

Project Newsletter 3

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It's been a while since our previous Newsletter, and quite a bit has happened since then. Let's first go through the past events chronologically, and then have a look at the project's current achievements.

Project Workshop 'Towards an Impact Assessment of Standards'

This workshop took place on November 25, 2004 at the CEN Management Centre, in Brussels. It was well attended, with 25 experts from 7 European countries participating. Judging by the discussions and the comments the presentations were also well received. See the [slides of all presentations](#).

Annual Project Review

The annual review of the NO-REST project took place on February 21, 2005 in Geneva (in conjunction with the Interop-ESA conference; see below).

The review was conducted in a very friendly atmosphere. Overall, the evaluators seemed to be quite content with the project work - "*Overall conclusion: the project has a good probability of success and achieving the agreed goals. Due to its pioneer character and the very specific area with little material available progress is slower than expected*". The latter comment is certainly valid, and the project is adopting appropriate counter-measures. The same holds for other sound and helpful comments made by the evaluators; they will also be addressed appropriately.

Workshop: 'Interoperability Standards - Implementation, Dynamics, and Impact'

This workshop (organised by NO-REST) was held in conjunction with the Interop-ESA conference on February 22, 2005 in Geneva. It aimed at getting a better understanding of the impact ICT standards have on networked organisations, striking a balance between academic rigor and practical relevance. Researchers and practitioners (from both industry and standards setting bodies) attended and presented their ideas and views.

To this end, the presentations first discussed interoperability issues and their relation to standardisation.

A general overview was followed by papers discussing the different dimensions of software interoperability, from an economic perspective. Subsequently, issues in RFID standardisation were discussed. With RFID being an extremely hot topic, such standards issues are rather high on the agenda of everyone wishing to promote this technology.

Other papers discussing specific cases followed. These included B2B standardisation, both sectoral and general, and IPv6 addressing issues. Although these topics are rather dissimilar, all studies highlighted the importance of standards in the quest for interoperability.

The approach to achieve interoperability through standards is further complicated by the fact that standards, once passed, are not set in stone. Rather, they can develop over time, either by means of e.g., new versions or addenda, or through implementation and use. The sources of such standards dynamics were thoroughly discussed. An analysis of the effects of the dynamics of JTC1's standards maintenance process highlighted the former, and different cases on mobile communication standards analysed the changing dynamics associated with standards in the larger context of the evolution of mobile communications. This was complemented by an analysis of the 'standards skirmish' (not really a battle) about DVD formats.

Many (most?) hard *technical* interoperability problems have been solved already. Now we are moving up to interoperability at the semantic level. This problem was discussed from the point of view of a European standards body. Subsequently, the relation between standards and the open source movement was addressed. After all, Open Source Software (OSS) is considered by many as a complement, or even an alternative, to standardisation. Differences and similarities between standards and OSS were identified and discussed, and an example of how to introduce OSS and standards into the government sector was given.

The workshop participants engaged in lengthy and interesting discussions during and after the individual presentations. It seems to be safe to say that everyone learned quite a bit, got new insights, and maybe even new ideas for future research.

See the [slides of the presentations and the draft papers / extended abstracts](#).



Next Project Workshop: 'Impacts of Standards?! - New Insights'

This workshop will be held on May 27, 2005 at ETSI's premises in Sophia Antipolis.

The overall goal of the workshop is to develop a better understanding of the impact standards may have in the e-business and ICT sectors, and to validate different approaches to assess the impacts of standards. To this end, the focus will be on

- presentations of the main results of the NO-REST project,
- presentations of relevant insights of external experts,
- discussions.

Note that [registration](#) is free of charge.

Time	Topic	Speaker
09:30	Welcome	ETSI
09:40	Introductory Remarks	EC Representative, DG INFO
10.00	From research to the user via standardisation	Jørgen Friis, ETSI
10.30	Trends and Challenges in Impact Assessment	Jordi Molas-Gallart, SPRU
11.00	The NO-REST project - a brief introduction	Knut Blind, FhG ISI
11:15	Standards' Markets	Kai Jakobs, RWTH Aachen
11:30	Standards Dynamics	Tineke Egyedi, TU Delft
11:45	General discussion	
12:30	Lunch and opportunity to fill out the online survey	
13:30	Better technological and institutional "gateways" for better standards	Zygmunt A. Lozinski, IBM
14:00	A general framework of standards impact assessment	Richard Hawkins, TNO-STB
14:30	Results of the empirical implementation of standards impact assessment	Knut Blind, FhG ISI
15:00	Coffee Break	
15:15	Round Table and Final Discussion	All presenters
15:50	Summary of Workshop	
16.:00	Close of Workshop	

For further information please visit the [Workshop's home page](#).

