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• PADI dives with ISO
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### Coming Up

The chaos created by this one volcano gave us a glimpse of the important role of travel in today’s lifestyle and its economic impact. Whether for fun, business, health, family or religion, millions of people routinely move about the globe. According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in 2008, international tourist arrivals reached 922 million. This figure is expected to surpass 1.5 billion by 2020. Yet although traveling to unfamiliar places is an enriching experience, it is also one ridden with challenges. International Standards are key for addressing the practical issues of globetrotting, so that the travel experience can be as accessible, safe and smooth as possible.

With ISO standards it is possible to cross language, cultural and knowledge barriers. Standardized graphic symbols, for instance, ensure that people from around the world can understand important information, such as where to find a hotel or a fire exit. And many other ISO standards, whether developed specifically for tourism or not, contribute by ensuring a consistent level of quality and safety everywhere.

This is even more important if you consider that tourism exports represent 30% of the world’s exports of commercial services, and, as an export category, ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and automotive products.

ISO’s value for the travel and tourism sectors is that it provides solutions built on international consensus. Take passports and identity cards. By enabling standardized formats and data, International Standards allow governments and regulatory authorities to establish passenger identity reliably and with ease, no matter what their origin. This increases safety and security of visitors and locals. And all this on a par with state-of-the-art technology, such as biometrics.

But perhaps the greatest advantage of International Standards is that they build confidence. ISO standards are a powerful way of telling clients from all over the world that a company’s products and services are safe and reliable. This is a strong selling point for developing countries, many for whom tourism is their most important industry.

In fact, according to the UNWTO, the share of international tourist arrivals received by developing countries has steadily risen, from 31% in 1990 to 45% in 2008. Ensuring that International Standards are applied reassures visitors and encourages a pleasant and successful experience, which in turn increases the reputation of a destination.

International Standards bring the world together through consensus building and understanding. The ash crisis taught us that today, we can confidently say that no man is an island, and that together we will pay for the failure to act sustainably. Our collective effort is needed to address global challenges, and International Standards are powerful tools for taking action. Soon, ISO 26000 on social responsibility will offer the industry guidance in a globally recognized way.

As we start seeing the ravages of climate change, more and more individuals and companies are increasingly making more environmentally friendly choices. Nowhere is this more evident than in the travel industry, where the carbon footprint and energy consumption of transport, catering and other services can be significant.

Social responsibility is another growing concern for the travel and tourism industry. Visitors are increasingly conscious of their impact on local communities. As they demand more environmental and socially responsible travel, ISO standards will be increasingly relied on as a means of demonstrating commitment to these values. Already, many ISO environmental standards are widely applied by airlines, hotels, restaurants and other service providers.

The future looks promising and the possibilities are endless – all thanks to ISO International Standards.

Dr. Alan Morrison
ISO President
COPANT General Assembly

Representatives of standards communities from North, Central, and South America gathered in Mexico City in April 2010 for the Pan American Standards Commission Assembly (COPANT) 2010.

The event, hosted by the Dirección General de Normas (DGN), ISO member for Mexico, provided valuable opportunities for active engagement and information. ISO President Alan Morrison reported on ISO activities of interest to COPANT. He said, “Out of COPANT’s 26 members, 24 are ISO members and represent 15% of total ISO membership. In addition, three ISO Council members (out of 20), three ISO Technical Management Board members (out of 14) and the Chair of the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO) are also COPANT members. Clearly, the interests of both bodies are closely linked, and continuing our successful cooperation is important.”

The ISO President emphasized the importance of standards for supporting and enhancing business throughout a business value chain. He also provided an overview of ISO initiatives in 2010. The 2011 COPANT General Assembly will be held in Santiago, Chile.

Regional cooperation in the Asia Pacific

ISO Vice-President (policy) Sadao Takeda and ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele attended the 33rd meeting of the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC) meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in May 2010.

The meeting was officially opened by Mongolia’s First Deputy Prime Minister, Norov Altankhuyag, who noted that international standardization was key to the growth of the Mongolian economy and to environmental challenges, such as access to and use of water.

The meeting was hosted by the Mongolian Agency for Standardization and Metrology (MASM), ISO member for Mongolia. The Acting Chairman of MASM, Gurjav Enkhtaivan, chaired the meeting which discussed standardization issues from the Asia Pacific area including the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-15. Another key discussion area was the link between international standardization and regional trade, specifically amongst the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members.

Participants of the 33rd PASC meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

“It was clear from the meeting that ISO members in the PASC region had been consulted widely and actively participated in providing ideas and comments as input to the ISO Strategic Plan and there was strong interest in seeing the Strategic Plan implemented,” said Rob Steele. “International Standards are a key driver of trade in the Asia Pacific as the region has a strong commitment to the use of international, rather than regional standards.”

ISO and CEN cooperation

ISO Vice-President (technical management) Jacob Holmblad spoke about key issues on the future of standardization in Europe at the General Assembly of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), which took place in Malta, in June 2010.

Mr. Holmblad highlighted the long history of cooperation between ISO and CEN. “The Vienna Agreement has been in place for 20 years,” he said, “and this approach has proved to be very successful.” He also talked about the EXPRESS group – the Expert Panel for the Review of the European Standardization System – which was created by the European Commission to provide strategic recommendations on European standardization with a horizon of 2020.

The CEN General Assembly was hosted by the Malta Standards Authority (MSA), ISO member for the country.

ISO/TC 204 Chair receives prestigious award

Michael J. Noblett, Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 204, Intelligent transport systems, is the recipient of the 2009 Delco Electronics Intelligent Transportation Systems Award. The award was presented during the Awards Ceremony at the SAE 2010 World Congress held in April 2010 in Detroit, Michigan, USA.

The award recognizes the profound impact that intelligent transport systems will have on mobility in the 21st century. This award distinguishes an individual or team whose outstanding long-term accomplishments are judged to have significantly advanced the state-of-the-art of ITS through innovative technology achievements and/or significant industry leadership.

ISO 22000 supports agri-food exports

Algeria is implementing a National Support Programme for the development of the agri-food industries (PN-DIAA) which should be operational by the end of 2010. This programme focuses, in particular, on the requirements of ISO 22000 for food safety management systems.

Its key objective is to step up the agri-food industry’s contribution to industrial GDP by 10% in order to reach 60% in 2014 and to conclude a minimum of 5 000 contracts per year between farmers and agro-processing companies.

This programme also has the following objectives:

• To bring some 500 agro-processing companies into conformity with ISO standards
• To achieve ISO 22000 certification for 200 of them to enable them to compete in the export market
• To multiply the volume of agri-food exports by 10 by 2014 and to enhance their export capacity.

Successful implementation of this development strategy requires a joint effort of all stakeholders, the efficient mobilization of national resources, the involvement of private companies and the strong commitment of farmers to the programme.

From left: Jesper Jerlang, Director Standards, DS (Denmark); Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha, Deputy Managing Director, ASI (Austria); Pekka Järvinen, Managing Director, SFS (Finland); ISO Vice-President (technical management) Jacob Holmblad.
Peter-Mario Kubsch is CEO of Studiosus. He obtained a degree in business from Munich University and completed studies in Stanford, California, then joined Studiosus, which was founded by his father, in January 1983. Peter-Mario Kubsch has been Managing Director of Studiosus since 1987. He is a founding member of the Institute for Tourism and Development and has been a member of the Legal Committee of the German Travel Association since 1992. Mr. Kubsch is actively involved in issues relating to the relationship between tourism and the environment, as well as to the social impact of travel. He lives with his wife and three children in Munich.

ISO Focus+: Studiosus states that its mission is to build bridges between countries and cultures. Can you tell us more about your mission and the company’s view of International Standards, which similarly build bridges?

Peter-Mario Kubsch: Our aim is indeed to build bridges between foreign peoples and foreign cultures, but we can only do this with the help of our customers, whom we regard as partners. But at the same time it is crucial that we, as a tour operator, preserve the natural landscapes of host countries and the socio-cultural structures that have evolved there.

ISO 14001, ISO 9001 and EMAS form the bedrock of our management system.

We have a responsibility to protect the cultural diversity and natural beauty of our earth – for both ourselves and generations to come. From the beginning, we have striven to turn this obligation into concrete, environmentally and socially responsible goals and commitments.

In 1998, we became the first tour operator in Europe to register with the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, EMAS. We drew up an environmental policy, put together a catalogue of environmental and social commitments and set up an environment management system based on ISO 14001.

Our decision to take part in EMAS reflects our company’s long history of commitment to sustainable tourism. To quote our mission statement: “Every Studiosus tour package must not only meet the very high expectations of our customers, but also be ecologically sound and reflect a strong sense of corporate responsibility.”

ISO Focus+: Currently, ISO is working on standards for tourist information offices, beaches, natural protected areas, golf services, health tourism and diving.
Guest Interview

What value do you see in the development of such standards? Have you any views on the reluctance of the hotel and tourist accommodation industry to adopt an international harmonized system of grading such accommodation?

Peter-Mario Kubsch: I would very much welcome International Standards, if only for ease of comparison. But we cannot ignore the fact that, in some cases, variations from country to country are still very marked. Just think about infrastructure differences when it comes to garbage separation and disposal. This makes it very difficult to establish a uniform grading system applicable to all the different players in the tourist industry. ISO standards, however, can provide good practice guidelines that can be adapted to a country’s specific context.

ISO Focus+: Studiosus describes itself as a pioneer in quality management. Could you tell us more about your, now lengthy, experience with ISO 9001?

Peter-Mario Kubsch: Our aim is to fulfill our customers’ wishes but also to try out new things all the time. Innovative new products and services are essential if Studiosus wants to continue to develop. We want to grow, but never at the expense of quality.

In the questionnaires that guests fill out after returning from a Studiosus tour, over 96% say their expectations were met or exceeded. In 1998, we submitted a quality management system for selecting, training and further educating Studiosus tour leaders for a ISO 9001 quality audit to ensure customer satisfaction. That same year our environment management system won a seal of approval for complying with both ISO 14001 and EMAS standards.

Both management systems have been recertified and/or revalidated numerous times. Auditing focuses on processes that ensure high quality of work and products in individual departments, as well as those aimed at achieving company objectives and carrying out company strategies.

We have a complex system for keeping track of whether or not we have achieved our five prime objectives: customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, fair dealings with our business partners, fulfilling our social responsibilities and adequate economic return.

It is the task of each and every one of our employees and also the special responsibility of management to preserve, and redress where necessary, this balance and avoid conflicts of interest. One component of our management system is the balanced scorecard, which measures the degree to which each of the above objectives is surpassed or remains unattained and features a traffic light function that illustrates the result. This enables us to see and monitor our self-defined indicators at a glance.

ISO Focus+: Studiosus markets itself as environmentally conscious and sustainable. How do you carry out this commitment? As a company relying heavily on external partners from around the world, how can you ensure their engagement to sustainability and the environment? How do ISO standards help? Does offering “environmentally friendly holidays” give you a business advantage?

Peter-Mario Kubsch: Our current sustainability report describes a host of measures that we have taken to apply our environmentally and socially responsible standards both to tours and holiday destinations. This is not always easy, but we will continue to pursue this course because it is producing results. For example, the percentage of customers satisfied with the ecological measures taken by hotels rose from 67.8% in 1996 to 78.8% in 2008. This is also a reflection...
of the regular hotel ecology seminars we offer hoteliers.

Another example: we observed a marked rise in our customers’ acceptance of Rail&Fly tickets when we included in the price of the tour the option of a free first class instead of second class rail ticket to the airport. Customers appreciated the free public transport package we included in the price, too. We also offer bus or rail travel as an alternative to air travel when distances allow. And since we are aware that air travel takes a particularly high toll on the environment and contributes to climate change, we offer our customers ways of compensating for the CO₂ emissions their flight produces.

ISO standards on, for example, customer satisfaction, GHG emissions or environmental management, provide companies with a framework to address these issues.

ISO Focus+: As a member of the UN Global Compact, can you tell us about Studiosus approach to SR? How does the company carry out its SR mission across to its partners and customers? What contribution will the future ISO 26000 make?

Peter-Mario Kubsch: Fulfilling our social responsibilities is one of the five main objectives here at Studiosus, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) means just that. This commitment is a fundamental aspect of our corporate culture and has been anchored in our mission statement for years. To us, fulfilling our responsibilities means enabling our customers to acquaint themselves with foreign countries and cultures in a sustainable way. By doing so, we are helping to promote understanding among people from many different countries and cultures.

That’s why we offer socially and ecologically responsible tours. Treating the environment and our natural resources with care is a matter of course, whilst respecting the social structures of our host countries is a necessity if we wish to be welcome there.

We measure our overall progress using a balanced scorecard, excerpts of which are published annually in our environmental report. Our CSR Report, which we drew up for the first time according to the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines in 2009 was immediately awarded the highest category rating A+.

In 2007, we joined the UN Global Compact, which has actively participated in the development of ISO 26000 on social responsibility. It is a great advantage that the UN Global Compact principles will be included in the standard, as many companies, like Studiosus, are already familiar with them. We look forward to the publication of ISO 26000 later this year.

