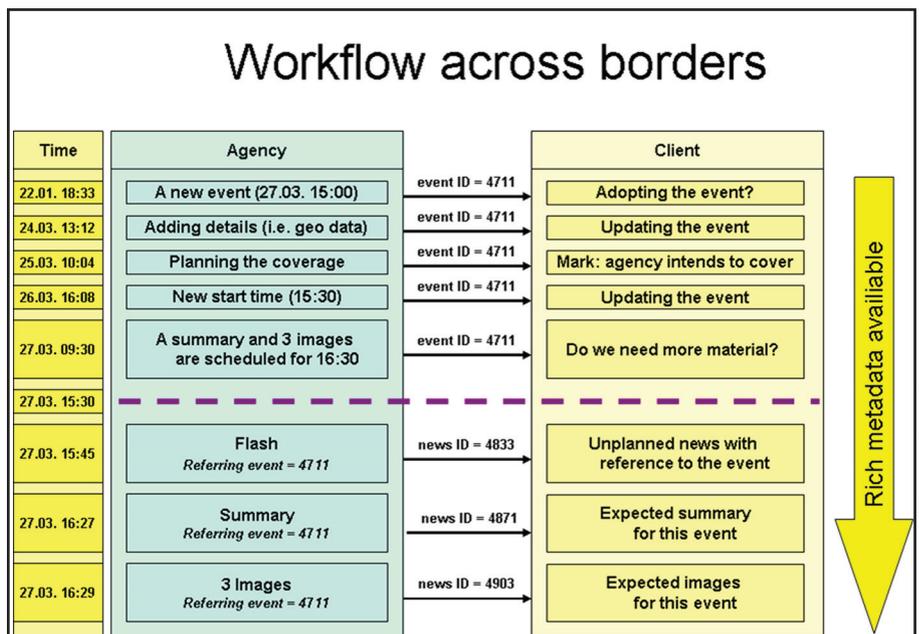
"However, as a news agency that provides major services using the IPTC 7901 standard, we did not face any direct market pressures to implement the EventsML-G2 at the time." That soon changed.

"Our customers let us know, for the first time", Schmidt-Nia said, "that they not only wanted, they *required* us to provide daily-planning events information in the human readable 7901 format they already received as well as in machine-readable XML. That gave

dpa a demonstrable business need to move to EventsMLG2". The need led to a new product with a ready market.

"The aggregated information about a single event becomes a product itself, with a very short time to market".

Even better, he says, customers familiar with a new standard like EventsML-G2 begin to see that the whole G2-Standards family can improve their own processes and their business.



How planning systems can be connected between an agency and its clients

Illustration courtesy Deutsche Presse-Agentur. Used with permission.

'G2-Standards Guide for Implementers' eases adoption, hastens benefits

A significant achievement in 2009 was the publication of IPTC's new *G2-Standards Guide for Implementers*, a free, downloadable introduction to the three standards in the G2 family — NewsML-G2, SportsML-G2 and EventsML-G2.

The implementers guide is a combination reference document, tutorial and handbook. Its publication is a welcome step in easing adoption and implementation for news organisations seeking a way to alleviate steadily increasing cost pressures. The Guide has been called the "user instruction manual for putting this new family of standards to work."

"The Guide should have a large 'Start Here' button on the front."

The G2-Standards were developed specifically to manage and exchange news in multiple formats across multiple platforms and delivery channels. They support delivery of new kinds of content (videos, event information) to the channels made possible by new technologies. In fact, much of what G2 can do was developed in response to the most compelling technology to impact the news industry since movable type: the Internet.

"Standards make it easier for organisations to do business with each other", said Kelvin Holland, IPTC Technical Editor, who was responsible for the project. "This increases the level of business activity and should promote higher-quality services, so both businesses and their customers benefit".

Paul Harman of the Press Association in the UK concurred. "The G2 Implementers Guide is an invaluable aid for organisations intending to im-

plement the G2 family of standards or for those who will be receiving it. It provides the necessary context for system developers, who may lack a full understanding of the way news organisations work, to interpret the detailed functional specification."

Migrating to G2

Between them, IPTC7901 and NITF have been mainstays of news exchange standards for text for 30 years. Migrating from them to the G2-Standards earned an entire chapter in the Guide. Mapping is provided in a table format that is designed to ease migration.

