

CEN/ISSS

Panel Statement

- eBusiness standardization needs a more mature approach
- Too much vendor hype, too many initiatives competing/overlapping, global consensus lacking
- End-users are confused - buy web services? stick to conventional EDI if you are using it? do nothing? (most, including SMEs)
- at EU level, ongoing fragmentation of approach can damage trade across national frontiers - lack of interoperability caused by isolated initiatives in eGovernment
- Signs of optimism - gradual realisation that potential benefits of eBusiness are not being realised, but a long way to go

Organisation Background

CEN is one of three European Standards Organisations recognised by the European Union (Directive 98/34). CEN Members are national standards bodies in EU and EFTA countries. CEN's global counterpart is the International Organization for Standards (ISO).

The Information Society Standardisation System (CEN/ISSS) is responsible for standards work in ICT applications. We operate through Technical Committees producing formal European Standards, through open Workshops producing CEN Workshop Agreements, and through Focus Groups whose role is to provide information, pre-standards proposals and recommendations.

eBusiness standards issues have become a core CEN/ISSS activity. We have established the eBusiness Interoperability Forum, which seeks to serve as a strategic focal point in Europe, but linking to similar activities in other regions.

CEN/ISSS is a "user" signatory to the ISO/IEC/ITU-T/UN-ECE Memorandum of Understanding on eCommerce standardisation. The CEN/ISSS Workshop eBES is the "European Entry Point" to the UN/CEFACT standards process, which includes both traditional EDI messaging and aspects of the ebXML initiative in collaboration with OASIS. Other relevant current activities include Workshops on eCataloguing and Classification (in association with ISO TC37), eProcurement (in connection with the recent modifications to the EU public procurement Directives, and in liaison with OASIS TC/EPS), eInvoicing (in connection with the implementation of Directive 2001/115), and a Focus Group assessing requirements for interoperability of eHealth standards. We also work on "horizontals" such as security and personal data protection.

Future activities under assessment include eGovernment (a proposal from our current Workshop on meta-data, which acts as a European arm of the Dublin Core) and work in relation to consensus-building for eBusiness in industry sectors.

Our overall philosophy encourages a more inclusive approach, better information on global activities, more collaboration between initiatives, serving as a European channel to such activities, and above all articulating European end-user requirements.

Speaker Information

John Ketchell has been Director of CEN/ISSS since its inception in mid-1997. Prior to this, he acted as European Co-ordination Officer in ETSI, a fellow European Standards Organisation, and was the first Secretary to the ICT Standards Board, which links the European bodies with currently 15 industry consortia. His previous career was in the UK public administration, specialising in European issues.

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