In addition, we work closely with ECPAT to eradicate all forms of child prostitution and The Studiosus foundation also supports social, cultural and ecological projects in many countries around the world so as not just to take but also to give something back. Most importantly of all, we expect our employees to fulfil their social responsibilities, and they do so with great dedication. We have also been implementing certain CSR tools since 1998, namely EMAS, ISO 14001 and ISO 9001, as I mentioned earlier. They form the bedrock of our management system, which has been recertified a number of times.

We implemented ISO 9001 to select, train and further educate Studiosus tour leaders.

About Studiosus

Studiosus is one of Europe’s leading operator of cultural tours. High-quality programmes, excellent tour leaders and constant innovations have secured the firm its leading position in the market.

Studiosus is the only cultural tour operator in Europe to have a certified quality management system based on ISO 9001 – since 1998 – for selecting, training and further educating its tour leaders. The quality management system was again recertified by an external auditor and awarded the ISO 9001 quality certification 2007.

In addition to cultural tours, Studiosus offers attractive tours of a similar nature such as event-based tours, language holidays and city tours. In the 2009 season, 93 400 guests travelled to over 125 countries with the Studiosus group, which includes the more affordable brand Marco Polo. Roughly 300 people, 22 of them trainees, are currently employed at the Studiosus headquarters in Munich. Studiosus also works with more than 600 tour leaders worldwide. The family-owned company was established in 1954.

ISO Focus+ July-August 2010 5
Travel

Getting rid of hassle and injecting fun

by Maria Lazarte

Travel can be exciting and rewarding. But as any person who has been to a foreign location will know, the experience can also present many challenges. Travellers, for instance, may need to reliably establish their identity, and other formalities. In an unfamiliar location, they will require information about their destination, together with a place to eat and sleep. They may be faced with a foreign language and a new currency, and may not understand cultural sensitivities.

Given the global nature of travel, International Standards provide key tools for making the experience of a traveller as smooth and safe as possible. And this is crucial given the important role of travel in today’s global economy and lifestyle. No longer can we imagine the world without the millions of people that routinely cross boundaries, both within and between countries, in search of adventure and fun or for work, family, health and religious reasons.

International Standards make travel procedures more efficient. Standards for passports and identity cards ensure that these documents can be recognized reliably and with ease around the world, often using state-of-the-art technology. In this manner, they increase security and safety of travellers and locals alike. In addition, ISO country and currency codes are just some examples of enabling tools that simplify travel-related information and processes. Imagine how complicated it would be to exchange money if currency codes varied from one bank or country to another.

ISO graphical symbols provide an important means to convey information across language and cultural boundaries. They help people from all origins to understand where fire exits are, how to operate rental cars or recognize beach safety flags. Just think what it would be like if you had to read signs in foreign scripts or if each country had its own set of symbols or graphics for communicating important information.

ISO also develops standards specifically targeted to the tourism industry within ISO technical committee ISO/TC 228, Tourism and related services. Its work addresses diving, adventure tourism, tourist information offices, beaches, natural protected areas, health tourism and much more. Out of its 53 member countries, many are developing countries relying heavily on tourism. Through their participation, they ensure that their voice and interests are heard, and gain access to global best practice.

Visitor spending on accommodation, food and drink, local transport, entertainment and shopping is an important pillar of many economies. According to the UN World Tourism Organization, international tourism contributes over USD three billion per day to the world economy and, in 2008, worldwide receipts reached USD 944 billion.

International Standards make an important contribution to the industry by helping make travel more comfortable, accessible and secure. ISO standards for products and services ensure that a level of quality and safety is maintained in areas as diverse as food safety, drinking water services, fire safety, camping tents, cars and air transport, and the list goes on. They are also a means for individuals and organizations to implement globally recognized best practice for environmental, economic and societal sustainability.

The portfolio of articles included in this issue of ISO Focus+ features key standards that are crucial for facilitating travel. So next time, when you are dreaming of a holiday or packing your bags for another business trip, spare a thought for how much International Standards will contribute to ensuring a voyage with the minimum of problems and the maximum of efficiency – or just plain fun!

Maria Lazarte is Assistant Editor, ISO Focus+.
A globetrotter’s dream

Machine readable passports, visas and travel documents

by Joel F. Shaw

Twenty-first century travellers are subjected to an ever increasing array of security controls. The first thing this brings to mind for most of us are the airport scans of our person and the items we carry. We are often less aware of the security checks made on our identification documents, which are not only important, but an essential part of modern travel.

In the case of domestic travel, a variety of documents are accepted by local authorities as proof of identity. International travel, however, is quite a different matter: presentation of an official travel document, such as passport and, where required, a visa; or, where permitted, other designated form of official travel document (National ID, Permanent Resident Card, Border Crossing Card, etc.) is mandated by countries and their border control authorities, and by airlines, to ensure that the identity and admissibility of a traveller can be confirmed to allow entry into a country.

historically, the design of official travel documents was determined by the issuing country. While certain information, such as country of issue, date of issue, date of expiry, name and photo of holder, date of birth and nationality became commonplace, no agreed standardization existed for travel documents.

As international travel became more prominent and traffic volumes increased substantially, the international community demanded travel documents and the information they contained be standardized to ensure that identification and admissibility checks could be carried out quickly and securely.

The fruit of collaboration

In 1968, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) formed the “Panel on Passport Cards”, to establish technical specifications and guidance material on a standardized form of passport. Recognizing the overall importance of automation, the panel developed specifications governing machine reading of standardized passport data. A first edition of the resulting ICAO technical specification (ICAO Doc 9303 : Machine Readable Passport (MRP)) was published in 1980 as a recommended practice.

In 1985, ISO developed an International Standard for the MRP working independently but using the technical specifications set out in ICAO Doc 9303.

Recognizing the benefits of collaboration, ISO and ICAO entered into an official liaison in 1989 to develop all future standards for travel documents. That collaboration has resulted in the publication of a series of technical specifications, covering passports, visas and identity documents that can be presented in lieu of a passport or visa. ISO and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) within joint technical committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, Information technology, SC 17, Cards and personal identification, published a short-form endorsement standard for each of the main ICAO Doc 9303 specifications, ISO/IEC 7501, Identification cards – Machine readable travel documents:


These new forms of travel documents bring many benefits for travellers.

A key principle of the initial standardization work was the presentation of details relating to the document itself (issuing country, document number, date of issue, date of expiry) and that of the rightful holder (name, nationality, date of birth) in both eye-readable and machine-readable form. This principle, which continues to be applied today, ensures that whether applying manual or machine-assisted procedures to process a document, personal identification and admissibility checks of the document presenter can be quickly and effectively performed in transit or at a final destination.

New generation travel documents

ISO and ICAO started work in 1998 to create a new generation of travel documents. One that not only offered continued compliance with the key principle of presenting vital information in both eye-readable and machine-readable formats, but also introduced enhancements designed to:

- Better confirm the presenter as the rightful holder of the document
- Better confirm the authenticity of the document and the vital information contained therein
- Provide more vital information than the area of the personal details page could physically accommodate.

The resulting new generation of travel documents exceeded these objectives by also setting standardization principles...
for many business processes seeking strengthened identity confirmation (e.g. access control), identity management (e.g. e-Government) and highly secure identification documents (e.g. national ID cards).

The biometric passport, or ePassport as it now known, complies with the key principle established by the founding technical experts in the 1960s, while introducing a number of important new performance features. It uses a securely embedded, high-capacity, contactless computer chip to:

- Expand the capacity of the document to carry greater amounts of information
- Facilitate provision of a greater amount of information in the shortest possible time through use of secure contactless (wireless) reading of information directly from the document
- Allow improved data authenticity, integrity checks and privacy with widely-used, highly secure digital signatures and public key infrastructure (PKI) techniques.

Often, the benefits of International Standards go unrecognized.

The ePassport also uses biometrics (facial biometrics have been deemed mandatory by the standard for global interoperability) to enable machine-assisted identity confirmation. This enhances and facilitates assurance of a match between the presenter and the travel document.

International Standards governing ePassports and other e-travel documents have been published as new parts and editions of both ICAO Doc 9303 and ISO/IEC 7501.

These new forms of travel documents bring many benefits for travellers, and not just while travelling. These technologies ensure that travel documents can be issued more securely and effectively and hence prevent identity theft. For example, facial biometric checks are now widely used to confirm that the person renewing a travel document is indeed the same person that received the previously issued document.

The standards also ensure that countries create travel documents using an array of special security features, such as restricted and special characteristic inks, printed security patterns, and secure laminates. As machine-assisted processing evolves, the standards allow for documents to be validated using state-of-the-art technology built into widely used travel document readers.

Such features not only confirm the authenticity and integrity of the document and its contents, but also support detection of counterfeits and fraudulent alterations.

Global adoption

Countries have recognized the many benefits of adopting these new standards. Currently, all 192 member countries of ICAO, are required to issue traditional MRPs by the end of 2010. As of today, 60 countries issue the ePassport version. That number is expected to reach 90 by the end of 2010, accounting for more than 80% of the world’s annual passport production.

A common misconception is that ISO/IEC 7501 and ICAO Doc 9303 series of standards only define specifications governing the design of travel documents and the content and layout of information contained in them. In fact, these standards equally define a set of implied procedures and recommended best practices that strengthen the integrity and security of travel document issuance and ensure efficient checking of travellers and their documents. Ultimately, they promote security and safety in countries around the world.

ISO/IEC 7501 and ICAO Doc 9303 do much more than harmonize information interchange. They ensure global interoperability, and harmonize personal identification, eligibility and admissibility checks for travellers, irrespective of where those checks are carried out or by whom (issuing authorities, border control authorities or transportation personnel). Governments and responsible authorities must ensure their implementation programmes go beyond issuance of a compliant document, and embrace associated best issuance, inspection and clearance practices.

Often, the benefits of International Standards go unrecognized. However, the value of the ISO/IEC 7501 and ICAO Doc 9303 series of standards is both visible and substantive. Particularly so to the traveller of the 21st century, who burdened by increasing security checks, appreciates the ease resulting from globally harmonized and recognized travel documents.

About the author

Joel F. Shaw is the Convenor of ISO/IEC JTC 1, Information technology, SC 17, Cards and personal identification, WG 3, Identification cards – Machine readable travel documents, a position that he has held since 1989. He is a recognized practitioner in the industry, having led development efforts that created the first machine reader for passports in 1985. Mr. Shaw has also managed projects that re-engineered border clearance and travel document issuance for governments around the world.
From airports to ships

How biometrics are changing the way we travel

by Maria Lazarte

On any given day, millions of people travel around the world. As their number continues to grow and security threats become more important, biometrics are being increasingly used as a powerful and reliable solution to identify people. International Standards are crucial for enabling the proliferation and application of biometric systems around the world. This article focuses on ISO/IEC 24713, a multipart standard specifying biometric profiles to enable interoperability and data interchange, including for access control of employees at airports and the identification of seafarers.

No more lost keys

Biometrics refers to the automated recognition of individuals based on their biological or behavioural characteristics. Examples of the former include fingerprints, face, DNA, hand geometry, iris and voice and of the latter, typing rhythm and gait. Biometrics are the most definitive, real-time identity management tools currently available. Unlike keys and passwords, an individual’s biometrics are more difficult to steal, copy or compromise and cannot be lost or forgotten. And it is universal, in that each individual has relatively unique biometric characteristics that distinguish one person from another.

Moreover, reliable biometric characteristics are often permanent, may resist ageing and variance over time, and are increasingly easy to collect and measure. They can be used to verify the identity of an individual by comparing information that stored in a card or other device. But they also allow the identification of individuals from biometric information contained in databases that may include tens of millions of biometric data records.

For decades, biometrics were primarily used in law enforcement. But over the past years, its applications have broadened considerably. In addition to assisting national security and preventing ID fraud, biometric-based solutions can be used to ensure confidential financial transactions, support personal data privacy and control access to secure sites such as buildings and computer networks.

Biometric technologies are also associated with the management of welfare, identifications cards and loyalty programmes. Diverse environments such as amusement parks, banks, mobile devices, passports, drivers’ licences, vehicles, college dormitories and school lunch applications are already using biometrics to verify claimed identities.

Enabling innovation

International Standards play a key role in the development and proliferation of this innovative technology and its diverse applications. The implementation of standards increases the security of biometrics systems. It also extends their outreach, by allowing systems produced by different suppliers and in different countries to interoperate efficiently. Standards enable the availability of multiple sources for compatible products in the marketplace, and disseminate technological know-how on a global scale. As a result,

1) With billions of people, the chances of two individuals having essentially identical fingerprints are highly improbable but still possible. A specific exception to the inherent uniqueness of biometrics is that identical twins have the same DNA and their faces can be difficult to distinguish. However, identical twins have fingerprints an irises that are individually unique.
a biometric passport produced in Peru can be read by biometric systems in the United Kingdom.

Within joint technical committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, Information technology, sub-committee SC 37, Biometrics, develops standards for generic biometric technologies in order to support both interoperability and data interchange among applications and systems.

Cards and personal identification are covered by ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 17, while biometric data protection techniques and security testing are addressed by ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 27.