The 'MMM' standard

The trio of G2-Standards positions news organisations for today's multi-media, multi-platform and multi-channel news environment. Holland noted that "Many of us have been in situations where a quick and sometimes crude 'mash-up' was used to solve a data exchange problem. I hope the Guide makes it easier for developers to use G2 as a longer-term solution without reinventing the wheel".

John Evans with Transtel Communi-

cations Ltd. in the UK added, "The Guide is just that: a starting point for companies trying to work out how to use G2. It uses real world cases from news agencies, and it provides a solid base from which further real world extensions and usages of G2 can be documented".

Tony Card and Siobhán Wheston, with BBC Monitoring in the UK, wrote IPTC that "We decided to use G2 as the core schema for our new content management system. We started design while the Guide was being produced. Thus we experienced 'life before' the Guide and 'life after' it. We like 'life after' better".

"Initially, we became somewhat lost in the wealth of detailed documentation on the website. Despite the helpfulness of other IPTC members, we had little idea of how to get started with G2. The Guide, with its examples and best practices, fixes that."

The guide is available at no charge and includes a PDF document and a folder of practical examples. It can be [downloaded](#) from the IPTC web site.



Members discuss the Guide's use with Editor Kelvin Holland at the IPTC Spring Meeting 2009.

New 'Guide' sharpens WP's focus on broader adoption of G2-Standards

The [G2-Standards](#) suite is a comprehensive framework that covers everything from exchanging simple textual news items to powerful Semantic Web applications that link content and knowledge domains. As these standards move from the development phase into production, the focus of the Working Party has been on detecting loose ends, establishing best practices and improving interoperability.

The most important effort since the last AGM has been creating a comprehensive implementation and usage guide: *G2-Standards Guide for Implementers*. Its effect is two-fold. On the one hand, the Guide eases the G2-Standards implementation barrier for newcomers by providing a slow progression from basic tasks to more advanced features. On the other, it promotes interoperability by helping people solve more complex problems and then align these solutions.

Most content providers have realized that simple, plain information is a commodity in our Internet-oriented world. In order to keep customers, they have had to move from providing facts towards providing knowledge — about events, about identifying the value of links between people, organizations and events, and about correlations between subjects and the time of their occurrence.

Putting the G2-Standards family in production significantly changes the way content providers interact with their audiences. We hope it will give rise to new, integrated business models in the near future: models that are integrated so that all kinds of multimedia content shipped together use common metadata models and delivery platforms; models that share

the same framework, with content linked from production planning through the production process and all the way to the point at which content is archived.

EventsML-G2 enables detailed planning of event coverage, as well as search and filtering of the upcoming events. The events could be described using the same descriptive metadata as the content, so that later metadata are simply copied to the news items; hence, the event serves as the integration point for all related content.

NewsML-G2 is a content format-agnostic metadata wrapper that allows content providers to describe content with rich and consistent sets of administrative, descriptive and rights metadata, regardless of the format of the actual content. That opens up the possibility for atomization of the content pieces that is necessary to open new delivery channels, while a powerful packaging mechanism still provides

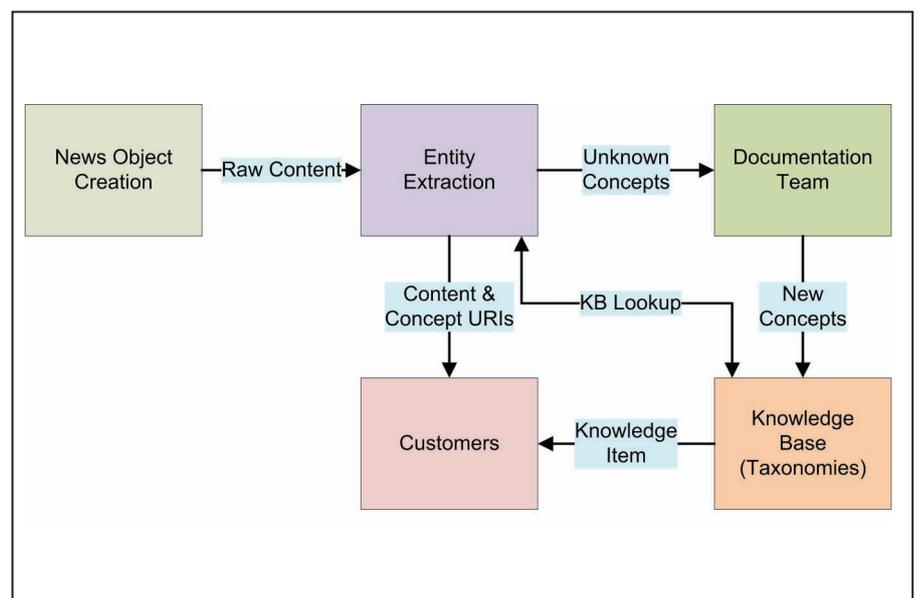
for integration of multimedia content items to create a rich customer experience.

