

Charter of the Standards Working Group (SWG)

Status of this RFC

This document provides information to the court community. This document does not specify a standard. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

Change Explanation

This RFC does not update or change a previous RFC.

Abstract

This RFC documents the composition, selection, roles, and organization of the COSCA/NACM Joint Technology Committee's Standards Working Group (SWG).

Notices

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1 Introduction

Future court systems will consist of a heterogeneous mix of interdependent components derived from the contributions of numerous individuals and institutions. Participants from these widely varying organizations will be responsible for technology management functions including technology acquisition and synthesis; and access to technology and services.

An important premise underlying the JTC standards development process is that courts should have considerable freedom in the ways in which they implement their functions and capabilities. Implementations will not be centrally developed, nor will the pieces developed be centrally managed. JTC Standards will aid COSCA and NACM as they seek to procure or develop new case management and other systems within their courts. Standards are also intended to help the vendor community coalesce around a common set of functions and capabilities and improve the service offerings to the court community. Additionally, JTC Standards will support the development of court systems that can readily share information and data within and among the courts and with others in the court and justice community. This will be achieved primarily through the adoption of common standards and practices.

The Standards Working Group (SWG) of the Joint Technology Committee is charged with running the JTC Standards Process. The process is inspired by the open review and emphasis on implementation modeled in the Internet Engineering Task Force's (IETF) standards process [1]. JTC requirements for timeliness and accountability have been incorporated into a tailored process that emphasizes adoption of standards that work. Proposals for standards will be developed by JTC or by stakeholders and codified in a "Request for Comments" (RFC). The SWG will facilitate the gathering of comments in a four-stage review. First, is review for relevance to the JTC, second is review of existing implementation, third is review of operational experience, and finally a COSCA and NACM approval. Only when a Candidate Standard is relevant to court community, has been shown to have at least two working implementations, significant operational experience has been gained, and COSCA and NACM has approved, will the standard become a fully qualified JTC Standard. The process recognizes Candidate, Proposed, Draft, Recommended and JTC Standard phases for a standard.

Both JTC and NCSC participate in many standards bodies and standards development and implementation activities. The SWG is not intended to replace these activities but rather to augment them by providing a venue for linkage to communities of practice.

The process for getting an RFC published as a JTC Standard is detailed in JTC-RFC-002, "Joint Technology Committee Standards Process" [2]. Information about the preparation of RFCs and policies relating to the publication of RFCs are described in JTC-RFC-003 "Instruction to RFC Authors" [3].

1. The Goals of the SWG

The charter of the Standards Working Group (SWG) is to advance the productive use of functional, process and data standards within the state court community.

Through its work the SWG seeks to:

1. Enable data and service providers to easily work with the court community and its systems through use of standards.
2. Facilitate interoperability between components of the court systems through use of standards.
3. Facilitate data stewardship and preservation through use of standards and adoption of best practices.
4. Develop and manage effective standards recommendation, adoption, and approval processes to guide the evolution of JTC standards. Support the evolving strategies and goals of the JTC through use of standards.

The SWG is not an advocate for particular standards. Its purpose is to facilitate the recommendation and adoption of standards that draw from the experience of the technical and court communities. This facilitation primarily consists of running the process by which standards recommendations are formed and ensuring communication about proposed and existing JTC standards.

2 The Players

The players involved in the JTC Standards Process include the following:

2.1 Conference of Chief Justices

The role of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) is defined in CCJ Resolution 13. CCJ ratifies standards adopted by COSCA and NACM and supports COSCA and NACM in their Standards development roles by:

- Disseminating information about proposed and approved technology standards among the courts of their states;
- Encouraging the inclusion of approved technology standards in state strategic plans; encouraging executive branch agencies to use approved communication protocols and standards in information-sharing systems that involve the courts;
- When they have the power to do so, adopting rules or orders directing courts within the state:
 - to comply with applicable national communication protocols and standards when procuring or developing new electronic filing and information-sharing systems or when adding these functions to existing case management information systems;
 - to comply with applicable national standards when procuring or developing other new applications, unless there is compelling justification not to do so; and
 - to comply with, or migrate toward, applicable national standards when enhancing existing applications.

2.2 COSCA and NACM

The Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and the National Association of Court Managers (NACM) sponsor the Joint Technology Committee (JTC) and its standards development activities and approve all standards developed by the JTC.

2.3 The Joint Technology Committee (JTC)

The Joint Technology Committee (JTC) is the decision-recommending board of the standards process. JTC decisions have force only with COSCA/NACM concurrence.

2.4 Standards Working Group (SWG)

The Standards Working Group is a standing committee of the Joint Technology Committee responsible for standards related activities and making recommendations to the JTC. SWG activities are subject to review of the full committee. Membership of the SWG is by appointment of the JTC Chairs and is defined in Section 3.