**Key for interoperability**

To further facilitate the application of biometric standards and solve complexities linked to their use, SC 37 recently published a three-part standard specifying biometric profiles for interoperability and data interchange, ISO/IEC 24713, Information technology – Biometric profiles for interoperability and data interchange:

- **Part 1:** Overview of biometric systems and biometric profiles (2008)
- **Part 2:** Physical access control for employees at airports (2008)
- **Part 3:** Biometric based verification and identification of seafarers (2009).

Part 1 provides generic information about biometric systems, which are systems capable of:

- Capturing biometric samples from an end-user
- Extracting biometric data from that sample
- Comparing biometric features with those stored in reference templates
- Determining the level of similarity
- Confirming whether the identification or verification has been successful
- Storing and managing biometric data and related system information.

The first part also provides guidance on the application of biometric profiles. Biometric profiles specify relevant subsets or combinations of base standards (generic biometric standards developed by SC 37) for a particular personal recognition application, such as physical access control of employees at airports. They define specific values or conditions from the range of options described in the base standards, in order to enable data interchange, and the interoperability of biometric systems.

**Airport employee security**

Part 2, Physical access control for employees at airports, specifies the biometric profile to support token-based biometric identification and verification of employees within the controlled areas of airports: whether at local access points (i.e. doors or other entrances), or across local boundaries.

Tokens should contain one or more biometric references such as fingerprints, face, iris, vascular, hand geometry silhouette, etc.

Part 2 also includes recommended practice for enrolment (collecting and storing a subject’s data), watch list checking, duplicate issuances prevention, and verification of the identity of employees at airports. It describes the architecture and business processes necessary to support token-based identity management in the secure environment of an airport.

Biometrics are a powerful and reliable solution to identify people.

**Seafarer identified**

Part 3, Biometric based verification and identification of seafarers, aims to support the International Labour Organization (ILO)’s Seafarer’s Identity Documents (SID) Convention 185. This Convention, adopted at the request of the International Maritime Organization, requires all seafarers from ratifying nations to be issued with an identity document that follows a uniform format, has specific physical security features, and uses biometrics to link the seafarer to their identity document.

The current Convention requires fingerprint data stored in a two-dimensional bar code, but the choice of biometric modality and storage medium could be changed in the future, provided backwards compatibility is maintained.

In order to support a globally interoperable system of SIDs, Part 3 establishes a biometric profile defining the verification...
Special Report

and identification of seafarers. It identifies a set of base standards, and the criteria for applying those standards. In addition to providing guidance on the enrolment and verification or identification of seafarers, it addresses system components such as the storage medium for biometric data and security specifications.

Although intended for use in the maritime industry, the standard can be applied to other situations where identification and verification of document holders are necessary.

On fair or stormy weather

Part 3 provides guidance on identification checks conducted during the issuance of a document, when watchlists are checked and the entire database of existing seafarers searched to prevent an individual from establishing multiple identities.

It also includes information for verifying data at control points, for instance at port entrances, ship gangplanks or border crossing points where seafarers must verify themselves to immigration authorities, and others.

This verification is expected to be performed successfully not only indoors under controlled conditions, but also outdoors in difficult conditions, including harsh wet weather, salt spray, high humidity and high temperatures. Biometric equipment and credentials have to be capable of functioning and correctly identifying seafarers under all such environments and atmospheric conditions.

The implementation of standards increases the security of biometrics systems.

Part 3 can be used to satisfy the requirements of the current Convention 185. But it also allows alternative approaches that may be used in the future by the ILO if the technical documents associated with the convention are modified. To ensure backwards compatibility, whenever alternative technology choices are promoted, they are required to be compatible with existing SIDs.

Technology of the future

As the efficiency and reliability of biometrics are increasingly recognized, we are going to see more and more applications of this technology. Among them, ensuring the effective management of identity for global travellers and air/land/sea port employees will remain key applications. But biometrics also have the potential to improve efficiency and comfort of travellers by simplifying the identity management process through the use of automated border crossing systems. Standards are, and will continue to be, crucial in the proliferation of this technology, which is enabling rapid, reliable and robust human identification and verification across a wide range of applications.

Maria Lazarte is Assistant Editor, ISO Focus+.
Travel tips
All “signs” for a safer, low-stress holiday break

by Michael Noblett

Now that summer is in full swing – or fall, depending on the hemisphere where you are reading this – it is probably your family’s best opportunity of the year to get away from the rigours of work, school, and the day-to-day grind. It is a time to head to the beach, go camping, see new sights, and relax.

Whether having a quick getaway for a picnic in the countryside, or a two-week trip by plane, train, or car, you can be sure that you will not be alone during the high season. Crowds of travellers on roads and elsewhere often mean delays and the stress that comes with it.

ISO/TS 14823 saves travel time.

Luckily, standards like those developed by ISO technical committee ISO/TC 204, Intelligent transport systems, help provide useful travel information before a trip starts, or while on the road, to maximize comfort and enjoyment and minimize disruption during the journey.


ISO/TS 14823 provides a system of standardized codes for existing signs and pictograms used to deliver traffic and traveller information (TTI). The standard adopts a unified graphic data dictionary (GDD) to facilitate data exchange between media, as well as to catalogue graphic images (like traffic signs) and pictograms specific to each country, and assign them a unique code.

How it works

Travellers routinely use a variety of media systems to receive information on: traffic, traffic management, travel conditions, public transport, traffic signs (including graphics), public facilities (including graphics), and ambient and road conditions (including graphics). ISO/TS 14823 helps such intelligent transport systems (ITS) to work effectively through global common principles and practices.

The coding system provided in ISO/TS 14823 can be used to form messages that can be handled by different media systems. It also allows the creation of graphic messages for on-board units, and the delivery of media system information on TTI dissemination systems. All these are required by people planning their travel in advance, but also for in-trip plan modifications.

A system handling graphic messages generally comprises TTI system operators, media systems, and a communication network interconnecting these systems. In particular, ISO/TS 14823 relates to TTI systems operators, which include:

- Traffic management centres (TMC)
- Traffic information centres (TIC)
- Parking information centres (PIC)
- Public transport centres (PTC)
- Value-added service providers (VASP).

It also refers to media systems, such as:

- On-board units (OBU)
- Variable message signs (VMS)
- Personal computers (PC)
- Public access terminals (PAT).
The ISO/TS 14823 standard explains in detail the concepts of graphic data information service to users who need TTI information service. It also presents an overview of the user service. The type of information contained in the pre-trip and in-trip services can be broadly divided into:

- Traffic sign – danger warning, regulatory, informative
- Public facilities
- Ambient/road condition.

**Aware of foggy patches and slippery roads**

ITS offers great potential for increasing the level of information service provided to travellers, boosting the efficiency of current infrastructure, as well as improving safety, convenience, and cost efficiency. Among the added benefits of ISO/TS 14823 are that it helps improve the travel environment, including air quality and noise abatement, and saves time. It also makes travel time more productive for business travellers. The added intelligence delivered to the user also facilitates the use of alternate or multiple travel modes, and helps to load-level the transportation system.

In practice, traffic sign information can alert users to any number of circumstances that could cause travel disruptions. Having access to traveller advisories on your laptop before leaving the house or at a public access terminal, for example, can come in very handy.

Not only does most traffic signage provide basic directions, such as city limits and streets on which to turn, but it can also alert users to recent accidents, provide updates on temporary parking restrictions, announce lane changes or closures, identify changes in speed limits, or indicate certain restrictions that might require detours.

Being aware of any problems on your intended route allows you to better choose whether to leave at a different time, or consider alternative modes of travel to ensure a smoother, quicker trip.

Most of us have the experience of seeing the “gas – food – lodging” signage as we approach highway road exits. Public facilities information on a device in your vehicle can be especially convenient if it is getting late and you need a hotel, if the children need a break to use facilities, or if your gas tank is less than one-quarter full. To have access to services before or during a trip, whether it be at the next turn or several miles down the road, not only provides convenience, but peace of mind.

Access to ambient and road condition information in advance of your trip or while en route also is extremely beneficial, and in some cases, life-saving. Knowing when a patch of fog is around the next mountain or if the roads are slippery, as seen from specialized road signage, gives the user the information needed to stay alert and travel safe.

Regardless of the media system used to deliver the information, having access to all of this standardized information before leaving home or during travel can save valuable time and money, resulting in more quality time at the beach, around the campsite, or at the picnic table.

**Smartly, safely, efficiently**

With over 100 published standards on intelligent transport systems, ISO/TC 204 continues its active involvement in vehicle communication to allow travellers to go forth smartly, safely, and efficiently. For more information on the standards currently under development, visit ISO/TC 204 homepage tinyurl.com/ISOTC204 or www.iso.org.

**About the author**

Michael Noblett is the Chair of ISO/TC 204, Intelligent transport systems, and an Associate Partner and Business Solutions Professional for IBM Global Business Services.

Mr. Noblett is internationally recognized as an expert in automotive electronics and wireless communications, and has helped pioneer multinational activities to advance vehicle technology and transportation safety (see World Scene on page 2).
Attention all adventurers

Adventure tourism gets good practice

by Graham Derrick and Brian Such

The beginning of work on a new ISO standard for adventure tourism, marked by a first meeting of its working group ISO/TC 228/WG 7, Adventure tourism, makes this a good time to review previously published material on this subject. Have the industry’s practices and prospects changed substantially in recent years?

In the July 2008 issue of ISO Focus issue, Claudio Guerreiro, in his article entitled, “Adventure tourism comes of age”, accurately depicted the challenge of introducing standardization to a complex field that, in its encouragement of a healthier more liberated lifestyle, essentially majors on freedom of action and exposure to risk.

The article clearly raised the profile of a rapidly growing industry, and the assertion that standardization in this area should be founded on the management of inherent risk remains true. This is particularly important because risk exclusion is not an option and therefore risk management is a requirement that will frequently have to be provided across a variety of locations, climates and time zones. Yet, risk management is a complex task for adventure providers.

To ensure that clients are correctly informed and competently led, and that the adventurous activities are appropriately delivered, providers need to place the inherent risk in its proper context. Participants can then still achieve a sense of adventure through exposure to managed risk without unduly compromising their safety.

Since the article’s publication in 2008, there have been a number of changes in the adventure tourism landscape, some of which merit further consideration.

Risk assessment

A future standard in the industry should be based on a risk assessment approach, rather than a list of specific activities. Not only would a risk approach assess the activity itself, but it would also ensure the standard’s applicability to all ages of participants and to every style of provider.

One example is “charity treks”, a field that is seeing significant growth now, and which has wide variations in the standard of provision. Charities solicit positive exposure and fund-raising opportunities by arranging treks to major mountain ranges, often reaching high altitudes.

Because many of these treks are one-off arrangements, they may not be as well managed as they should be. Potential clients often receive only a limited explanation of the rigours and potential risks involved. Equally important is that it may not be clear who the true provider is, leading to confusion over roles and...
responsibilities. Such outings clearly fall within the scope of adventure tourism and would benefit from standardization.

Across Europe and other parts of the world, an expanding field is the supply of large off-shore sailing craft, often with a professional crew, for sailing holidays around coastlines and islands. Such ventures are often advertised from a conservation perspective, to view species on the fringe of endangerment. These activities, like safaris to observe and photograph wild game, are not always defined as adventure tourism, which means they may fall outside package travel regulations that govern other aspects of tourist provision.

It is imperative that any ISO standard for adventure tourism embraces such activities. Adventure tourism should be approached through the nature of provision, rather than through standards related to specific activities, which are often already well regulated by their governing bodies.

Risk management is a complex task for venture providers.

Encompass all providers

In this context, service provision by charitable trusts and other organizations that manage activities through a volunteer workforce is another area that will require our attention. This is especially prevalent in the world of youth adventure, as exemplified by Scouts, Guides and other “uniformed” organizations. Such providers, just as the sole traders and corporate organizations referred to in the 2008 article, need to operate to a universally accepted standard of good practice.

But adventure tourism is not just for these young persons’ organizations or for the fit and able young adult. More and more retirees have time unencumbered by work-related restraints, allowing them to engage in adventurous activities, albeit in a gentler more leisurely style.

Perhaps of greater economic importance for the industry as a whole, this group also has the disposable income to pursue adventurous tourism. They will often use higher-end and, therefore, inevitably more costly, accommodation, transport and service provision than their younger counterparts can afford. International Standards for adventure tourism need to encompass provision for all ages.

Of concern to any standard addressing adventurous activities is the aspect of third-party provision. More often than not, this relates to the supply of a specific service or element of the venture by individuals or organizations in the country hosting the activities.

Adventure tourism’s contribution to employment and income is likely to be significant. Because standards for the industry aim to improve the overall quality of service, they are of vital importance to the full realization of the international market potential.

Risk management is a key factor. However it is essential to recognize that risk is but one aspect of good practice for adventure tourism. It is important that any new standard in this field should reflect current good practice as demonstrated by preeminent providers. It should also address:

- The quality of provision in terms of enabling potential participants to make fully informed decisions
- The selection, terms of reference and competence of the leadership team
- The planning associated with the management of any crisis that may occur.
It is encouraging to see that the remit of the new ISO working group for adventure tourism also includes these important aspects of provision. It is essential that all who engage in adventurous activities fully understand the level of risk involved and that they have a right to know what the provider proposes to do if and when things go wrong.