As the world's only open, extensible XML standard for exchanging complex sports tables and statistics data, SportsML-G2 accompanies NewsML, NewsML-G2 and NITF, so that sports statistics can be packaged with edited coverage of sports.



Such an infrastructure provides grounds for *automated interpretation* of content and enables users to quickly and efficiently find what they need, and — more importantly — to truly understand the information they find.

— Darko Gulija, Chair



Information Flow for Concepts and Knowledge Items

Next WG goal: more interoperable G2-Standards

NewsML-G2 is a member of IPTC's G2-Standards family, which debuted in February 2008 and which also includes EventsML-G2 and SportsML-G2. The latest release of the standard is NewsML-G2 2.4, approved at AGM 2009 along with NAR 1.5, the architectural framework for the G2-Standards.

The standard allows the bundling of multiple news items (with inline or referenced content) along with a detailed description of each item and information on how the items relate to each other. The NewsML-G2 specification is designed to make it easy to package and exchange news, bundle and resell it, or archive it, irrespective of the media that will use it. At the standard's introduction, several organisations moved quickly to implement it and, in 2009, others expanded the effort to establish G2-Standards compliant systems.

Since then, we identified minor gaps between real world needs and the standard's design. Similar gaps were noted for the EventsML-G2 standard. However, most of the gaps were not specific to the G2-Standards themselves, but related to the news architecture (NAR) framework.

Closing these gaps was the main business of the NewsML-G2 WG in

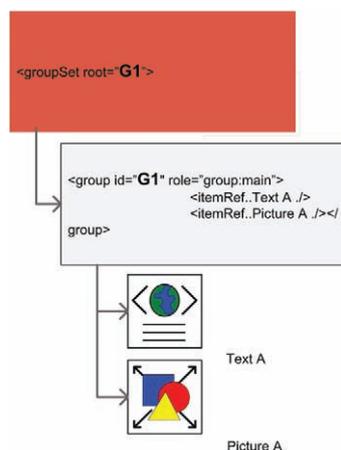
2009. This was seen in the nature of the formal change requests that were submitted for consideration. The working group discussed a handful of change requests, created workable solutions and brought them to the IPTC member representative meetings for approval.

The working group also focused attention on interoperability of G2-Standards objects throughout the suite of specifications. It proved challenging to determine best practices and then to provide them within developer guidelines.

Several attempts were made to promote the new standard, increase its visibility and acceptance, and overcome the perception of some that this new standard is marginal. A presentation during the Ibra Expo 2008 in Amsterdam, and one planned for Ibra Expo 2009 in Vienna, were coupled with face to face workshops about promoting the standard to customers.

With the NewsML-G2 standard now stable, the working group shifted its attention to customer-centric requirements. G2-Standards customers should be able to process all G2-Standards based communications without each interface having to be specialised. Improving interoperability will be an ongoing working group concern between now and AGM 2010.

— Helge Viehof, acting as Chair



G2-Standards' simple package relationship

EventsML may inspire G2-Standards adoption

In 2008, EventsML-G2 was a new G2-Standard and was receiving far less attention than the better-known NewsML-G2. By the end of 2008, however, customer interest in the benefits that could be gained from structured data about events was growing. This interest:

- 1) fed awareness of EventsML-G2
- 2) encouraged the creation of new products that take advantage of the G2-Standards
- 3) introduce customers to the entire G2-Standards family.

Event-related information, necessary for planning news coverage, is central to the effective functioning of news organisations. While customers once only asked for what-where-when information, they now want information enriched with pertinent, accurate metadata. EventsML-G2 makes such enrichment possible, and fulfills customers' demands.

Using this capability, providers can create new, highly marketable products that supply customers with huge amounts of metadata that can then be embedded into news content without increasing customer workloads. The standard supports internal and external workflows for both parties.

