

**SGFS N 1335**

**EWOS/TA/96/  
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**Title: Input from JTC1/SGFS to JTC1 Plenary, March 1996, Sydney -  
EWOS contribution on JTC 1 N 3772 The Normative Referencing of  
Specifications other than International Standards in JTC 1 International  
Standardized Profiles - Guidelines for ISP Submitters**

**Source: ISO/IEC JTC1/SGFS Secretariat**

**Date: 19th February 1996**

**Status: This document is not a formal SGFS position but is a contribution  
to SGFS from one of its S-liaisons**

EWOS recognizes that N3772 is a major step in the direction of allowing normative references from ISPs to non-ISO specifications, and supports this direction. However, it continues to have concerns about some of the detailed proposals. These concerns are set out below.

**1. Clause 4.1 - Multi-TC ISPs**

The current text in clause 4.1 excludes multi-TC ISPs where the Referenced Specification is within the scope of the 'other' TC. Since this is an undesirable restriction EWOS suggests that a note be added to this clause, encouraging SGFS to contact those TCs for which a Cooperative Agreement on the development of ISPs exists, in order to come to an agreement on this handling of Referenced Specifications.

**2. Clause 4.8 - Documented evidence of sufficient knowledge**

EWOS fully understands and supports the requirement for thorough review of an ISP containing Referenced Specifications (and in fact of any ISP) before the ISP is submitted to SGFS. However, the concept of "evidence of sufficient knowledge" (clause 4.8) is vague, and can only be interpreted subjectively. Is the review by a group of 20 people with some knowledge of the subject better or worse than the review of 1 or 2 real experts? If the real experts on the Referenced Specification says "yes", but the real experts on the ISP say "no", then what should happen? How is the degree of knowledge to be quantified in the Referencing Explanatory Report?

The real issue here seems to be one of trust by one review group (the JTC1 NBs) of a review carried out previously by another review group (the RWSs). The basis for trust in such matters cannot easily be quantified or completely ensured. The only thing that can be done is to require that the Referencing Explanatory Report includes a description (as detailed as possible) of the review process done by the RWSs and that such descriptions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by JTC1 NBs. EWOS proposes that clause 4.8 be revised in this light.

### 3. Clause 4.9 - ISPs only containing Referenced Specifications

ISPs are used to define logical blocks which can be used to form larger specifications which each address groupings of functionality to meet specific requirements. If two such blocks offer (nearly) the same functionality through identical interfaces but are based on different types of technology, then the blocks are interchangeable in a specification.

There can be no guarantee that all of the logical blocks required for any particular requirement can be defined by ISPs involving standards (e.g. this is unlikely to be the case for an ISP addressing an HCI requirement). Thus, ISPs purely based on Referenced Specifications may be necessary for some requirements to be met. It follows that the grouping of specifications in an ISP should be based on the requirements and on the useability of the individual specifications, not on their sources. EWOS therefore proposes that clause 4.9 be deleted.