*These new standards can help to ensure the provision of safe activities.*

**What, not how**

At first sight, this may appear somewhat dictatorial for an industry that is primarily about freedom, challenge and adventure. But by unambiguously specifying required outcomes rather than setting out potentially restricting procedures (*what* a provider needs to deliver and not *how* it has to be done). These new standards can help to ensure the provision of safe activities, without sacrificing originality, spontaneity and a sense of adventure.

Finally, although these International Standards for adventure tourism will be valuable, an associated mechanism to help providers demonstrate their conformity could be particularly useful. Consideration should therefore be given in the preparation of such a mechanism, including implementation instructions, so as to boost confidence of potential participants in adventure tourism. This will help enable the industry to grow and mature in a framework of trust.

The national experts embarking on this new work realize that there is a need for standards with global relevance, and that an ISO standard is likely to prove the most effective means of its achievement. But much good work has already been done at the national level and it is important that this be taken into account as the new work progresses.

The engagement of a broad cross-section of this nationally developed expertise will be essential to the ultimate success of this project, and every effort should be made to encourage that engagement. The authors hope that this article will contribute to this effort.

**About the authors**

Graham Derrick is an outdoor education specialist with extensive expedition and leadership experience. He is also a founder member and Trustee of Young Explorers’ Trust.

Brian Such is a Project Manager at BSI, ISO member for the United Kingdom. He is also the former Secretary of the national committee on adventure activities and member of the Chartered Management Institute.
Because first impressions matter

Helping travellers discover unknown destinations

by Clelia María López

Who hasn’t arrived at a new destination full of hope and excitement about what they will discover. But, as newcomers, there is always a certain apprehension when in an unknown setting where they may not speak the language, understand the culture, or be familiar with the town’s layout and its services.

Visitor havens are often the first point of contact for new arrivals. Here we will be provided with maps and tips to make our stay a pleasant one. But the expectations visitors may have of a tourist information office are not always met, and the level of services and facilities may vary from place to place. As the quality of the information centre may be determinant in shaping the experience of a visitor, how can we help them meet or exceed travellers’ needs?

How do we know where to find a good hotel, or what tourist sites we should not miss? How do we get from place to place or even find the nearest pharmacy? These are questions that will be asked by visitors, whether they are there for leisure or business, to visit friends and relatives, or for a religious pilgrimage or health treatment.

Luckily, in many places we can expect to find tourist information offices. These tourist information centres act as an interface between service providers and tourists.

USD 3 billion a day

Tourism development is a key driver of socio-economic progress. It creates jobs and enterprises, and drives export income. Over the past six decades, tourism has steadily grown to finally become one of the largest and fastest evolving economic sectors worldwide. The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a specialized agency of the United Nations and leading international organization in the field of tourism, provides these facts and figures:

• International tourism receipts represented approximately six percent of worldwide exports of goods and services in 2003
• International tourist arrivals reached 922 million in 2008
• The share of international tourist arrivals received by developing countries has steadily risen, from 31% in 1990 to 45% in 2008
• International arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by 2020
• The overall export income generated by international tourism, including passenger transport, reached USD three billion per day
• Tourism exports represent 30% of the world’s exports of commercial services and as an export category ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and automotive products
• The global contribution of tourism to gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated at some five percent, its contribution to employment is around six percent of the overall number of jobs
• Visitor spending on accommodations, food and drink, local transport, entertainment and shopping is an important pillar of the economies of many destinations: worldwide receipts from international tourism reached USD 944 billion in 2008
• International tourism contributes over USD three billion per day to the world economy.

Warm welcomes

With such an important impact on the economy, countries have much to gain from ensuring that travellers have a pleasant experience during their visits. The role of tourist information offices is key.

Tourist information offices exist to give visitors the information they are looking for, to tell them all about the not-to-be-missed tourist hotspots or help them find an obscure restaurant they vaguely remember from an earlier visit. More often than not, they are the welcoming point for travellers, and therefore responsible for generating first impressions.

They are present worldwide, managed primarily by local or national governments, but also by private companies. Their most important function is to furnish travellers with the right answer, while interacting neutrally and professionally with tourists.

Their advice helps tourists have more enjoyable visits, and the quality of this service plays an important role in the appreciation of the destination. Tourist information centres also act as an interface between service providers and tourists, receiving complaints and suggestions, and providing helpful guidance whether face-to-face, in print or via the Internet.

Almost every country has developed such services, and there is global demand for an International Standard.

ISO/TC 228/WG 3 expects that the standard they are currently developing will help ensure a consistent level of service from tourist information offices, regardless of destination. The future standard, ISO 14785, Tourist information offices – Requirements for tourist information and reception services, is now a working draft. It is expected to target issues related to the provision of, and access to, information as well as ethical issues related to the service.

International arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by 2020.

The working group hopes to highlight consumer rights, suggestion and claims, and to target responsible travelling. Experts in WG 3 are working hard to obtain international consensus on best practice for the benefit of the tourism industry.

About the author

Clelia María López has been actively involved in quality for the public sector since 1992. She is a member of the Argentine National Quality Award jury. She has been working in quality indicators for transport and museums since 2000. Ms. López is responsible for the implementation of quality programmes in the Ministry of Tourism in Argentina, and collaborates with UNWTO and IRAM, ISO member for Argentina. She has been committed to national standardization since 2007, and has served as Convenor of ISO/TC 228/WG 3 since 2008.
Having already been awarded the title of “Best Tourist Board in Africa” at the Good Safari Guide Awards 2009, the Kenya Tourist Board (KTB) has gone one step further in its quest for outstanding achievement by certifying to ISO 9001:2008.

In doing so, KTB has broken new ground in the Eastern African region, and has set a challenge to its counterpart bodies in Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda to follow suite. The achievement is a pointer towards the direction KTB intends to take, as Kenya’s principal marketing tool for tourism and overseas public relations, in bringing as many as three million visitors to the country in the near future.

ISO 9001 implementation and certification will subject the organization to external quality audits, encourage the streamlining of internal administrations, and help focus funds and emphasis on promotions in existing, new and emerging markets.

**Challenges**

The main reason for seeking ISO 9001 certification was to implement a system that conforms to an internationally recognized standard of quality and gives us a focus on always achieving customer satisfaction.

Implementation and certification took about three years from late 2006 to September 2009, with some challenges along the way in a process that required patience and total commitment. There were also several changes in KTB management during that time which meant that continuity was difficult.

Training played an important part in building staff awareness of quality management and ISO 9001. We conducted a series of courses facilitated by the training section of the Kenya Bureau of Standards, including process owners and internal audit training.

**Reaping the benefits**

Despite the challenges, we are very happy that we went through the rigorous implementation process, were able to achieve ISO 9001 certification, and now are reaping the benefits.

Since implementation, the Board has seen tremendous improvement in its operations through quality service delivery, motivation, and the commitment of all members of staff in using KTB resources more efficiently and effectively.

Better identification and documentation of quality management procedures has led to improved control, flow, integration and alignment of the processes. This has also enabled us to make better decisions due to availability of information, and we are continually improving KTB’s activities at all levels in line with our strategic intent.
Hospitality industry

Tackling challenges and reaping profits

by Ghassan Aidi

The hospitality industry is the world’s fastest growing sector, with a tremendous impact on local, national and global economies. Tourism plays a substantial direct or indirect role in most national economies and its importance is widely recognized by governments, international agencies and local communities.

Despite the current slowdown in the global economy, the hospitality industry remains vibrant, generating revenues that help sustain troubled economies. Even during an economic crisis, travellers will always need food and lodging. Perhaps they look for more affordable options, but tourism and travel are on the rise.

Unprecedented growth is expected in the tourism sector in coming decades. Within the next few years, as the global economy rebounds from the current recession, and as the baby boomers retire in large numbers, travel and related leisure activities will become more widespread. The hotel and restaurant industry is expected to reap major benefits.

Consumers will have a major say in the standards set for the tourism industry. They will ultimately decide whether the goods and services they consume meet the minimum standards that they have come to expect. Though these standards may vary by region or by price, consumers are the decision-makers in accepting or rejecting the standards set for tourism, including those affecting goods and services in hotels and restaurants. For example, there is a growing interest in green and eco-friendly tourism. As a result, green, clean and energy-efficient hotels and restaurants will become increasingly popular.

The beneficiaries of standards

Technological changes and the ways in which tourists use the Internet for travel have created a need for more transparent ways of doing business. Most travellers now bypass traditional travel agencies and do their planning via the Internet.

ISO International Standards are relevant for the tourism industry because they clear the path for more unified and consistent standards everywhere. Tourists will have a place to compare and evaluate standards. Hoteliers and restaurateurs can share best practice and compare their services to the benchmarks set by ISO technical committee ISO/TC 228, Tourism and related services.

One of the greatest benefits of standardization by ISO/TC 228 is that consumers will be able to make more informed choices. The tourism market is vast and diverse, and consumers are often at a disadvantage in making decisions about destinations. International Standards will help protect their interests.

Small businesses related to tourism, such as family-run restaurants or homestays will also benefit from international standardization. By conforming to defined standards, they can attract more visitors.

By the same token, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-designated heritage sites also benefit from standardization. To cater to the large numbers of tourists they attract, typical heritage sites are surrounded by hotels and restaurants which may proclaim that they are part of the heritage facility. Standards for heritage
sites will determine how they may be sustained and protected from unscrupulous interests.

Reasonable resistance

The International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA) members support a standardized classification system. Established in 1869, IH&RA is the only global business organization representing the hotel and restaurant industry worldwide, and it has become a major force in lobbying and advocating for issues affecting the industry. Recognized by the United Nations, IH&RA monitors and lobbies all major international organizations, giving it a competitive edge over other industry representatives. IH&RA is fully qualified to participate in and approve standards.

The industry often finds it difficult to accept standards created by ISO or any other entity rather than hoteliers, believing that only hoteliers can understand the needs of the hospitality industry. But IH&RA can assist ISO in setting new and improved standards for tourism and restaurant businesses with the aim of improving quality, safety and efficiency at all budget levels.

IH&RA is well positioned to provide the necessary assistance, advice, support and information to ISO, based on years of industry knowledge and first-hand experience of the hospitality industry in general, and tourism services in particular. IH&RA can step in when some ISO standards are considered inappropriate, working with all relevant stakeholders in tourism and travel standardization.

With more than 140 years of experience, IH&RA can play a vital role in ensuring that standards are set in a manner acceptable to all. As it works closely with the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other UN bodies on matters related to the tourism and travel industry, IH&RA’s knowledge on issues affecting the industry is always current.

It must be acknowledged that there are many stakeholders in the tourism industry who are against international standardization for various reasons, but mainly because it is not being done by the industry itself.

In a statement to ISO/TC 228 as an official liaison body, IH&RA was opposed “to the establishment of International Standards covering accommodation and catering services on the grounds, inter alia, that these services are already subject to stringent regulation at the national level; that International Standards are not a prerequisite for quality; and that international standardization work should only be embarked upon at the specific request of the industry concerned and with its support.”

IH&RA can assist ISO in setting new and improved standards.

However, we believe there are other areas of the tourism and travel industry that may benefit from international standardization, for example, energy and water, food and beverages, air filtration and HVAC systems (heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems), furniture, and cosmetics.

Environmentally sustainable

In 2008, the United Nations Foundation invited 27 NGOs and international organizations, including United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNWTO, and International Air Transport Association (IATA), to define, unify, and standardize criteria for sustainable development in the hospitality industry. IH&RA was included in this group as the only representative of the hospitality industry. With some 100 criteria defined, IH&RA has begun training hotels to adapt to the requirements of environmental and social responsibility.

IH&RA decided to offer special recognition for a hotel or a chain for their commitment to exceed their expectation
in protecting our environment and reducing the intake of CO₂. It decided to call these hotels who are trying to protect the environment, “The Emeraude Hôtelier of the Year”.

Our criteria for the Emeraude Hôtelier are based on:

- Hotel energy saving strategies
- Environmentally sound operation
- Hygienic, healthy management and food services
- Water saving policies
- Use of locally manufactured products.

Awards and accolades such as the Emeraude Hôtelier of the Year are intended to motivate IH&RA members and partners to strive toward greener, more energy efficient and eco-friendly hotels and restaurants.

This programme has been widely recognized by the industry, and IH&RA is the only international organization from the hospitality industry currently certifying hotels worldwide.

The industry’s future

IH&RA estimates that international tourist arrivals should reach more than 1.5 billion by the year 2020, while economic activities attributed to tourism will also rise during this time frame. There will be a shortage of available labour and an even greater shortage of qualified tourism professionals to meet the demands of this growing industry.

Health tourism, eco tourism and adventure tourism are only a few of the areas that will grow dramatically in coming decades. Some developing countries are already building special health facilities to attract predominantly older medical guests. Today’s 20-to-40-year-olds are more interested in adventure tourism, whether on water, land or air. New research and findings on climate change and global warming are likely to result in a renewed interest in eco tourism, with more and more travellers seeking eco-friendly hotels.