Work Finished

This first deliverables of the NO-REST project on standards impact assessment include D 01: '*Draft version of guidelines for tools for an a posteriori performance evaluation of standards for networked organisations*' and D 02: '*Draft version of guidelines for tools for an a priori impact assessment of standards for networked organisations*'.

The deliverable first develops a general standard impact assessment framework developed. To this end, the problems of impact assessment in the dynamic standardisation environment are identified first. Subsequently, the different impact dimensions and the relevant scientific disciplinary approaches are identified. Based on the understanding that technology foresight can be interpreted as a mode of an overall impact assessment, a standardisation foresight framework for a comprehensive impact assessment is developed.

The document then presents an overview and an assessment of existing impact assessment methodologies, illustrated by a selection of relevant examples. These methodologies are relevant for the stage of empirical analyses within the standard impact assessment framework. The deliverable then compare the different methodologies according to a set of criteria in order to illustrate that specific methodologies should only be applied in specific contexts and for specific impact dimensions, which cover primarily the 'economics' domain. An analysis of the applicability of the different methods for ex-post and ex-ante impact assessments, respectively, also demonstrates that the two should be integrated.

Finally, the deliverable outlines both the plans and an application of the different methodologies already realized, as well as the implementation plan for the standard impact assessment framework. Based on the experiences gathered during the implementation of the different approaches and methodologies we will produce guidelines both for ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments for standards.

Similarly, the Deliverables D 05: '*Report on demand factors for standards for networked organisations*' and D 06: '*Report on the supply side of standards*' were integrated and delivered. We are currently waiting for comments and/or approval.

The deliverable puts the interrelationship between standards and the environments of their elaboration and use into perspective: an introductory section integrates the supply and demand sides into an overarching perspective. Here it became obvious that the separation between these two sides is artificial.

This is not least due to the fact that in many cases those stakeholders which create the demand for standards are also actively involved in their supply.

Against this backdrop, the deliverable goes on to consider defining aspects of standards in the dynamic e-business environment. It starts from basic features and functions of standards and links them to the user environment. Here the demand for standards is understood to emerge from a dynamic interaction between three basic stakeholder constituencies: producers, intermediaries, and users. The section takes account of relational, contextual, and motivational variables of these stakeholder groups to generate a set of hypotheses on the interrelationship between these dimensions of e-business organisations and the use of standards.

This lays the groundwork to consider relevant dimensions of the universe of Standards Setting Bodies (SSBs) which is changing. This standardisation landscape is discussed in terms of a market for standards, where market dynamics are evolving. General organisational traits of different types of bodies as well as a breakdown of functions in the standardisation process are elaborated. This section then considers the way a set of Standards Setting Bodies are organised and function. The question of credibility is especially raised as a factor that might influence the success in this market, as conceived in this way. Finally, implications for the other deliverables are drawn and conclusions made.

Once approved, the deliverables will be made publicly available through the project web site.

Publications

Blind, K.: Interoperability of Software - Demand and Solutions. To be published in: Proc. WS Interoperability Standards - Implementation, Dynamics, and Impact. HERMES Science Publishing Ltd.

Blind, K.; Jakobs, K.: Networked Organisations - Research into Standards and Standardisation. NO-REST: An FP6 IST Project. Proc. Interop-ESA, Geneva, 2005.

Egyedi, T. M.: Standards Dynamics. To be published in: Proc. WS Interoperability Standards - Implementation, Dynamics, and Impact. HERMES Science Publishing Ltd.

Gauch, S.: + vs. - : Impacts and Dynamics of competing standards of recordable DVD-media. To be published in: Proc. WS Interoperability Standards - Implementation, Dynamics, and Impact. HERMES Science Publishing Ltd.

Gerst, M.; Bunduchi, R.: Current issues in RFID standardisation. To be published in: Proc. WS Interoperability Standards - Implementation, Dynamics, and Impact. HERMES Science Publishing Ltd.

Iversen, E. J.; Tee, R.: Standards dynamics and industrial organization in the mobile communication area: three cases. To be published in: Proc. WS Interoperability Standards - Implementation, Dynamics, and Impact. HERMES Science Publishing Ltd.

Jakobs, K.; Wallbaum, M.: Selecting the best Platform for ICT Standards Development. Proc. UKAIS 2005, Northumbria University Press..

Jakobs, K.; Wallbaum, M.: Scores of Rule-Setters - Cooperation and Competition in ICT Standards Setting. To be published in: Proc. SCORE Conference, 2005.

Jakobs, K.: Does an ICT Standards' Success Depend on Its Origin? (invited paper). To be published in: Standards Engineering, vol. 57, no 3, 2005.