

# ANSI X3J16 \* PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE C++

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**TO: X3J16 committee members**

## **Planning the meeting**

The first technical meeting of the committee is going to be an exciting event. 50-70 people are expected at the meeting. Many participants are experienced C++ implementors and users. Together with this document you will receive Bjarne Stroustrup's annotated C++ reference manual. It will definitely provide the basis for many interesting discussions. However, besides the excitement, we all want this meeting to be productive. It means we need to set up goals to be achieved at the meeting. Complying with the guidelines developed at the X3J16 organizational meeting we have the following goals for the March meeting:

### **1. Complete the definition of committee goals.**

Four groups of goals were considered to be most important at the organizational meeting:

a) Language definition and design criteria (spirit of C++).

b) Scope of standard.

This group of goals has two dimensions. Determining standard components such as the language itself, libraries, preprocessor, header files, etc., constitute the first dimension. In the second dimension we need to define how far the committee wants to go in defining each particular component and what criteria it should use to draw the boundary.

c) Deliverables.

X3J11 has delivered two documents: standard document and rationale document. There seems to be no doubt that we should deliver these two documents as well. However we may want to consider some additional deliverables. Among them a set of examples illustrating each C++ concept and construct would be very useful. C++ is a significantly more complex language than C. It will be very difficult to come up with an absolutely clear and concise definition for each element of the language. A set of examples will make the standard more understandable. At the organizational meeting, formal definition of C++ and specification techniques for C++ classes were also mentioned.

d) Time frame for the deliverables.

The goals working group will prepare a proposal to be considered by the committee. The discussion will probably be quite intense, in particular in regard to the scope of standard. To make this discussion constructive, I urge everybody who has a position in regard to any group of the committee goals, to prepare his position in writing and/or prepare a presentation in support of his position. I would like to suggest that each such position concentrate on the justification for including or excluding certain goals or language elements rather than on associated technical details. I also would like to ask these people to inform me about their intention to present their position. This will help me to plan the meeting. Also if they send me a copy of their position and/or presentation I will make sure that everybody has a copy of it, if possible, before the meeting.

## **2. Approval of the annotated C++ reference manual as a base document.**

It definitely cannot be assumed that everybody will read the manual carefully (400 pages) before the meeting. However it is probably enough time for everybody to figure out any major disagreements and problems in regard to the manual. At the meeting we can discuss them and make a list of concerns, if any, approved by the committee. This will let us form appropriate working groups and let the editors start their work. Again I would like to urge everybody who has a position in regard to the reference manual, to prepare his position in writing and/or prepare a presentation, and let me know about it.

## **3. Form working groups in accordance with the results of two above items.**

We will probably need 5-7 groups to be formed. Each group will have to meet for a few hours to develop a work plan and goals to be achieved before the July meeting. If I am right about the number of groups, most members will probably have to volunteer for at least one group.

## **4. Other business items.**

These include items that we did not have enough time to discuss at the organizational meeting and a few new ones.

### **a) X3J16 internal procedures.**

Productive discussions, careful and objective consideration of each work item, and little time spent on formal votes are very important factors in the success of the committee work. Thus we should start a log of our internal policies and procedures which will support these factors. The following items seem to be important enough to be discussed at the meeting and be included in the log in this form or another:

- 1). Procedure for making important decisions. Such procedure may require an important issue, language extension, or work item to be discussed during, or between, several meetings at the working group level and then to be presented to the committee for a short additional discussion and final vote.
- 2). Conferences. Experience of the CODASYL committee shows that conferences on significant changes to the language are very useful in choosing the right approach for introducing the changes into the language. Such conferences involve not only committee members but also other experts in the subject and representatives of the user community. This allows all

committee members to understand the issues associated with the proposed change better before taking a vote, and in certain cases helps to eliminate disagreements at all. Such conference may take a day or half day of a committee meeting.

3). Position papers. The position papers is a common practice that allows technical discussion to be focused on a particular topic rather than wander. It also allows participants to follow and understand better the thoughts of the position presenter. I suggest that we strongly recommend a position paper for any extended discussion and any position requiring more than 5 minutes for its presentation.

b) International involvement and ISO new work item.

Early international involvement is very important to assure that only one international standard definition of C++ will exist and that no delays in producing standard documents will occur because of late comments and suggestions from the international community.

The committee may want to discuss and take some actions in this regard. We also have to discuss and approve the new work item for ISO SC22 since the US delegation has been assigned by SC22 to prepare it.

c) X3J16 1991 summer meeting in Sweden.

Dag Bruck and organizations funding his participation in X3J16 very kindly invite X3J16 to have its 1991 summer meeting in Sweden. This seems to be a good opportunity in regard to the previous item. We need to discuss this invitation and make a decision in order to let Dag know if he needs to continue his activities to prepare the meeting. I would recommend that all committee members consult with their organizations in this regard before the meeting.

d). Report of the communication tools working group.

We may need to make some decisions and take some actions to confirm our policy - "Less meetings - More work between meetings".

5. **Goals and Agenda for the July meeting.**

## **Preliminary Agenda**

### **Monday, March 12, 9:00am - 5:30pm**

1. Introductions
2. Communication tools working group.
3. X3J16 internal procedures.
4. International involvement and ISO new work item.
5. X3J16 1991 summer meeting in Sweden.

### **Tuesday, March 13, 8:30am - 5:30pm**

6. Report of the goals working group and its approval
7. Position presentations and common discussion in regard to goals
8. Breaking into subgroups to discuss particular goals and items in the scope of work
9. Subgroup sessions
10. Reports of subgroups and common discussion
11. Approval of the committee goals

### **Wednesday, March 14, 8:30am - 5:30pm**

12. Annotated C++ reference manual - common discussion
13. Position presentations and common discussion
14. Breaking into subgroups to discuss concerns and disagreements
15. Subgroup sessions

### **Thursday, March 15, 8:30am - 5:30pm**

16. Reports of subgroups and common discussion
17. Approval of the base document and the list of concerns, if any
18. Forming working groups
19. Development of goals and work plans by working groups

### **Friday, March 16, 8:30am - 12:30pm**

20. Reports of working groups and common discussion
21. Approval of working group plans and goals
22. Goals and preliminary agenda for the July meeting

After 12:30 non-official meetings and consultations, if any, can continue.