IH&RA places great importance on developing eco-friendly hotels and restaurants that focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in all aspects of operation. Climate change is affecting the tourism industry as much as any other, and this motivates us to switch to cleaner forms of energy in our member establishments.

Efforts at developing and expanding the hospitality industry should also aim to reduce other environmental impacts. Cleaner and greener energy use and eco-friendly practices in all aspects of our business will also increase our overall efficiency.

Meetings, events, conventions, and exhibits attract large numbers of tourists to certain destinations. Organizers of such events should be able to refer to a standards and certification for their preferred destinations and identify facilities and venues that meet their needs. In some countries, the national tourism boards have classifications of their own, but these differ from country to country and region to region. There is a clear need in the hospitality industry to create a universal system that is consistent and transparent.

About the author

Dr. Ghassan Aidi is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Royal Regency International Hotels Inc. based in Washington, DC. Since 2006, he has served as President of the International Hotels & Restaurants Association (IH&RA), founded in 1869 and representing more than 200 000 hotels and six million restaurants worldwide. Dr. Aidi earned a Master degree in management and business administration from the Sorbonne University in France, followed by a PhD in Management Information Systems from American University.
Being able to understand safety messages and public information despite language barriers or illiteracy is possible thanks to internationally harmonized ISO graphical symbols that, for example, direct you to the exit in case of a fire, or tell you not to swim in dangerous waters.

The story below is based on a fun, easy-to-read booklet developed by ISO to raise awareness about these symbols and teach the public to recognize the different meanings behind their various shapes and colours. The international language of ISO graphical symbols can be downloaded free of charge at http://iso.org/graphical-symbols-booklet
Wait, darling, people are surfing here, so we have to go a little farther...

GO, WATER!

Mummy, are we there yet?

NO, DEAR, THIS IS THE HOTEL PARKING.

Why do we have to put these funny things on?

The sign there tells us to wear life jackets because we are going in a speedboat.

Look dear, they may tell us where we can find a spa?

Oh, no... no swimming here either?

Yes, no stress! Thanks to the graphical symbols!

This is one of our best vacations!

Because they are the same in Ambrosia as at home!

Time to go to the pool.

I'm so excited to go swimming tomorrow! I just can't wait!
Progress on packaging standards

A successful start was made in the development of International Standards for packaging and the environment and for companies involved in the activity of packaging, including packaging designers and manufacturers, recyclers, retailers, branded good manufacturers, manufacturers of packaging materials and inks. ISO delegates from around the world, and from across the supply chain for packaged goods, gathered in Beijing from 31 May until 4 June to share their experiences and to start writing the standards.

It is estimated that packaging, as an activity, takes place worldwide at least 100,000 times every second, involving applications for consumer products, industrial products, food products, including packaging designers and manufacturers, recyclers, retailers, branded good manufacturers, manufacturers of packaging materials and inks.

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The future ISO standards will address the optimization of packaging by source reduction, the responsible use of heavy metals and other noxious substances, the possible reuse of packages and the different modes of recycling (material, energy or composting).

Anders Linde, Chair of ISO/TC 122/SC 4, the subcommittee responsible developing the standards, commented positively on the outcome of the week and expressed his gratitude to the Chinese and Swedish co-secretaries, Stina Wallstrom and Xu Ting, for organizing the meetings.

What’s new with food

What food crises like the one on milk contaminated with melamine show is that the implementation of safety and other food standards can be a matter of life and death. ISO, therefore, places great importance in the continual development of food standards to meet global market needs.

The ISO committee responsible is ISO/TC 34, Food products, whose most recent plenary was held in April 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At the meeting, cooperation with the Codex Alimentarius and other relevant organizations, was emphasized as crucial in the work of ISO/TC 34.

In a recent newsletter, the committee highlighted some of the key developments of the past few months. A strong emphasis is made on milk (and cheese) standards, many of which are developed in cooperation with the International Dairy Federation (IDF).

Following incidents of adulterated milk, the dairy industry has strongly requested guidance on this area. Therefore, among the new projects the committee is working on are standards to determine melamine and cyanuric acid content in milk, milk products and infant formulae. Work is also progressing on standards for food irradiation, rice, saffron, green and black tea, microbiology, sensory analysis, as well as, good manufacturing practice in food services.

The next plenary meeting of ISO/TC 34 is expected to be held in 2012. To subscribe to the newsletter, contact the ISO/TC 34 Secretary, Sandrine Espeillac: sandrine.espeillac@afnor.org.

Tourism takes-off

Some 70 member countries are now involved in the work of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 228, Tourism and related services, following the addition of New Zealand, Kazakhstan and Uganda at its 5th meeting in Foz do Iguazú, Brazil.

“The committee’s growing membership confirms the increased interest in the subject all over the world,” noted its Secretary, Elena Ordozogeti de la Rica. What’s more, despite air travel difficulties caused by volcanic ashes, the meeting brought together 44 attendees.

Projects in the committee’s work programme continue to progress, and new, highly topical items appearing on the horizon hold promise as future International Standards. Proposals on industrial tourism
and yacht harbours, for example, received full support from participants.

TSE, ISO member for Turkey, will present the proposal for environmentally friendly accommodation establishments outlined in 2009, with the purpose of bringing clarity to the market in which already several labels compete with each other.

The next ISO/TC 228 plenary will be held in April 2011 in Italy.

Hydrogen meetings

ISO technical committee ISO/TC 197, Hydrogen technologies, held its plenary meeting in May 2010 in Essen, Germany, in conjunction with the 18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference (WHEC). Both events were a success and attracted a record number of participants.

During its plenary meeting, ISO/TC 197 reviewed the status and target dates of each project in its work programme, including possible additions. The technical committee also agreed to begin work on retrofit and multi-fuel refuelling stations.

These two applications are important additions since a number of gaseous hydrogen fuelling activities will be integrated into existing natural gas or gasoline fuelling stations or built in a multi-fuelling environment.

Among other items of interest was the new work item proposal by DIN, ISO member for Germany, on the revision of ISO/TR 15916 on basic considerations for the safety of hydrogen systems. This document, which was published in 2004, has been of great interest to stakeholders worldwide and there is a general consensus that it should be updated to reflect the current state-of-the-art.

As part of WHEC, Randy Dey chaired the session on regulations, codes, standards and test methods, which had a focus on hydrogen refuelling stations. For the occasion, a leaflet prepared by ISO was distributed to attendees.

A longer report on the activities of ISO/TC 197, will be made available in the ISO Focus+ bonus articles section on ISO online (www.iso.org/bonusarticles).

Intelligent transport systems

Some 150 participants representing 12 countries attended the recently held plenary of ISO/TC 204, Intelligent transport systems, in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. In addition, 10 out of its 12 working groups met during this meeting week to take advantage of a shared location.

Participants agreed to move forward in the area of intelligent transport systems (ITS) cooperative systems. In addition, several new work items were approved related to communications access for land mobiles, as well as numerous ballots relating to electronic fee collection, nomadic devices in support of ITS service in vehicles, freight conveyance identification and architecture, and navigation data delivery, among others.

Also held during the plenary week were three workshops, a symposium defining standards for mobile phones in transit, a round table on deploying ITS at 5.9 GHz in the USA, and a joint workshop between Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and ISO/TC 204.

The next ISO/TC 204 plenary will be held in November 2010 in Jeju, Republic of Korea.

New developments for nuclear technologies

Over 100 participants representing some 10 countries attended the 17th plenary meeting of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 85, Nuclear energy, nuclear technologies and radiological protection, in Jeju, Republic of Korea, in June 2010, hosted by the Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS).

Among the main resolutions were:
- Changes to the committee’s title, together with the relevant subcommittees concerned
- Communication improvements through electronic tools provided by ISO and AF-NOR (ISO member for France), as well as with international organizations having liaison status with the TC
- Enhanced participation through the implementation of improved procedures, and
increased communication to ISO/TC 85 members and stakeholder organizations.

A review of the work undertaken by the ad hoc group on management systems and conformity assessment in the field of nuclear energy was discussed, including an analysis of needs and subsequent draft work programme.

ISO/TC 85 Chair, Bernard Sevestre, commented: “I was impressed by, and would like to pay tribute to, the outstanding welcome and service that our Korean hosts, KATS, Korean Electric Association (KEA) and Korean Electric Power Industry Code (KEPI), offered the ISO/TC meeting. The perfect organization of the meeting enabled each and every participant to focus on his/ her work, for an optimal result.”

In a combination of plenary and breakout group meetings, these three subject areas will be discussed and the potential of standardization – in particular international standardization – to contribute to strengthening accessibility aspects in the design of products, services, environments and facilities will be addressed.

Also under discussion will be the current and future needs in the field of accessibility, as well as the possible contributions international standardization can make in facilitating the development of accessible solutions around the world.

For more information, please contact, Reinhard Weissinger: weissinger@iso.org.

ISO Secretary-General in Cambodia

The ISO Secretary General visited Cambodia to meet representatives of the Institute for Standards of Cambodia (ISC), ISO member for the country, and senior government officials.

A highlight of the visit was a decision by ISC Council, supported by Cambodia’s Secretary of State for the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy, Ith Praing, to recommend to the Cambodian government that the country upgrade its membership of ISO. It was noted that the upgrade, from subscriber to correspondent member, would bring added value to both stakeholders and users of standards.

ISC President Ping Sivlay explained that the growth of the Cambodian economy, the significant increase in trade, both regionally and internationally, together with the enthusiasm to use International Standards in setting food, health and safety standards in the country, make a compelling argument for upgrading membership in ISO.

CAMBODIA’S WORLD HERITAGE SITE OF ANGKOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WAS CERTIFIED TO ISO 14001 IN 2006.

International workshop on accessibility

Accessibility is the degree to which a product, device, service, environment or facility is usable by as many people as possible, including by persons with disabilities. Its importance is signified by the fact that the number of persons with disabilities, either congenital, acquired or as a result of age is estimated to be at around 650 million worldwide.

International standardization can be a powerful tool for strengthening accessibility in all these areas by setting the same standards around the world for accessible products, devices, services, environments and facilities.

On 3-4 November 2010, the World Standards Cooperation (WSC) – the coordination entity of ISO, IEC and ITU – will organize an international workshop on “Accessibility and the contribution of International Standards” in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop coincides with the theme for World Standards Day 2010 on “Standards make the world accessible for all.”

The workshop will address three key subject areas:

• Accessibility and in the field of everyday products
• Accessibility and buildings
• eAccessibility and inclusion (in information and communication technologies).

In a combination of plenary and breakout group meetings, these three subject areas will be discussed and the potential of standardization – in particular international standardization – to contribute to strengthening accessibility aspects in the design of products, services, environments and facilities will be addressed.

Also under discussion will be the current and future needs in the field of accessibility, as well as the possible contributions international standardization can make in facilitating the development of accessible solutions around the world.

For more information, please contact, Reinhard Weissinger: weissinger@iso.org.
First ISO regional training course in Syria

Twenty participants representing 12 Arab countries attended a regional training course entitled “Adopting and referencing International Standards” in Syria, in June 2010.

The course aimed at demonstrating the potential value of using ISO standards in support of technical regulations, explaining how standards can be used by governments to support good regulatory practices.

ISO/CASCO workshop
Addressing the role of risk

The ISO Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO) will hold a workshop on the role of risk in designing conformity assessment strategies on 17 November 2010, in Paris, France.

Risks are present in any organization. They may arise from environmental, technological, health, safety, security, commercial, financial or economic issues, and they may impact an organization’s ability to achieve its objectives. Risk can never be eliminated, but the development of appropriate conformity assessment strategies can help keep risk to acceptable levels.

The workshop will address areas that may be less familiar, but that play important roles in conformity assessment, including the insurance, finance, and legal sectors. It is intended to help determine if ISO/CASCO has a role to play regarding the design and risks of conformity assessment strategies.

The workshop, open to ISO/CASCO members and guests, will be accessible through the Internet to a limited number of participants.

The workshop, held in conjunction with the 26th ISO/CASCO plenary meeting on 18-19 November 2010, will be hosted by Afnor (Association Francaise de Normalisation), ISO member for France. Delegates will gather at the Marriott Hotel on the Champs-Elysées in Paris to review and discuss ISO/CASCO’s policy projects, its working groups and liaisons.

For more information, see ISO Online www.iso.org/casco2010.
With input from Ms. Nesreen Al-Khammash, ISO expert, Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology (JISM).

CLOSER TO COMPLETION: ISO/IEC 17021

Although the last scheduled meeting of the ISO/IEC 17021 working group was postponed due to the Icelandic volcano eruption, completion of the document is still on target and publication is slated for early 2011. The new version of ISO/IEC 17021, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems, will contain all the current ISO/IEC 17021:2006 requirements, together with additional specifications related to auditor competence and the audit process.

The 2011 and 2006 versions will coexist for the first year following publication. ISO/IEC 17021:2011 will undergo a systematic review in 2012 to determine if it is necessary to make changes to the 2006 parts of the document. The 2011 publication of ISO/IEC 17021 will then replace all earlier versions.

