

Update on the ISO RFID for Libraries Project

The third meeting of the International Working Group ISO TC46/SC4/WG11 was held in London on September 21st. National Experts attended from Australia, the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, The Netherlands, Japan, and the United States National Information Standards Organization, together with Liaisons from EDItEUR and the ISSN International Centre. The Group has been formed to develop an international RFID data model standard which will be known as ISO 28560.

In previous meetings, the most challenging issues concerned backward compatibility with existing national initiatives such as those in Denmark and The Netherlands. The September meeting was most productive and a proposal was developed which permits progress to be made along two routes and has been achieved by structuring the proposed ISO 28560 standard in three parts.

Part one will include a list of possible data elements that libraries may wish to include in the memory of their RFID tags. As this list could be expected to grow over time, part one will also include the procedure for approval of new data elements for the list.

Part two of the standard will describe the way in which the data elements may be encoded according to ISO 15962 for inclusion on the RFID tag. This method provides for a flexible yet interoperable scheme allowing individual libraries, library sectors or even national bodies to select the data elements appropriate for use within common communities of

interest while mandating an absolute minimum of data. This kind of encoding scheme currently has the support of Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA, and The Netherlands.

Part three of ISO 28560 will describe a fixed memory model of the type seen in some existing national initiatives, particularly in Europe.

The result will be that two options will exist to encode a common set of data elements into the memory of library RFID tags. It is not proposed that these two models will be interoperable but it is anticipated that the selection of encoding method will be made on a national basis to preserve interoperability within specific countries. At this stage, the countries favouring a fixed memory model (for various local reasons) include Japan, Denmark and Italy. Naturally, a single encoding method was the outcome sought by the working group but the current three-part proposal allowing two schemes was considered the best possible outcome achievable without an international consensus around a single encoding scheme.

More information on the ISO 28560 project may be found at the project's website, hosted by Danish Standards: <<http://www.bs.dk/standards/rfid/>>, and on the ALIA website at <<http://www.alia.org.au/rfidproject/>>.

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