One European news organisation that implemented EventsML-G2 noted that "Using EventsML-G2 to

Continued, "EventsML", page 11

SPORTSML-G2 WORKING GROUP

Revisions align standard with IOC data feed, global tournament structure

The SportsML-G2 Working Group was very busy this year. The aim of the [SportsML-G2](#) standard is to provide an open and universal format for sports data and news. Most news organizations handle some kind of sports content, and SportsML-G2 eases the management of sports information because it is:

- 1) ready-made, reflecting the efforts of other experts in the news industry
- 2) non-proprietary and therefore not subject to vendor whim or happenstance
- 3) open and comes with a suite of sharable and reusable tools such as the SportsDB relational database schema.

Organisations that adopt the SportsML-G2 standard save development costs they would incur if they chose to develop their own formats. They also future-proof their investment by storing their data in a non-proprietary, open format.

In the year between the last two IPTC Annual General Meetings, the Working Group furthered two major, intertwined goals: releasing

SportsML-G2 2.1 and working to expand adoption of SportsML-G2 outside North America.

Requirements for SportsML-G2 2.1 were gathered over a one-year period and previewed at the IPTC Autumn 2008 meeting and IPTC Spring 2009 meeting. Significant features were added to SportsML-G2, and they were approved in Seoul at AGM 2009. These included:

- 1) a generic scoring structure to mimic the IOC's Olympic Data Feed (ODF) XML format for Olympic events
- 2) improved tournament structure that is more suited to competitions outside of North America
- 3) expanded ice hockey plug-in to accommodate the new and detailed National Hockey League (NHL) XML format.

The IOC released ODF in November, 2008. The WG's aim was to make convertibility to SportsML-G2 as easy and transparent as possible.

The tournament improvements arose from a meeting held at the offices of IPTC member Deutsche

Presse-Agentur (DPA). The theme of the meeting was the suitability of SportsML-G2 for representing European competitions such as Champions League. XML Team's Paul Kelly attended the meeting and heard many suggestions for the improvement of the specification. The ODF-inspired scoring features in SportsML-G2 2.1 also address some of the concerns expressed at that meeting.

The NHL's XML format is a highly detailed, ice hockey-only format that was introduced in 2008. It tracks all possible, recordable, on-ice events. SportsML's ice hockey plugin was enhanced to reflect this. How SportsML-G2 represents on-field actions in all other sports also was streamlined, inspired by the plugin enhancements.

The working group is in the process of gathering requirements for SportsML 2.2. These will be previewed and discussed at the Autumn 2009 meeting in Washington D.C. and the Spring 2010 meeting in Paris. The requirements will be presented and, if members approve, ratified at AGM 2010 in San Francisco next June.

— Alan Karben, Chair



IPTC AT KPF NEWSML FORUM

Following IPTC's 44th AGM in Seoul in June, the Korea Press Foundation held a NewsML-G2 Symposium for newspapers and agencies in Korea. Dave Compton of Reuters, UK, right, gave an hour-long presentation on Reuters' implementation approach and challenges, which was followed by a question-and-answer panel session featuring representatives of several Korea media organisations. A number of IPTC officers and member representatives were in attendance.



Continued from *EventsML*, page 7

handle well known stories in advance, and gathering a huge amount of metadata without additional work, convinced our customer [to use our product]". The same firm added that demonstrating the capabilities this



single G2-Standard offers to customers also became a way to introduce NewsML-G2 and SportsML-G2. Since its initial release in 2008 a few

maintenance versions were created. The most recent version is EventsML-G2 1.3, which was approved at AGM 2009 and will be rolled out with full documentation this autumn. Version 1.3 can be considered stable; no major changes are planned.

From now until AGM 2010, the EventsML-G2 Working Group has two objectives. One is to improve the benefits of the interactions between all components of the G2 framework. To do that, we will synchronize the controlled vocabularies between standards and all providers.

The second objective is to stay in close contact with all EventsML-G2 providers to ensure that everyone uses the same semantic interpretation of the standard. Since 2009 was the first year that EventsML-G2 entered the market, we need to have all providers process the standard in the same way, so that customers benefit from it consistently across providers.

— Robert Schmidt-Nia, Chair



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Let's examine ways to keep IPTC vital amid challenges

With the G2-Standards launched in 2008 and deemed stable by AGM 2009, the Standards Committee began examining ways to improve IPTC's ability to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing business landscape. Steps already have been taken to address some of the most pressing needs and approaches to resolving other issues are being studied.

