Standards, Trade, and the Future

IFAN International Conference

Presented by

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October 12, 2010
10 Myths of International Standardization

1. The global economy is good for all.
2. International standards are always preferred.
3. Everyone wants one standard – one test – accepted everywhere.
4. All affected interests need to be at the table.
10 Myths of International Standardization, continued

6. Standards development is driven by altruism.

7. Standards can’t mandate a company’s product or service.

8. A standard is a standard is a standard.

9. Standards development requires face-to-face meetings.

10. Health and safety requirements are universal worldwide.
Myth One

1. The global economy is good for all.

- Only true for the best, cheapest, or most innovative.
Myth Two

2. International standards are always preferred.

- Does a standard on reindeer harnesses need to be international?
Myth Three

3. Everyone wants one standard – one test – accepted everywhere.

- Not if your product can’t meet the standard or pass the test.
Myth Four

4. All affected interests need to be at the table.

- Consortia sure don’t think so.
Myth Five


- Most users don’t care.
Myth Six

6. Standards development is driven by altruism.

- Standards development is driven by **business**.
Myth Seven

7. Standards can’t mandate a company’s product or service.

- Embedded patents can provide a preference.
Myth Eight

8. A standard is a standard is a standard.

- Unless it’s a code, a recommended good practice, or a guideline.
Myth Nine

9. Standards development requires face-to-face meetings.

- Not in the 21st Century.
Myth Ten

10. Health and safety requirements are universal worldwide.

- Safety (acceptable level of risk) is not the same in developing countries compared to developed countries.
Implications for Standards, Trade, and the Future

- The pressure for **protectionism** is increasing.

- Large global companies have **less connection** to any one national economy than ever before.

- Large global companies are **major players** in international standardization.
Implications

- International standards are developed primarily by developed countries.

- The developed countries of the world do not always understand the real problems facing developing countries.
Implications

- There is a **spectrum of standardization** from consortia to full consensus.

- The broader the application of the standard, the greater the need for an open, balanced, full participation (ANSI-style) consensus process.
Implications

- The subject matter experts who will develop the standards of the future are college students today.
- They have rarely mailed anything using a stamp.
- Text messaging is their email.
- To them, google has always been a verb.
- The WWW has always been an online tool.
- GPS navigation has always been available.
Implications

- They think IBM never made typewriters.
- Caller ID has always been available on phones.
- Electronic filing of tax returns has always existed.
- They have never used a card catalog to find a book.
- The European Union has always existed.
- They have always been able to read books on an electronic screen.
Implications

- There have always been flat-screen TVs.
- Everyone has always known what the evening news was before the evening news came on.
- Few know how to write in cursive.
- Korean cars have always been on American highways.
- They have never seen a carousel of Kodachrome slides.
- Computers have never lacked a CD-ROM drive.
Implications

- They’ve never recognized that pointing to their wrists was a request for the time of day.
- American companies have always done business in Vietnam.
- Having hundreds of cable channels but nothing to watch has always been routine.
- They first met Michelangelo when he was just a computer virus.
Implications

- DNA fingerprinting and maps of the human genome have always existed.
- “Go West, Young College Grad” has always implied, “and don’t stop until you get to Asia... and learn Chinese along the way.”
- Czechoslovakia has never existed.
- Tattoos have always been very chic and highly visible.
- They have never rolled down a car window.
Implications

- Thanks to MySpace and Facebook, autobiography can happen in real time.

- They are wireless, yet always connected.

And you think this group will travel to Elbonia to meet face to face to develop standards?
Elbonia

- Industry Standards Meeting in Elbonia
  - Let's adopt my company's specs as the industry standard.
- Your specifications are weak, and so is your kung fu.
- From that day on, all standards meetings were held in the mud of Elbonia.
  - Can't... kick! Stupid... mud!