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ISO/TC 46/SC 9 N 277
2000-02-20

To: Members of ISO/TC 46/SC 9
        Organizations in liaison

From: ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretariat

Subject: **Secretariat's proposal to change the scope and title of ISO/TC 46/SC 9
to "Identifiers for information and documentation"**

At our meeting last year ISO/TC 46/SC 9 agreed to conduct a review of the Subcommittee's work in the following three subject areas: 1) standards for bibliographic description and data; 2) standards for subject description and data; and 3) standards for the presentation of documents. The review would determine the ongoing viability of these areas of work. SC 9's work on standards for information item identifiers was excluded from the review because there is no question as to the application and viability of those standards (e.g. ISBN, ISSN, etc.).

In Circular Letter 38 the SC 9 Secretariat requested volunteers to act as project leaders for each of the three subject areas under review. Only one member body (AFNOR) responded to that request, with an offer of assistance for two of the subject areas. No members expressed an interest in leading the review of SC 9's work on document presentation.

Rather than proceed with only a partial review of SC 9's work, I have decided to issue the Secretariat's own proposal for the future of SC 9. Essentially, I am proposing that the Subcommittee should reposition itself as an ISO committee for standards on identifiers for information resources. The reasons for this proposal are as follows:

- In the past two years there has been a significant increase of interest in and demand for standard information identifiers. Although identifiers have always been key components of the traditional booktrade and of library systems, the Internet and e-commerce applications have created new areas of application in terms of networked resource discovery and rights administration. In February 2000 a meeting of representatives from various information identifier systems was convened in Paris to discuss the possibility of coordinating work in this area. It was evident from those discussions that work in this subject area will require more intensive attention by both the membership and Secretariat of SC 9. (A report of that meeting on identifiers will be issued in the near future.)

ISO   International Organization for Standardization
TC 46 Information and Documentation
SC 9 Presentation, Identification and Description of Documents

ISO   Organisation internationale de normalisation
TC 46 Information et documentation
SC 9 Présentation, identification et description des documents

- With one exception (CD 5966, see below) there has been no real activity since 1997 on standards for document description and presentation within SC 9, nor is there any clear evidence of a market or demand for further work in those areas. In the near future, the ISO Technical Management Board will be requiring business plans for SC as well as TC. It will be easier to justify the ongoing existence of SC 9, in terms of that business plan, if the scope of the Subcommittee is re-oriented to focus on a subject area that clearly demonstrates evidence of current market relevance. That should also make it easier in the future to attract experts for SC 9's work at the national committee level.

- The one area of document description in which there is a current demand for international standardization, i.e. metadata, is already being addressed within SC 4 (Computer applications in information and documentation). For example, metadata is included in its ISO 8459 data element directory. The potential overlap between SC 4 and SC 9 in the area of metadata standards is confusing to external parties and should be eliminated by clearly assigning responsibility for metadata standards to one committee, i.e. to SC 4 which is already working in this area.

- Finally, the Secretariat is no longer in a position to support the diverse programme of work that it took on in 1987 when SC 9 was created. The Secretariat would like to ensure that there is adequate support for current and future projects on information item identifiers. To do this, difficult choices must be made about where to deploy the resources available to SC 9. The Secretariat's opinion is that standardization of information identifiers is the area in which SC 9's work can make the most significant contribution to the information and documentation community over the next several years.

For these reasons, I am proposing that SC 9 change its scope to the development of standards for information item identifiers. Specifically the Secretariat proposes the following changes for approval by the P-members of ISO/TC 46/SC 9:

1. That the title and scope of ISO/TC 46/SC 9 be changed to:

   Title: "Identifiers for information and documentation"

   Scope: "Standard code and numbering systems for the identification of documents and other information items in physical and/or digital formats"

   Target audience: Publishers and other producers of information resources; rights administration organizations; libraries, database providers and other information organizations.

2. That the proposed survey on the use and viability of SC 9's standards for bibliographic description, subject description, and presentation of documents proceed as planned. The results of the survey would be used to determine whether any of the standards in these areas should be withdrawn for lack of use. If any of those

standards show only marginal evidence of application and use, a formal vote on their withdrawal should be conducted in accordance with ISO procedures.