ASSESSING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ACTIVITIES

ISO is undertaking an assessment of its activities organized under the ISO Action Plan for Developing Countries 2005-2010 and is asking its members for feedback.

Thanks to additional resources being made available by donors, the number of ISO activities for developing countries has increased significantly in recent years. Donor agreements, as well as ISO’s inherent interest in evaluating the benefits of programmes, require that procedures be in place to assess impacts.

ISO is, therefore, compiling feedback through questionnaires from participants in training and awareness activities. The results seek to find out whether the activity provided the requisite tools, and whether participant expectations were met.

For the first 2009 impact assessment, covering activities implemented in 2008, the response rate was an excellent 73% for participants and 79% for national standards bodies.

The assessment showed that 79% of participants had been able to apply the knowledge gained within their organizations, and 76% report that their participation enhanced involvement in national standardization work.

Technical assistance activities carried out in support of the action plan are monitored by the ISO Committee on developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO) with the support of the ISO/DEVCO Chair’s Advisory Group (CAG).

CLOSER TO COMPLETION: ISO/IEC 17021

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Upcoming: ISO Action plan for Developing Countries 2011-2015

The ISO/DEVCO Chair’s Advisory Group (CAG) has begun preparations for the next ISO Action Plan for Developing Countries 2011-2015.

Since March 2009, the CAG initiated discussions and consultations to take stock of the achievements under the current action plan and to reflect on the future. As with the action plan concluding this year, the new programme will be aligned with the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

A set of actions has been defined to address the specific challenges of the 75% of ISO’s 163 members from developing countries, aimed at improving national standardization infrastructures, building capacity and increasing involvement in international standardization.

The ISO/DEVCO CAG meeting in June 2010 discussed the findings from five regional workshops held between December 2009 and May 2010. The draft Action Plan is expected to be presented at the next meeting of the ISO/DEVCO in Oslo, Norway, in September 2010.

These texts were provided by the teams of ISO/CASCO and ISO/DEVT at the ISO Central Secretariat.
The ISO Pack on Food Safety Management Systems on CD.

The supply chain that puts food from the farm on to our table is a bit longer than in nature. It can stretch across continents and include producers, processors, transport and storage operators, and retail outlets. The ISO 22000 family of standards helps all types of operator in the supply chain to implement management systems that ensure the food we eat is safe. The ISO Pack on Food Safety Management Systems includes on one CD the entire ISO 22000 family of standards, in English and in French. It costs just 322 Swiss francs (about USD 300 – EUR 219).

Available from ISO national member institutes (listed with contact details on the ISO Web site at www.iso.org) and from the ISO Central Secretariat Webstore at www.iso.org/isostore or e-mail to sales@iso.org.

International Organization for Standardization

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Food safety training
Rwanda puts ISO 22000 on the menu

by Garry Lambert

Food industry companies across Rwanda are participating in a series of training seminars to encourage implementation of, and certification to, ISO 22000:2005, Food safety management systems – Requirements for any organization in the food chain. Launched in March 2010, the training programme, conducted by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in collaboration with the Rwanda Bureau of Standards (RBS), aims at helping local enterprises upgrade to ISO 22000, in a move to help promote exports of Rwandan food products.

ISO 22000-certified Sorwathé, producer and exporter of black tea, has tea plantations as far as the eye can see in Rwanda’s “country of a thousand hills”.

“Iso 22000 is like a passport because products cannot be exported if they don’t conform to it,” said Charles Rutagengwa, national coordinator of the trade capacity building project under UNIDO.

Participants become conversant with the requirements of an ISO 22000-based food safety management system (FSMS), hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP), traceability and control of nonconformities. The seminars also review general infrastructure requirements, staff capacity development, levels necessary for standards implementation, and administrative requirements.

According to Athanasie Mukeshiyarameye, Head of the Standards Unit at RBS, two enterprises in Rwanda have so far certified to ISO 22000 – drinking water bottler Sulfo Rwanda, and Sorwathé, a tea producer and exporter.

Théonase Munana, Product Manager of tomato paste processor and exporter Sorwatom is optimistic that the training sessions will inspire participants to...
implement the FSMS in their respective enterprises. “In four to five months we hope to have the certification, start exporting and provide quality products to the local market,” he said.

**Very positive**

*ISO Focus*+ asked Mr. Rutagengwa to comment on early reactions to the training programme, and industry participation so far.

“Comments from the local food industry have been very positive, and participating organizations seem to be committed to certification. We targeted 10 enterprises for the first seminar and nine responded by sending at least two representatives each, totaling 21 participants. Our ultimate goal is to have all food sector companies acquiring ISO 22000 certification. Even though not all may succeed in doing so, at least they will be a step ahead in implementation of the standard.”

“We carried out a candidate selection and gap analysis prior to the training. One of the selection criteria was to determine the level of commitment to achieving certification before committing UNIDO project support, and also willingness to share the costs 50/50,” he added.

**Using local media**

Mr. Rutagengwa explained that the first two training sessions focused on bringing all participant organizations to the same level of understanding of the standard, and on ISO 22000-based documentation.

A third session will be conducted later for internal auditors drawn from these organizations.

In addition, the organizations will be visited by experts to observe implementation levels and identify non-compliance and corrective actions. Internal auditing assistance will also be provided.

Besides project support, RBS is organizing more food industry training, and has also trained local trainers to conduct ISO 22000 seminars. “We intended to use local media to publicize these events, disseminate information about the importance of the standard and FSMS certification, and raise public awareness of food safety issues in general,” he concluded.

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Garry Lambert is a British freelance journalist based in Switzerland.
Carbon neutral wine - Australian winery’s ISO 14044 vintage

by Garry Lambert

Taylors Wines Pty Ltd., of Clare Valley, South Australia, reckons it could be the world’s first winery to produce and market a range of 100 % carbon neutral wines, following the requirements of ISO 14044:2006, *Environmental management – Life cycle assessment – Requirements and guidelines*, in assessing its carbon emissions. One of Australia’s leading family-owned wineries, Taylors Wines has announced that its Eighty Acres range of wines is 100 % carbon neutral, based on a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) model conforming to ISO 14044 requirements. The company told *ISO Focus* that it also operates an ISO 14001-certified environmental management system at Clare Valley and the Sydney head office.

“As a family-owned winery we are committed to reducing our impact upon the environment. Our direct link with the land, along with the long-term view we hold for our business, means we acknowledge the responsibility we have in protecting our environment both for the present and future generations.

“The LCA model is instrumental in helping us fulfil this commitment by providing an accurate picture of our total carbon dioxide equivalent emissions,” said Mitchell Taylor, CEO of Taylors Wines.

**Accurate controls**

Taylors has implemented controls that accurately measure the CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions at every step in the lifecycle of its Eighty Acres range of wines. The assessment begins in the vineyard before harvesting and ends with the consumption, disposal and recycling of the finished packaging – a complete “cradle to the grave” approach.

Jonathan Lord, Eighty Acres Brand Manager, commented on the ISO 14044/ISO 14001-conforming controls now in place. “Perhaps the most significant of these measures relates to our programme of composting and mulching across our entire vineyard estate of more than 500 hectares, which directly contributes to the overall health of the soil and vines, and has a significant impact in reducing our overall requirement to deliver water for supplementary vineyard irrigation.

“Electricity used to pump water throughout the vineyard is the third largest...
The company also operates an ISO 14001 EMS. Contributing to the overall CO\textsubscript{2}e footprint of these wines, behind electricity for refrigeration and glass bottles, and any initiatives that reduce the requirement for irrigation directly contribute to reducing the CO\textsubscript{2}e footprint.

**Risk of CO\textsubscript{2}e miscalculation**

The measurement of CO\textsubscript{2}e across the complete Eighty Acres life cycle is based on an ISO 14044-conforming LCA maintained by the Commercial Services Division of the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI – formerly Provisor), and independently audited by RMIT University in Melbourne.

"In calculating the transport component of Eighty Acres carbon footprint, Taylors wanted to be extra sure they weren’t missing any emissions," said Karl Forsyth of AWRI. "In doing so, we have based our calculations on the longest feasible journey the product could take to reach the consumer. By using a peer reviewed ISO 14044-conforming assessment, Taylors has ensured all aspects of the product’s life cycle have been included."

"Organizations making carbon claims may fail to calculate carbon dioxide equivalent emissions relating to the entire product life-cycle if they do not use an ISO 14044-conforming assessment technique," he added. Taylors selected Carbon Neutral, www.carbonneutral.com.au, a not-for-profit organization which provides carbon offsets including Verified Emission Reduction Units (VERs), to offset the sum of carbon emissions.

Garry Lambert is a British freelance journalist based in Switzerland.

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**Reg Shaughnessy passes away**

Reginald N. Shaughnessy, former Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 176, Quality management and quality assurance, passed away, aged 77, on 24 May 2010 in Canada.

"Reg" Shaughnessy served as Chair of ISO/TC 176, responsible for the ISO 9000 family of quality management standards, from 1987 to 1997. The first standards in the family were published in 1987 and it has become a global benchmark for quality management.

"Reg leaves behind a community of TC members who have become like a family over the years," said current Chair, Gary Cort. “His enthusiasm and appreciation for the role of standards in making the world a better place and his contribution to the work of ISO and the Canadian national mirror committee will long be remembered.”

Born and educated in South Wales, Mr. Shaughnessy was a metallurgical engineer with supplementary qualifications in management and quality engineering. He worked in the iron and steel industry in the United Kingdom for 17 years, followed by 23 years of service in executive management in the Canadian steel industry. His professional life focused on metal technology, quality and productivity management and workplace health and safety systems.

He was a founding member of the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standards Policy Board, and chaired the CSA Steering Committee, responsible for developing, implementing and promoting the Z299 Canadian Quality Assurance Standards. He later served as Acting Chairman of the CSA Strategic Steering Committee on Business Management.

In 1995, he was awarded the John Jenkins Award of Excellence by the CSA in recognition of his leadership and international contributions to the development of quality management and quality assurance standards.

In 2002, he was the first recipient of the Roy A. Phillips Award, instituted by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) in recognition of individuals whose contributions have helped Canada become recognized as a world leader in international standardization. At the time, Mr. Shaughnessy had been a volunteer on steel, health, safety and quality committees for 42 years.

He later directed his own company, Q-Norm Inc., which offered consultancy on supply chain management, quality, continual improvement, health, safety and productivity.

Reg Shaughnessy was regularly quoted in, or contributed articles to, the ISO publications, ISO 9000 News and ISO Management Systems. ■

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Carbon-rich mulch delivered to Taylors Eighty Acres vineyard in its ISO 14044-conforming Life Cycle Assessment programme, based on waste from the winemaking process, has helped reduce water and electricity use, and its carbon footprint.
Scuba diving has become a very popular activity, and the sport’s service providers can be found almost anywhere in the world where there is water. Although diving has a very good safety record, there are obvious hazards that need to be controlled, particularly with equipment, diving operations and the training of divers and instructors.

In 2007, six ISO standards for recreational diving services were published, providing training requirements for three levels of diver, two levels of instructor and for the operation of a service provider (dive centre). In 2009, two more standards were published covering the conduct of nitrox diver courses and the conduct of introductory dives.

These standards have been well received by the diving industry worldwide, and many of the training organizations have taken some pains to ensure their compliance with them.

Two for one

PADI, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors, is the largest diver training organization in the world, issuing nearly a million diving certifications a year. The certifications apply to people who dive as a sport rather than for commercial diving, such as around oil rigs.

Each of the ISO standards equates to a PADI certification or professional member level. This means that a diver or member holding one of these qualifications can also be said to have met the requirements of the relevant ISO standard – in effect, two credentials are earned at once.

Why are these standards important to the diving industry? Here are a few reasons:

- **For consumers**: They enable them to make comparisons regarding diver training, allowing consumers to measure against an independent benchmark.

- **For tour operators**: Operators able to show compliance with ISO standards have increased liability protection. They can also be used to help operators make decisions as to which training agencies or businesses they want to partner with.

- **For governments**: Countries or local governments are more likely to use ISO standards as a basis for their regulations on scuba diving than invent new ones. What’s more, if the diving industry is to have regulations, it is far better to have meaningful, workable ones.

- **For training organizations**: If compliant with ISO standards, such as PADI, there is a marketing advantage when trying to attract potential divers, who are reassured that the services they will receive follow ISO standards.

In recent years, changes to PADI standards have been made with the standards in mind, so that the relevant PADI standards remain aligned with ISO standards.
Mark Caney is the President of the European Underwater Federation (EUF). He has been heavily involved in the development of CEN and ISO standards for diving and he continues to represent the UK for the negotiation and design of ISO standards for recreational diving services. In addition to his main PADI role, Mr. Caney is Director, Rebreather Technologies in the PADI Technical Diving Division, Director of Emergency First Response Ltd, and Chairman of Project AWARE Foundation (International) Ltd. A keen underwater photographer and writer, his work has been published extensively in magazines and other media.
Norway hosts GA 2010

SN’s CEO outlines programme

*ISO Focus*: Before we turn our attention to the 33rd ISO General Assembly, could you briefly describe the mission of SN?