One need, now resolved, was to take up member change requests quickly, without impacting the consensus-driven standards development process. Raised in the context of Subject NewsCodes change requests, IPTC member representatives agreed there is a need to streamline the process for considering proposed additions to Media Topics NewsCodes.

The impact of this year's global economic crisis on members, coupled with the competitive pressures that news organisations are experiencing, set the stage for discussions of the conditions under which non-members could be allowed or invited to participate

in IPTC's work programmes. The discussion is continuing and may have an impact on internal processes. This may require rethinking the way a standards body should work, given today's business environment.

Also, as convergence continues between once-separate areas of the news industry, we need to recognize that there are a lot of stakeholders outside of IPTC's traditional member base who are able and willing to provide knowledge and effort towards supporting and developing IPTC standards. Pressure from the rapidly expanding Semantic Web may drive this effort.



Evaluating our industry's changed conditions and looking for approaches for resolving these issues, and others that arise, is the challenge for this year and next.

— Helge Viehof, Chair

IPTC discussion forums

- G2-Standards
 - [NewsML-G2](#)
 - [SportsML-G2](#)
 - [EventsML-G2](#)
- [IPTC Core \(metadata for XMP\)](#)
- [NewsCodes](#)
- [News Industry Text Format \(NITF\)](#)
- [NewsML 1](#)
- [Photo Metadata](#)

These discussions groups are hosted and moderated by IPTC. Interested parties may apply to participate.

New Media Topic NewsCodes: hierarchy expanded, taxonomy updated

Over the past three years, the NewsCodes Working Party has laboured to finalize a new set of subject-based NewsCodes — codes that constitute descriptive metadata for videos, pictures, text and graphics — all of which are linked to machine-readable numeric values.

The new codes, now called Media Topic NewsCodes, evolved from the IPTC Subject NewsCodes. The NewsCodes revision was necessary because they were sadly out of date and no longer served the industry. The byte size of the code, which created the three-level restriction that dictated the original structure, no longer applies.

The hierarchy restriction to only three term levels of the Subject NewsCodes, had lead to terms living at the same level as their parents. Allowing more levels will allow Media Topic NewsCodes to follow a true hierarchical path, as shown below (numbering refers to topic levels).

- 1. lifestyle and leisure
- 2. leisure
- 3. recreational activities
- 4. fishing

In the Subject NewsCodes, *recreational activities* and *fishing* appear at the same level, but that doesn't make it clear that fishing is a recreational activity, or that there might be other activities, such as *hunting*, which also have *recreational activities* as their parent.

The Media Topic NewsCodes retain the same 17 first-level, hierarchical subject areas as the Subject NewsCodes, but are updated and streamlined at the second, third, fourth and, now, fifth levels. New definitions for each subject-area term were written, where needed.

Revising the Subject NewsCodes was a long and complicated process.



Every term was evaluated to make sure it is inclusive enough, that the term and the idea it references are universal, and that the description —

written in British English — is not ambiguous and will not create irresolvable translation issues. All languages are complex and specific to the culture they rise from; therefore, no one set of codes is perfect. The Media Topic NewsCodes, however, match the taxonomy needs of today's news organisations more carefully. Over time, they will be improved as well.

At AGM 2009 in Seoul, the Media Topic NewsCodes hierarchy and terms were approved. There was disagreement over the proposed machine readable numerical values for each term, however, so that portion of the Media Topic NewsCodes was set aside for additional work.

The Media Topic numerical values will occupy a parallel field and reflect the heirarchy, but will be hierarchy-agnostic themselves. Unlike the current Subject NewsCodes, if a Media Topic term is promoted up a level in the hierarchy, it retains its unique code; it does not acquire a new numeric value. A proposal for the Media Topic NewsCodes' numerical codes is on the agenda for the Autumn 2009 meeting in Washington, DC. If approved, the numerical codes will be released on the IPTC website.

In a separate action at AGM 2009, a decision was made to define world regions for the World Region NewsCodes. These codes allow users to describe where in the world a picture of the snake was taken or where disaster occurred in the article about floods. The world-region definitions that were agreed to are based on the United Nations' designations. These are broad-brush areas and are not IPTC mandated codes. The high-level definitions are designed as *default* NewsCodes, and may represent different regional boundaries than some organisations use. Organisations that do not have company-defined world regions may use the IPTC definitions instead. The designated world regions are: Africa, the Americas—North and South, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

The next stage of work is to map the Subject NewsCodes to the Media Topic NewsCodes.