3. That after the survey and the resulting withdrawal of unused standards is concluded, the remaining standards for description and presentation of documents be placed under the direct responsibility of the Technical Committee as completed areas of work. If in the future there is renewed interest and a market for updated versions of those standards, that work should be done by finite TC 46 working groups established for that specific task (as described in the ISO Directives). If there is no ongoing evidence of interest in these standards, they would be withdrawn over the next five years as a result of the new criteria for the systematic review of ISO standards.

4. That the current SC 9 project on revising ISO 5966 be cancelled in response to the voting results on CD 5966 (Guidelines for the presentation of technical reports). Over 60% of SC 9's member bodies did not submit votes on this Committee Draft. The guidelines in ISO 5966 would probably be more effective and widely implemented if they were published as such by a professional association. If this ISO project is cancelled, the existing guidelines in CD 5966 should be given to a liaison organization (e.g. the European Association of Science Editors) for further development and publication as association guidelines, if so desired.

Annex A of this document shows the proposed disposition of SC 9's existing corpus of work.

This proposal will be discussed at the ISO/TC 46/SC 9 meeting on May 10, 2000 in Berlin. If this proposal is approved at that meeting, it will be circulated with the appropriate resolution to the P-members of TC 46 for a formal vote on the new title and scope of SC 9.

If you will not be sending a delegate to the May 2000 meeting of TC 46/SC9, please submit your comments on this proposal in writing to the ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretariat before May 1, 2000.

Thank you. I look forward to your comments on this proposal.

With regards,

[original signed by]

Jane Thacker
ISO/TC 46/SC 9 Secretariat

List of existing standards to remain under the direct responsibility of ISO/TC 46/SC 9:

- ISO 2108:1992 Information and documentation -- International Standard Book Numbering (ISBN)

- ISO 3297:1998 Information and documentation -- International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)

- ISO/DIS 3901 Information and documentation -- International Standard Recording Code (ISRC)

- ISO 10444:1994 Information and documentation -- International Standard Technical Report Number (ISRN)

- ISO 10957:1993 Information and documentation -- International Standard Music Number (ISMN)

- ISO/DIS 15706 Information and documentation -- International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN)

- ISO/DIS 15707 Information and documentation -- International Standard Musical Work Code (ISWC)

List of standards in the category of "inactive and/or completed areas of work" to be transferred to direct responsibility of ISO/TC 46:

- ISO 4:1997 Information and documentation -- Rules for the abbreviation of title words and titles of publications

- ISO 8:1977 Documentation -- Presentation of periodicals

- ISO 18:1981 Documentation -- Contents list of periodicals

- ISO 214:1976 Documentation -- Abstracts for publications and documentation

- ISO 215:1986 Documentation -- Presentation of contributions to periodicals and other serials

- ISO 690:1987 Documentation -- Bibliographic references -- Content, form and structure

- ISO 690-2:1997 Information and documentation -- Bibliographic references -- Part 2: Electronic documents or parts thereof

- ISO 832:1994 Information and documentation -- Bibliographic description and references -- Rules for the abbreviation of bibliographic terms

- ISO 999:1996 Information and documentation -- Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes

- ISO 1086:1991 Information and documentation -- Title leaves of books

- ISO 2145:1978 Documentation -- Numbering of divisions and subdivisions in written documents

- ISO 2384:1977 Documentation -- Presentation of translations

- ISO 2788:1986 Documentation -- Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri

- ISO 5122:1979 Documentation -- Abstract sheets in serial publications

- ISO 5123:1984 Documentation -- Headers for microfiche of monographs and serials

- ISO 5963:1985 Documentation -- Methods for examining documents, determining their subjects, and selecting indexing terms

- ISO 5964:1985 Documentation -- Guidelines for the establishment and development of multilingual thesauri

- ISO 5966:1982 Documentation -- Presentation of scientific and technical reports

- ISO 6357:1985 Documentation -- Spine titles on books and other publications

- ISO 7144:1986 Documentation -- Presentation of theses and similar documents

- ISO 7154:1983 Documentation -- Bibliographic filing principles

- ISO 7220:1996 Information and documentation -- Presentation of catalogues of standards

- ISO 7275:1985 Documentation -- Presentation of title information of series

- ISO/TR 8393:1985 Documentation -- ISO bibliographic filing rules (International Standard Bibliographic Filing Rules) -- Exemplification of Bibliographic filing principles in a model set of rules

- ISO 10324:1997 Information and documentation -- Holdings statements -- Summary level