2.5 Court Information Technology Officers Consortium (CITOC)

The Court Information Technology Officers Consortium (CITOC) is the group of court chief information technology officers chartered by the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and the National Association for Court Management (NACM) for the purpose of supporting their efforts to use technology to improve the management and administration of courts. CITOC is a principal stakeholder and contributor to the JTC Standards Process. CITOC provides support to the work of the JTC, under the direction of the Boards of COSCA and NACM, within the parameters established by the JTC Charter and the COSCA/NACM Memorandum of Understanding and supports the National Center for State Courts' (NCSC) efforts to carry out the agenda of the JTC.

2.6 National Center for State Courts (NCSC)

The NCSC serves as staff to the JTC and is a signatory of the Memorandum of Understanding forming the Joint Technology Committee. NCSC serves as the RFC Editor and may contract out such services. NCSC will provide staff support to the CCJ, COSCA, NACM, JTC, and the SWG as it relates to the Standards Process and will host the Standards web site and publish all standards related documents. NCSC's role in the process is to perform such financial, legal and logistical tasks as necessary and to act on recommendations from the SWG as appropriate. NCSC will determine the resource capacity of the JTC's Standards efforts and will work with the JTC to align JTC and NCSC project objectives with that capacity.

2.7 RFC Editor

The primary standards process documents are called Request For Comments (RFCs). The RFC editor is responsible for logistical coordination of RFCs including assuring that RFC submittals follow established standards for content coverage and format and that the RFC library is maintained and is accessible. The editor will advise submitters on content and format, but the

ultimate responsibility for providing a sufficient RFC in acceptable format rests with the author(s) of the RFC.

2.8 Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are commissioned by the SWG to perform specific review and evaluation of Candidate Standards, related implementations, and operational experience, as defined in JTC-RFC-002 [2]. Membership on a TWG is primarily drawn from CITOC.

Membership can also be drawn from other Stakeholders with specific expertise related to the RFC being reviewed. The duration of a TWG corresponds to the review schedule set by the SWG for a particular candidate standard.

2.9 Public

The public includes all process participants, all court stakeholders, and all those who are generally understood to be the “public”. Any person may make comment on RFCs under consideration. Specific procedures to ensure fair and appropriate opportunities for public comment will be developed by the SWG.

2.10 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who are materially affected by the work of the JTC. The JTC has a direct interest in stakeholders because the success of standards recommended by the JTC is ultimately determined by the use of those standards by programs, projects, tasks, or other activities directed by or performed by JTC Stakeholders. The Court Information Technology Officers Consortium (CITOC) is a special group of JTC stakeholders with defined responsibilities in the standards process.

3 SWG Membership

3.1 Selection of the SWG Members

The SWG membership is by appointment of the JTC Chairs and will include two JTC members, one of whom will serve as chair, and three CITOC members, one of whom will serve as vice-chair.

3.2 Liaison Members

Other organizations and industry may recommend liaison members to the SWG.

Liaison members participate in SWG discussions as appropriate to their roles and as designated by the SWG.

Vacancies in the liaison positions do not affect the SWG power to make decisions.

4 The Role of the SWG

The responsibilities of the SWG include:

1. Manage and coordinate activities in the adoption and approval of JTC standards.
2. Provide leadership and coordination to identify the interfaces or capabilities that need to be standardized across court systems.
3. Coordinate public reviews and evaluations of various candidate standards and their implementations.
4. Form and task TWGs to evaluate candidate standards.
5. Monitor TWG activities.
6. Make decisions related to the disposition of Standards Track, Best Current Practice (BCP) Track, and Informational Note RFCs, as defined in JTC-RFC-002 [2], in the approval process.
7. Evaluate candidate standards and advise JTC regarding resources needed to adopt and implement standards or to provide technical support for approved standards.
8. Focus on adopting standards implementations that are relevant to the court community and that have mature implementations and operational experience.
9. When no mature Candidate Standard for a defined need can be identified, advise JTC of need for development.
10. Coordinate document management for all Standards Track, BCP Track, and Informational Notes that come before the SWG.
11. Periodically review and evaluate the process as it pertains to meeting the JTC mission and, where appropriate, recommend modifications to the process.

5 SWG Decision Making

The SWG attempts to reach all decisions unanimously. If unanimity cannot be achieved, the chair may determine rough consensus by informal polls or other means. SWG recommendations do not use formal or recorded voting.

The SWG makes decisions related to the recommendations for advancement of the RFCs along the Standards Track. The SWG may approve or disapprove TWG recommendations. The SWG will consider public comments, technical factors, and JTC programmatic concerns in making decisions.

The SWG may reach decisions by face-to-face meeting, teleconference, Internet communication, or any combination of the above.

SWG activities and decisions for recommendation are then subject to review approval by the JTC.

6 Openness and Confidentiality

The SWG publishes minutes of all its meetings and all its findings regarding to RFCs on the SPG website.

7 References

7.1 Normative References

[2] JTC-RFC-002, "Joint Technology Committee Standards Process"

[3] JTC-RFC-003 "Instruction to RFC Authors"

7.2 Informative References

[1] S. Bradner, "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3," IETF RFC 2026, October 1996; www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2026.txt.

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9 Appendix A Glossary of Acronyms