— Honor Craig-Bennett, Chair



How culture affects language and what that means for NewsCodes was discussed in Seoul.



Member delegates concentrated on NewsCodes hierarchy changes for three years

Work begins on 'Image Controlled Vocabulary' for photos and video

The goal of IPTC's [Photo Metadata Working Group](#) is to deal with metadata issues from a photo business-specific perspective. Members of the WG are representatives of IPTC members from the professional photo business — BAPLA, BVPA, CEPIC, Keystone, PLUS — and also representatives from the photo departments of more generic news providers. The basic goals of this WG are to create and maintain IPTC's photo metadata specifications, resolve very practical "open issues" which were identified by an IPTC White Paper in 2007, develop photo workflow guidelines, and collaborate with other parties, including camera makers.

A highlight for the Working Group occurred at the AGM 2008 when the IPTC Extension metadata schema was approved. The schema provides about two dozen properties requested by the professional photo industry. This includes a refined description of what is shown in an image: persons, places, artwork and other intellectually protected objects, featured organisations, or events. Further, it provides a rich set of rights-related properties which were adopted from the PLUS standard: model and property release information, image creator, copyright owner image supplier, licensor and,

finally, some administrative helpers like a Digital Image ID, or IDs issued by registrars.

The big challenge for the Working Group was to bring this completely new standard to life, which means encouraging software makers to implement it. For this purpose, translations were created in the major international languages — French, Spanish and German — for all texts appearing on user interfaces of software for implementing the standard. In the spring of 2009, work started on forms to manage the metadata values by software.

Since the summer of 2008, the new focus of the working group has been to go beyond the traditional limits of photography and extend photo metadata to video content. This came about through direct requests to the group. As a first step, the Working Group reviewed a couple of existing standards, including SMTPE's MXF, the EBU-Core, the PBCore and BMF of the IRT. The first conclusion was that some have a clear focus on technical metadata — like Exif for photos — while others have a more extended use and also cover descriptions of the content. The latter is the focus of IPTC standards. Many of these

descriptions are very much like metadata fields from IPTC Photo Metadata standards. This encouraged the group to think about mappings between photo and video metadata and to talk to the major parties within the video metadata business.

Making this issue the focal point of the 3rd International Photo Metadata Conference programme was a first step in opening discussions. The Conference was held in June 2009 in Dresden, and about half of the programme was dedicated to presentations on metadata for video. The IPTC was happy to have top speakers from content providers and software developers for managing video content with metadata.

In the past year the Working Group not only dealt with the containers for metadata — the fields or properties — but also with the growing challenge of managing the values properly. Work on an controlled vocabulary for images was begun; the goal is to provide a comprehensive, top level-only taxonomy for photos, and beyond. The latest discussions have opened it up to use with video as well.

For that reason, the summer of 2009 is only a short break in the work on photo and visual content metadata. Between now and next summer, the Working Group expects to have results in the area of video metadata fields, a "visual content CV", and the release of panels to manage all the old and new IPTC photo metadata properly and with ease.

— Michael Steidl, Vice Chair

The day-long , 3rd Annual Photo Metadata Conference, held this year in Dresden, Germany, was sponsored by the IPTC, WAN-Ifra and CEPIC. The conference theme was "Metadata in a Multimedia World", and the focus was on the metadata requirements of video, along with the need for a controlled vocabulary for this segment of the industry.



NITF: IPTC's most widely used XML standard

NITF is the "News Industry Text Format". It defines the content and structure of text articles, with related media, and is IPTC's most widely-used XML standard. NITF is a mature and capable format that is comprised of almost 150 elements aligned with the needs of sophisticated, business-to-business exchange of news text. As such, much of the work of the NITF Maintenance group revolves around questions of how best to use the XML format to meet particular goals and scenarios.

This year, questions addressed included article redlining (indicating inline what parts of an article have changed) and the markup to indicate potentially offensive language. We have also looked at the wider world of news markup — including the IPTC's G2 family of standards, where

we looked at how to integrate the use of QCodes within NITF — and the growing numbers of alternatives for semantically marking up news.



A continuation of these activities, now and in 2010 is likely. We will explain how to use existing NITF capabilities to satisfy specific publishing scenarios, tweak those capabilities to support the evolving needs of publishers, and look for ways to ensure that NITF is compatible with other standards that publishers want to use.