**Trine Tveter**: Standards Norway, with a staff of around 70 people, is a private and independent non-profit member organization. Its members represent companies, public authorities, research and development, non-governmental organizations, consumers, labour unions and other stakeholders.

In addition to SN’s staff, approximately 2 050 Norwegian experts are engaged in national, European and international standardization. Its main tasks are to:

- Serve trade and industry, the authorities and other interested bodies
- Promote standardization as a mean for national competitiveness
- Meet society’s demands for developing safe products, production processes and services.

*ISO Focus*: What motivated you to propose Norway as the venue for the ISO General Assembly in 2010?

**Trine Tveter**: It is a great privilege to invite ISO members to join us in Oslo, Norway, from 13 to 18 September 2010. The time has come for the whole ISO family to visit the northern regions of our global community. We want them all to experience both our capital, Oslo, and Norway, the land of the fjords.

Standardization has a long tradition in our country, dating back to 1923 with the creation of Standards Norway’s predecessor. In addition, Norway was one of the founding member countries of ISO when the organization was established in 1947. Since then, Norway has been actively involved in ISO.

Though Norway is a relatively small country, Norwegian representatives carry a lot of weight in ISO. According to the ISO ranking based on degree of activity and GNP, Norway ranks a respectable 20th place. The country holds 53 secretariats.

SN develops standards for all fields (except electrotechnical and telecommunication) and adopts between 1 200-1 300 Norwegian Standards (NS) annually. More than 95% of the standards adopted in Norway today are of international (ISO) or European (CEN) origin. There are currently close to 14 500 Norwegian Standards available.
depends quite heavily on transnational agreements and practices. This is where ISO can play an important role with International Standards.

Norwegian companies have fish farms in many countries around the world, and we have had national standards on fisheries and aquaculture for several years. Because of the industry’s impact in Norway, it is of great importance for us to take a leading role in developing International Standards for this field.

In assessing the requirements for standardization in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, ISO/TC 234 has proposed that initial priorities should include:

- Terminology
- Technical specifications for equipment and its operation
- Characterization of aquaculture sites and maintenance of appropriate physical, chemical and biological conditions
- Environmental monitoring
- Data reporting
- Traceability
- Waste disposal.

Favourable environmental conditions for farmed fish promote optimum health and growth. It is also important to avoid unnecessary environmental impact from marine finfish farms and aquaculture.

For example, when farmed fish escape, they can inflict economic losses on aquaculture business and represent a potential environmental problem.
ISO Focus+: This year’s World Standards Day will be devoted to the theme of accessibility. How has Norway addressed issues related to accessibility? What events/activities are being planned by SN to commemorate WSD 2010?

Trine Tveter: How to make society accessible for all and remove barriers against the societal participation of disabled people are fairly new notions for some countries. In Norway, accessibility has been a significant issue for the last 10 years and is only growing in importance. Accessibility is referred to in the country’s existing and new laws and regulations, actions plans, county and municipality planning documents, and standards.

In January 2009, Norway introduced the Discrimination and Accessibility Act. This Act underlines that products, means of communication, buildings and surroundings have to be accessible for as many people as possible. Standards are important tools to make this happen.

In 2008, we developed a Norwegian Standard for accessible tourist destinations and this year we launched a standard for accessibility in houses and office buildings. At a press conference, I handed the standard to the Minister of Local Government. Good news for us – the standard received a lot of attention in the Norwegian media.

In addition, we have written chronicles and articles on accessibility and have given different presentations on the theme in Norway and abroad. Our committees on accessibility are popular and their members represent the interests of all stakeholder groups – authorities, companies, and special interest organizations.

Trine Tveter: Indeed, we have started a national project provisionally entitled, “Influencing factors on the environment”. Our main objective is a hierarchical system of factors influencing the environment, positively or negatively.

The system will be used by local and national authorities dealing with natural resource management, for the production of environmental statistics and other information as well as a tool for environmental management systems. It should also be used to support national legislation, European directives (like the habitat directive, the birds directive and the water framework directive) and international agreements like the Bern Convention and the Bonn Agreement.

We hope to publish the first edition of the system, as a Norwegian Standard, in December 2010. The project could serve as a very good basis for international standardization in order to preserve natural biological diversity.

ISO Focus: How do you see SN in the next five years? What new directions do you see the organization undertaking?

Trine Tveter: In the future, standards will be developed as part of bigger knowledge systems. We will probably see more standards on applied IT, including Web services such as online shopping. This, at least, is one of our main targets. More attention will also be given to climate, sustainability and services.

More generally, an increasing number of standards will be developed in cooperation with relevant key partners, and a greater share of our income will come from other sources – beyond the sales of standards.

We, here in SN, are constantly developing our organization, and this will make us an even more innovative organization.
Filling the gaps
Can new standards restore consumer trust in financial services?

by Elizabeth Gasiorowski-Denis

Consumer protection in financial services has come to the forefront of public attention as consumers – the end users of many types of financial services such as pension funds and other private investments, mortgage loans and consumer credit – have paid a heavy price for the world financial crisis. Recent events have damaged general public confidence in many financial institutions and the services they offer.

New market niches and opportunities for new businesses. These events are changing the face of the financial services industry. This is most visible in, but by no means limited to, developing countries.

For example, the spectacular rise of mobile phones has led to a corresponding growth in the volume of payments and cash remittances executed by them. Pent-up demand by individuals and small business for start-up capital to finance home business or small ventures has fuelled the growth of cooperative societies and companies offering micro-loans.

Some 130 representatives from standards bodies, industry, and consumer organizations from 30 countries attended a workshop in Bali, Indonesia, on the theme, “Restoring consumer confidence in financial services – Can standards help?”. This workshop aimed to examine whether International Standards can help achieve consumer protection for aspects of financial services of high priority for consumers.

For, as Ms. Norma McCormick, Chair of ISO/COPOLCO, said when opening the workshop: “COPOLCO has consistently demonstrated the ability to anticipate what will become significant emerging issues, and to be proactive in offering our insights, opinions, and perspectives.”

Restoring confidence

Participants focused on access to financial services, ethical and transparent business practices, effective consumer information about financial products. For many consumers, it is time to review or re-think all, or parts of, the current way of doing business.

“The level of consumer understanding of financial services must be continually improved,” said Dr. Bambang Setiad, Chairman of BSN and Chair of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO) in his keynote speech. “It is not easy to understand financial services such as interest payments and rates, and debt management. We need better tools, clearer terms and definitions and defined criteria against which consumers can compare the different financial services in order to make informed choices.”

Looking at financial services and restoring confidence is very timely. Ms. Dewi Odjar Ratna Komala, Deputy for Information and Promotion of Standardization, BSN, said how pleased she was that the workshop was taking place in order to raise actual issues on financial problems of importance and relevance to the public at this moment. “It is expected that this workshop will be successful in

Even before the most recent economic downturn, however, financial services were a key concern by virtue of their pervasiveness: most consumers use some type of financial service.

More than ever, consumers are questioning existing practices and searching for solutions above and beyond “business as usual.” For many, a financial services “confidence gap” has been created which needs to be filled if we are to succeed in addressing consumer confidence and trust.

To compound matters, technological advances, new business models and demand for financial services on the part of “non-banked” populations are creating new market niches and opportunities for new businesses. These events are changing the face of the financial services industry. This is most visible in, but by no means limited to, developing countries.

Some 130 representatives from 30 countries attended the ISO/COPOLCO workshop in Bali, Indonesia.
meeting the needs of all participants for financial practices applicable in different countries."

**Consumer challenges**

Mr. Bjorn Erik Thon, Consumer Ombudsman, Norway, was not able to attend in person, and his address on “Consumer challenges in the financial market,” was presented in a videomessage. He focused on the three challenges facing consumers in financial services:

- Information about costs (charges, fees) related to investments and savings
- Information about the return on investments
- Sales methods over the phone.

The particular characteristics of financial services, he said, are that they are complex, difficult to understand, and involve a lot of money. Yet, the consumer is often inexperienced. An example is guaranteed or structured savings products: thousands of consumers bought these products and lost money, due to high interest rates on hidden, high-risk loan portfolios embedded within these products.

In 2009, Norway’s Consumer Ombudsman office received approximately 8,300 complaints from consumers. According to Mr. Thon, it is essential for costs (fees and charges) to be communicated in a clear and transparent way, especially in view of the complexity of financial products.

He further questioned the current marketing practices for financial products, such as telephone sales. Consumers need to know that advice comes at a cost and what that cost is, as well as what the cost of the product/service is that they are buying. Information can do much to improve consumer confidence in this market.

**One billion people have mobile phones but no bank accounts.**

“Standards can play an important role in order to develop these important markets for the benefit of world consumers and businesses,” he said. “Standards can be a way to tackle the challenges together with legislation and market monitoring.”

**Serving bank interests**

Industry perspective was well explained by Mr. Ronald Waas, Directorate of Accounting and Payment System, Bank of Indonesia, who highlighted the Bank’s implementation of the microchip standard as a means of preventing card fraud. In Indonesia, exponential growth of card-based payment instruments reached more than 150 million rupiah per month at the end of 2009.

Like two sides of a coin, said Mr. Waas, this encouraging trend brought fraud. The Bank’s policy to migrate to chip standard, apart from reducing fraud, is expected to provide better security, efficiency and additional facilities to both the industry and its consumers.

From its experience with the chip migration, explained Mr. Waas, the Bank has learned that standardization has the ability to provide a lot of benefits. Such benefits, in the end, will likely help Bank Indonesia and the payment system industry to achieve the objective of developing a sound, robust and efficient payment and settlement system (PSS), which also gives a high level of protection to consumers. Standards, explained Mr. Waas:

- Promote interlinkage and interoperability of card-based payment instruments (any card can be read by any reader and the issued card can be used everywhere)
- Improve efficiency of the payment system (minimize cost of infrastructure investment)
- Expand the use of card-based payment instruments (customers need only one card).

While standards bring an abundance of benefits, Mr. Waas cautioned against piecemeal interference in the industry which may stifle innovation.

**Calling for universal access**

Ms. Indrani Thuraisingham, Head, Consumers International, Kuala Lumpur Office for Asia Pacific and the Middle
East, showed how International Standards can help contribute to the development of universal access to financial services, highlighting World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) 2010, “Our money, our rights”.

For Ms. Thuraisingham, the plight of the poorest with no access to financial services is particularly alarming: “There are already more than one billion people on the planet who have mobile phones but no bank accounts.”

In giving insight into the financial needs of the poor and their access to financial services – namely through micro-financing, and the use of mobile phone commerce – she examined the sectoral gaps in standards development. Do existing standards allow the necessary degree of consumer protection in this rapidly changing field? Do we need new universal standards for emerging services, so as to fully take advantage of them?

Ms. Thuraisingham drew analogies between financial services and ISO 24510:2007, *Activities relating to drinking water and wastewater services – Guidelines for the assessment and for the improvement of the service to users*, where the focus on the industry and consumer protection is mixed: providing information to consumers, payment methods to help those on low incomes, management of debt policies, guidance on fees etc.

A survey conducted by Consumers International revealed a need for standards, namely for impartiality (e.g. ISO 22222:2005, *Personal financial planning – Requirements for personal financial planners*), access to basic financial services, transparency and fairness of agreements. Consumers International, she concluded, sees a role for ISO standards and for standards “providing good old-fashioned consumer protection.”

**Growing in togetherness**

Microfinance is a powerful poverty alleviation tool. It implies provision of financial services to poor and low-income people whose low economic standing excludes them from formal financial systems. In Indonesia, the aim of Baitul Maal Wa Tamwil (BMT), said Mr. Ahmad Juwaini, Executive Director, Dompet Dhuafa Republika Foundation, is to serve low-income Muslim clients who demand products consistent with Islamic financial principles – otherwise known as Islamic microfinance.

BMT operates on the principle of profit-loss sharing instead of charging interest rates, and uses Islamic moral values and group solidarity to encourage repayment of loans. One example of a BMT operator is BMT Beringharjo. Active since 1994, BMT Beringharjo caters to the micro-financing needs of urban traders including the Beringharjo market. In 2009, BMT Beringharjo assets reached 31 billion rupiah.

For Mr. Juwaini, BMTs provide micro-enterprises access to financial services that would have been otherwise impossible for them to obtain. Similarly, micro-enterprises prefer BMTs to conventional banks due to their convenience and faster loan approval. BMTs provide an attractive alternative to private lenders who charge interest rates of between 10% and 30% per month. BMTs have also been found to be less vulnerable to system risks compared to formal financial institutions.

Unlike conventional financial services, however, BMTs at the grassroots largely fall outside the financial regulatory mechanism since they operate as member-based cooperative organizations without governmental assistance or intervention. And herein lies the challenge: how to strike a balance between the need to strengthen the linkage between the formal financial system and the BMTs, while retaining the benefits of flexibility and independence?

**The new payment landscape**

Prof. Sri Ram Khanna, National Consumer Helpline, University of Delhi, India, told the workshop about the introduction of a mobile-based model for delivery of basic financial services to millions of poor people around the world.
The figures speak for themselves. There are about 400 million bank account holders in India, whereas the number of mobile phone subscribers has reached 500 million, with an addition of 10-12 million new users per month. Of these, 490 million subscribers added in the last 14 years, about 50% do not have a bank account.

