

Introduction

by Mark H. Needleman, Special Section Guest Editor

Information Standards

This special section of the *Bulletin* is a product of the ASIS&T Standards Committee. As stated in the Committee's charter:

The Standards Committee shall advise the Board of Directors and shall represent the Society's interest in matters pertaining to standards. It shall actively identify potential new standards needed by the information community and shall take the necessary steps to initiate development of such needed standards with the appropriate organizations. The Chair, after consultation with the full committee, may vote or comment in accordance with the majority opinion of the committee in the name of the Society on all proposed standards submitted by organizations with which the Society affiliates. All such action and comment must be promptly reported to the Board of Directors; actions and comments proposed should be reported to the board in advance whenever possible.

Another duty of the Standards Committee is to keep the ASIS&T membership informed about standards issues that are of concern to our members and have, or potentially have, an impact on them. I hope that this special section will help to advance that goal.

Because there are so many standards, covering the subject in five articles is akin to trying to write an encyclopedia on a single sheet of paper. There are existing standards, standards under development and emerging ideas for new standards. There are standards that come from official standards organizations like NISO (National Information Standards Organization) and ISO (International Standards Organization), from industry consortia like the Unicode Consortium and to some extent W3C (Worldwide Web

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Consortium), from cooperative consortia of universities and other research organizations or from major industrial organizations such as Microsoft and Adobe. And they cover a wide range of topics. No special section could, therefore, cover all of the ones that affect (or are going to affect in the future) the work of the information professionals and researchers that make up the membership of ASIS&T, but we have an interesting selection for you.

In the first of our efforts Rafal Kasprowski surveys the landscape of standards initiatives addressing ERM (Electronic Resource Management) issues and discusses some best practices for those systems. Two articles cover metadata registries. One by Nagamori and Sugimoto covers the DCMI (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative) registry and related developments, while Gail Hodge reports on the 11th Open Forum on Metadata registries that was held in Sydney, Australia, in May of this year. Next, Stella Dextre Clarke reviews the ongoing effort to produce ISI 25694, the new international standard on thesauri. Finally, we step back from reports on specific standards to take a broader view as Caryn Anderson examines the possible roles of standards in complex, problem-based research that seeks to integrate knowledge across disciplines and stakeholders.

If you have suggestions for articles on other standards issues you would like to see in the *Bulletin*, please send them to me (or if you are involved in some standards area or are knowledgeable about one that you feel is important for ASIS&T members to be aware of – it would be great if you would consider writing an article about it and submitting it to the *Bulletin* for publication).

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not sincerely thank the authors of the articles in this section, not only for agreeing to write them, but more importantly for all the hard work and effort they put in to complete and deliver them in a timely manner. I would also like to thank Marcia Zeng, chairperson of the ASIS&T Standards Committee, for her assistance in putting this section together. ■