— Stuart Myles, Chair

IPTC Objectives

"To establish and maintain an open, apolitical international forum to promote and enable the exchange of news information in an efficient manner, while maintaining the highest technical quality and, at the same time, taking advantage of the advances in telecommunication and computing technology."

News is digital and since the early 1980s, IPTC has led the way in developing standards for the high speed transfer of digital news information and for creating subject classification systems that make it possible to consistently identify news content, regardless of the originating language of the news source. Most recently, IPTC widened its charter to include standards development for multiple media, photographs and videos. The resulting family of G2-Standards and IPTC's Photo Metadata Standard give the world's news agencies and organizations an array of standards to utilise, from early standards — IPTC7901 and IIM — to NewsML 1, NITF, NewsCodes and the multimedia-capable G2-Standards family: NewsML-G2, EventsML-G2 and SportsML-G2.

Updated: NewsML 1 adapted to new needs

As the name of our Working Party implies, maintenance of the NewsML 1 standard is on-going, although the standard's development phase is complete. Between AGM 2008 and AGM 2009, new versions of the NewsML 1.2 DTD, Specification and Guidelines were released. The work corrected technical and grammatical issues reported by IPTC members and included updates mandated by the deprecation of an RFC (3066) referenced by the standard for representing the language of a content item in XML.

In addition to the standard maintenance of NewsML 1.2, the NewsML 1 Maintenance Working Party assisted



in updating the URN Namespace for NewsML to enable it also to be used by G2-Standards. The work involved modifying technical details of the supporting

documentation, RFC3085, to enable use of the URN Namespace for IPTC news standards other than NewsML 1 and formatting for re-submission to the IETF.

During the update of this document, a number of technical and grammatical issues with the initial text, identified by IPTC members, were also corrected. Michael Steidl joined in the update efforts and handled the final formatting of the documents and all communications with IETF.

— Jayson Lorenzen, Chair

Industry's economic challenges make creative PR essential to a strong IPTC

Any review of the past year's Public Relations Committee activities shows mixed success. While a number of changes freshened the image IPTC presents to the world and made it more appealing, other circumstances have forced us to rethink our assumptions about how we communicate with non-members.

Sue Fine joined us as Editor of the annual *IPTC Spectrum* and IPTC's periodical, the *IPTC Mirror*, which completed a change in editorial direction that began a few years ago. Through Michael Steidl's work with a commercial artist, we were able to redesign both periodicals. The editorial focus changed as well, with more articles about how our standards are used and speculation about future development.

Our website also changed. Steidl completed our migration to a new web server that is hosted by APA, the Austrian news agency. Using modern content management tools, the new website presents more timely information in a more structured environment than our old system. A redesign of the site's look and feel, which also made it easier to use, was carried out in conjunction with the migration to the new web server. By basing the server in Vienna, Austria,

where Steidl lives, he can work more closely with APA developers.

Our new IPTC logo mandated new buttons and publicity handouts for trade shows. In addition, Steidl led the production of a brochure that outlines IPTC's activities and solicits new members. The basic brochure design should serve us well for several years.

Competitive pressure from the Web and the worldwide economic crisis led to reduced attendance at newspaper trade shows, which in turn led to a greatly reduced turnout at our presentation at IFRA Expo 2008. We had previously decided that we would not return to NEXPO in the United States; in fact, the Newspaper Association of America no longer will produce that show. The frequency of live IPTC informational sessions at trade shows may be reduced even further as newspaper travel budgets are slashed, further



reducing our potential audience.

Members continue to distribute our press releases without charge, for which we are grateful. The association saves many thousands of dollars per press release because of the *pro bono* efforts of its members. Although we lost one key media outlet in 2008, we were still able to disseminate our press releases worldwide in 2009. Generally, we send press releases after annual general meetings and shortly before major standards are published.

Finding suitable live forums to spread the IPTC message in 2010 will require considerable creative thinking. IPTC's two major focuses — XML data structure and news-related metadata — increasingly attract vastly different audiences. Finding new platforms from which to speak to such niche audiences will be an important task.

I want to thank Michael Steidl, Sue Fine and my IPTC colleagues for their wonderful support during my tenure as Public Relations Committee chair, which now is ending. I wish IPTC well as I move on to other challenges within The New York Times.