“The rapid growth in users and wider coverage of mobile phone networks have made this channel an important platform for extending banking services to customers,” said Prof. Khanna, highlighting that low prices have enabled even the poorest to afford a phone. He also cited figures for other countries such as Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines and South Africa as examples of the same general trend.

Consumers speak out

The panel discussion moderator, Ms. Jai Ok Kim, saw in all the four presentations two common themes that were present throughout:

- International Standards for financial services can provide a mechanism of consumer protection and contribute to restoring consumer confidence
- More access and information is needed by consumers on personal financial services (loans, pensions, investments), together with information disclosure and fair contracts.

Breakout groups then tackled themes of particular concern. Talking about access to financial services, participants noted that financial services, which theoretically could open the world to consumers, still suffered from the problem of access by the poor, particularly in developing countries, as well as a lack of information.

Attendees noted that International Standards for financial services needed to be based on information, ethics, protection of privacy, as well as making services available to everyone, everywhere.

Financial literacy and informed choice were a very special case, and the second breakout group recognized their importance but stressed the need for an International Standard for financial services information. Participants suggested that ISO/COPOLCO undertake a feasibility study to identify gaps in International Standards where standards could offer consumers better information to make informed choices.

A future standard, they argued, should include information design by financial institutions when presenting consumer information in consideration. The results of the study would be presented at the next ISO/COPOLCO plenary, while taking account of previous work on financial templates.

Participants in the third breakout group on ethics in financial services suggested that the development of a set of criteria in the field should consider existing standards, such as ISO 22222 for personal financial planners, ISO 24510 for water services and applicable clauses in the future ISO 26000 for social responsibility.

The relevance of ISO/COPOLCO’s past work on the matter was questioned, but the group felt that strong involvement by stakeholders in an ISO standard for financial services giving guidance on ethics (as a complement to ISO 26000) could be a way forward.

Building confidence

In the course of the workshop, the issue of information was constantly either present or in the wings. Among the array of instruments for restoring confidence, along with regulations and self-regulations, came voluntary and consensus-based International Standards, one of the most useful of these tools.

In the view of many workshop speakers and participants, a wide range of stakeholders, including consumer groups, financial sector, regulators, and other concerned stakeholders, stand to gain from the creation of International Standards for the financial service sector, with a view to providing accessible, available, understandable, visible and affordable financial services information for consumers.

In the “wrap up” session to the workshop, Ms. Norma McCormick, said that a good start has been made, but that much more remains to be done. “It was most encouraging to see industry, businesses, the consumer organizations and the standards community coming together at this workshop to reach consensus on this important issue, and to look for a cohesive, constructive way forward.

“We have made a very good start in finding common ground and hope we have come one step closer to considering information disclosure/transparency of financial services.”

Elizabeth Gasiorowski-Denis is Editor, ISO Focus+

Break-out groups tackled themes of particular concern.
ISO/COPOLCO plenary attracts strong support from Indonesian Government

Attendance by Indonesian Government representatives and major Indonesian consumer organizations demonstrated the importance given in this country to a highly successful 32nd plenary of the ISO Committee on consumer matters (ISO/COPOLCO) in Bali.

The plenary, held on 27-28 May 2010, was hosted by the ISO member for Indonesia, the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (BSN). Some 130 delegates participated, including representatives of 33 ISO member countries, Consumers International, academia and national and regional consumer organizations.

In the opening address to the plenary, the Indonesian Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade from the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs Dr. Edy Putra Irawady highlighted the growing importance of ISO, the world’s largest developer of International Standards: “As a credible international institution on standardization, ISO plays a strategic role by supporting international trade through the development of International Standards which have become reference tools in trade transactions.

“In dealing with global competition in which open and fair trade practices are the main postulates, Indonesia appreciates the important role of standardization. Therefore, the Government has high hopes for BSN to play a significant role in improving standards both in accommodating changes of product characteristics and global consumption patterns, and in protecting consumers and end users of products circulated in the domestic market."

Dr. Edy Putra Irawady went on to highlight ISO/COPOLCO’s key role as an enabler of consumer participation in the standards development process. He added: “I sincerely believe that this Bali meeting will bring real benefits to consumers. The contribution of each participant is important in the development of harmonized International Standards so that the common interests of consumers will be accommodated appropriately.”

The 32nd ISO/COPOLCO plenary was notable for the strong participation by representatives from the Indonesian Government, which also included: the country’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Bali Provincial Government.

Speaking on behalf of ISO, ISO Vice-President (technical management) Jacob Holmblad told participants that ISO gives particular importance to the way consumer interests are considered. “ISO/COPOLCO is a crucial link in the value chain,” he said, “by safeguarding the views and interests of consumers, and by acting as the ‘terrier of ISO’ – someone who keeps you alert and ensures that you do not take everything for granted.

“Seize the opportunities, exploit the possibilities, learn from your mistakes and let yourself be guided by your successes by making the most of these for maximum impact! And, finally – continue acting like a terrier!”

For more information about COPOLCO, contact its Secretary, Ms. Dana Kissinger-Matray at copolco@iso.org
Online standards development

Ensuring important progress in ISO committee work

by Elizabeth Gasiorowski-Denis

Dedicated ISO experts from around the world review and discuss the content of International Standards to achieve the broadest possible consensus between the interested parties. It often takes multiple meetings to enable all stakeholders to provide input and/or agree on a key issue.

However, despite modern means of transportation, it is not always possible to physically attend a meeting being held in another part of the world.

To tackle this challenge, the ISO Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, introduced a new application, the Web and voice conferencing tool, which allows working-level meetings within ISO’s technical programme to facilitate and complement their work.

How does it work?

Since November 2009, ISO’s Web and voice conferencing tool – GoToMeeting (www.gotomeeting.com) – has been enabling experts with an Internet connection to join a meeting from their computer. Users can make presentations, view and work on documents, and share information displayed on their screens, in a secure online environment.

Web-conferencing is coupled with voice-conferencing to allow discussion of what is on the screen. ISO offers a free call-back option. This means that participants can join the meeting from anywhere in the world and the telephone charges are paid by ISO.

Commenting on the contribution to committee work, ISO Deputy Secretary-General Kevin McKinley, said: “The benefits of Web conferencing are far-reaching. As a whole, web conferencing is flexible, dependable, and reliable, and will contribute to supporting standards development among stakeholders at a faster pace than before.

“Given these strained economic times and limitations on travel, our hope is that this conferencing tool will assist in ensuring important progress on key issues in ISO committee work.”

No mountain too high

As the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland spewed ash over much of Europe’s air space, air travel around the world came to a sudden halt. Consequently, many experts around the world were unable to physically attend ISO meetings. However, the impact of the event on the standards development process was reduced. Apart from a few meetings that were rescheduled, ISO was able to continue “business
as usual” thanks largely to the ISO Web and voice conferencing tool.

During the first week of the volcano crisis, there were over 400 participant hours of ISO Web meetings. In concrete terms, this means that there was as much ISO Web conferencing volume during this one week as there was during the first five months combined (November 2009 to March 2010).

The figures since its inception are impressive. Over 250 meetings have been held using the Web and voice conferencing tool. The majority of these meetings had between two and 10 participants and lasted approximately two hours, but a number of larger and longer meetings have been held as well.

In all, more than 600 people have participated in ISO web meetings from around the world in such countries as Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the USA.

User feedback

ISO continually compiles feedback from participants having used the tool to find out to what extent it has enabled them to better perform their work and whether their expectations were met. Such information is used to continually improve technical content and delivery. An analysis of the feedback obtained from participants showed overall satisfaction and success of the tool. The biggest success factor in using the tool is for the leader to have a practice session and to read the guidance and frequently asked questions (FAQs) provided on ISOTC’s livelink site.

The Web and voice conferencing tool can complement face-to-face meetings and enable experts to maintain progress on specific issues. From a two-person meeting to a twenty-person meeting, the tool makes an important contribution to ISO work by increasing productivity and saving valuable time and resources.

At the same time, it enables experts to keep (or even increase) the momentum needed by the market for the development of standards – with or without a volcano eruption. In fact, the latest June statistics show that usage was even higher than in April, with nearly twice as many meetings.

Sign up now

There are an estimated seven ISO meetings held each day somewhere in the world with an increasing number of them being held online. ISO even provides free monthly trainings on its Web and voice conferencing system to help you get started.

To set up a web and voice conference for your committee or to sign up for a training, send an e-mail with your request to tc-support@iso.org. Please note that meetings require at least one week’s notice. A reply will then be sent with all necessary details.

Elizabeth Gasiorowski-Denis is Editor, ISO Focus+.
by Roger Frost

ISO has just published a CD-ROM compilation of 202 standards and related documents addressing the field of mechanical vibration, shock and the condition monitoring of machines, including vehicles, and structures, such as bridges and buildings.

The documents accessible on the Mechanical vibration, shock and condition monitoring ISO Standards collection on CD-ROM include the entire portfolio of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 108, Mechanical vibration, shock and condition monitoring, as well as a selection of other related ISO standards.

ISO/TC 108 Chair, Dr. Bruce E. Douglas, comments: “ISO/TC 108 was established because of the recognition that the machines, vehicles and structures upon which we depend for food, shelter and livelihood are all either subjected to, or are the source of, mechanical forces. These forces, which originate both from nature and man-made sources, result in harmful mechanical vibration, shock and acoustic energy that can damage or destroy a structure or its surroundings, as well as people’s health.

“The proper measurement, monitoring and control of mechanical vibration and shock are critical to public safety, the environment, the quality of life and the sustainability of the Earth’s resources. Machine and structural efficiencies can be gained through proper dynamic design and maintenance practices. The ISO/TC 108 standards compiled on this new CD-ROM provide practical tools for effective and efficient design, good practice and for achieving these broader societal objectives. In addition, they give guidance for the training of certified specialists in these fields.”

The scope of ISO/TC 108’s work is “standardization in the fields of mechanical vibration and shock and the effects of vibration and shock on humans, machines, vehicles (air, sea, land and rail) and stationary structures, and of the condition monitoring of machines and structures, using multidisciplinary approaches”.

It has been developing standards for more than 50 years for the dynamic design, construction and maintenance of stationary structures, vehicles and machines. The main objectives of these standards are to:

- Facilitate international trade
- Improve the environment
- Better ensure human health and public safety
- Preserve cultural structures
- Better sustain the earth’s resources through improved machinery efficiency.

ISO/TC 108 has been formally recognized by the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM), for its expertise in the field of vibration and shock measurement metrology. BIPM is the intergovernmental organization responsible for maintaining a coherent international system of measurement and is recognized by scientists as the world leader in metrology.

The Mechanical vibration, shock and condition monitoring ISO Standards collection on CD-ROM (ISBN 978-92-671-10529-1) is available from ISO national member institutes (listed with contact details on the ISO Web site www.iso.org). It may also be obtained directly from the ISO Central Secretariat through the ISO Store or by contacting the Marketing, Communication and Information department (sales@iso.org).

Roger Frost is Head of Communications Services, ISO Central Secretariat.
According to the United Nations, 10% of the world’s population, or 650 million people, live with a disability. They are the world’s largest minority. The figure is increasing through population growth, medical advances and the ageing process.

Accessibility is often used to focus on people with disabilities and their right of access to entities, often through use of assistive technology.

In view of its enormous impact on the social and economic situation in countries around the world, ISO Focus+ will devote the Special Report of its September 2010 issue to accessibility. The subject is also at the core of this year’s theme for World Standards Day on 14 October: “Standards make the world accessible for all”.

The theme of accessibility will be developed in September 2010 issue of ISO Focus+ through the work of the different ISO technical committees that develop International Standards intended to help manufacturers, governments, regulators, designers, architects design products and services to improve the quality of life for all.

Articles will cover subjects such as user interface accessibility as well as accessibility and usability of the built environment. Accessible design is now gaining a worldwide interest in standardization not only for products, but also for social and economical activities.

Making goods and services accessible to all, directly or indirectly is the goal of ISO standards. Not only do ISO standards help improve the quality of life for all, they also provide state-of-the-art solutions to the challenges encountered by the elderly, or persons with disabilities.

Find out more on accessibility in the next issue of ISO Focus+.
Wouldn’t it be great to feel strong, calm, ready for anything?

ISO has standards that can help.

We’ve all met managers who like to pass themselves off as “real tigers”. But bluster can often be a mask for a lack of confidence. Real confidence comes from knowing you have done all in your power to prepare your organization for anything that an uncertain world can throw at it. And the power of confidence can be developed by implementing the ISO 31000 series for risk management. These standards enable organizations of all types and sizes, in both public and private sectors, to manage risk effectively. They can make all the difference between paper tigers and the real thing.

ISO 31000:2009, Risk management – Principles and guidelines
ISO/IEC 31010, Risk management – Risk assessment techniques

Available from ISO national member institutes (listed with contact details on the ISO Web site at www.iso.org) and from the ISO Central Secretariat Webstore at www.iso.org/isostore or e-mail to sales@iso.org.