— Walter Baranger, Chair

IPTC praises 'G2 power' at Ifra Expo '08

We know: IPTC standards involve paperwork. Before adopting a standard, people have to read the introductions, guidelines and specifications, and review examples. This is time consuming. Software

vendors also want an overview of a given standard's features, before they begin considering the details of how to implement it. To give these decision makers sufficient insight into IPTC's standards, IPTC regularly offers presentations at industry trade fairs, including Ifra Expo in Europe or, in past years, at NEXPO in the US.

In October 2008, IPTC invited software makers that might want to incorporate IPTC standards into their products

to attend a four-hour presentation at Ifra Expo in Amsterdam. The main message of this information session was that standards improve interoperability in the exchange of news, and this increases revenues.

The speakers at this event were top developers of the standards that were presented. Each speaker represented an IPTC member organization. Each had volunteered to work on an IPTC

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IPTC members reap rewards and re-shape the industry

Developing standards involves making rules — rules to govern an industry (interoperable formats to exchange news), an activity (JDF workflow for a pressroom), or an object (specifications for an ink train).

The more an industry's members participate in rule-making efforts, the better are the rules that they devise to guide that industry. At IPTC, the rule-makers are its members. There are a number of benefits to being a member, and IPTC outlines some of them.

What is IPTC?

The International Press Telecommunications Council is a consortium of news agencies, newspapers and news system vendors that develops and publishes technical specifications to promote the easy, accurate and inexpensive sharing of news.

Who runs IPTC?

The members are represented by a board of directors, which hires a managing director and a publications editor. Development work is handled by committees and smaller working groups. Some focus on general issues, such as the exchange of general news, while others address specific areas such as photography or sports results. Members vote to approve standards before they are published, though exact voting rights vary by type of membership.

Who pays for IPTC's activities?

IPTC standards for news exchange are available for downloading at no cost and no royalties or fees are paid. This means the only source of income is the dues members pay, which is why "made by the news industry, for the news industry" is not just a motto,

but a reality. For individual members, dues pay for early and direct access to the development of standards, and for networking with peers in the news industry.

Can small companies and sole practitioners join IPTC?

Yes! Even if your company cannot send delegates to IPTC meetings, several affordable membership plans are available to encourage participation by any interested firm. Some of IPTC's biggest contributors to standards work are from some of the smallest member organizations.

If the standards are free, why join IPTC?

Members receive many benefits that put them well ahead of the public, which has access to a standard only after it's endorsed by IPTC members. Members can make contributions to the development of standards and request changes to them. Members also have access to the IPTC's exclusive members-only web site area, which contains development documents and access to members-only discussion groups. Members also have voting privileges. Finally, an IPTC membership makes a statement that a business is a news industry leader, committed to the overall well-being of worldwide journalism.

How do I follow the activities of IPTC?

We maintain a [Web site](#) that is updated frequently. In addition, the electronic periodicals, *IPTC Mirror* and *IPTC Spectrum* can be downloaded from the web site. The IPTC also makes presentations at major news technology events such as IFRA Expo and CEPIC Congress. Participating in committee discussion groups via email are a good way to keep up; some of the groups are open to non-members.

How do I join IPTC?

Visit the [IPTC Web site](#) for more membership information or contact Managing Director [Michael Steidl](#). Prospective members can attend a regular IPTC meeting as an invited guest.

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Working Party to develop an industry standard. Each contributed their own talents and shared experiences managing the exchange of news.

The opening presentation was an overview about the value of standards in a technical world that requires flexibility in almost everything. The presentations that followed focused, first, on the new family of G2-Standards and, second, on IPTC work with extending IPTC's photo metadata fields.

Even though the G2-Standards were only published six months earlier, speakers shared their first-hand experiences with NewsML-G2 and EventsML-G2 implementations that already were underway. Their presentations showed how news providers can reduce the costs of managing and sharing news using G2-Standards, and outlined the market advantages and money

savings that system vendors could expect from implementing the G2-Standards as a family with a common design and framework.

Photo metadata is a key industry issue, and the vast majority of professional photographers and photo suppliers use the "IPTC fields" for describing the visual and digital content of images. At Ifra Expo 2008, IPTC unveiled its new IPTC Extension set of metadata fields. Another presentation proved the importance of photo metadata by confirming the role technical metadata of photos plays in reproducing photographs clearly and accurately. To cap the day's programme, a demonstration bridged the photo metadata and G2-Standards presentations by showing how easily metadata embedded into image files can be transformed into metadata held by items from the new G2-Standards.

— Michael Steidl