

**Title: U.S. comments on Guidelines for a Taxonomy Email Reflector**

**Source: ANSI**

**Status: For discussion during the 11th SGFS Plenary Meeting,  
June 19 - 23, Berlin, Germany**

The U.S. notes that the SGFS chairman's "Management Report on SGFS Authorized Subgroup Meeting" (SGFSN1269) states that "SGFS will create a special email list to discuss taxonomy issues". Based on this statement, the U.S. anticipates that this topic will be discussed at the Berlin meeting. (To help focus discussion, references are made in this contribution to the anticipated contribution from the chairman which was informally provided in SGFS.108.) The U.S. offers the following comments on the proposed special email list on taxonomy issues:

1. Discussion of taxonomy issues can quite easily and naturally lead to discussion of TR 10000 structure issues or possibly other points which are key to the future work of SGFS. (This will be particularly true if, as suggested in SGFS.108, point 5, "The scope of the contributions should be SGFS taxonomy in the widest sense.")  
Therefore, the U.S. requests that all SGFS participants be included on the email list unless they request to be excluded. (The issue of participation on the email list is raised in SGFS.108, point 2.)
2. Because a wide variety of taxonomy issues, with a wide range of impact, may be discussed simultaneously on the reflector, the use of "clear short but descriptive subject headers" is critical. (SGFS.108 point 6 suggests new issues "should" contain such headers. Because of the possible importance, "shall" is more appropriate.) During discussion on this topic, the following observations were made:
  - a) Although not identified so far as a requirement, we assume that message numbers, similar to those used in the SGFS reflector, will be provided.
  - b) (As suggested in SGFS.108, point 6), in order to track discussion on a particular issue, the subject header must contain easily identifiable, consistent, information in order to associate related messages.
  - c) To be able to track related messages and to be able to identify the original issue raised, the subject header shall contain a single "Re:" followed by the original message number and title.
  - d) It is likely that most participants will use a "reply" or "answer" capability of their e-mail system. This could produce difficulties with maintaining useful subject headers. For example  
\* The phrase "Re:" is commonly added at the beginning of the subject

header. After several messages have been exchanged on a topic, the subject header will become almost useless as a string of "Re: Re: Re: . . .". (See SGFS.104 as an example).

o The subject header does not normally contain the message number. Therefore, a "Reply" will not automatically capture the original message number for reference purposes.

In other words, to optimize the usefulness of the subject header, the responder may have to make an additional effort to modify the header line.

3. It should be clear that results of these discussions, in order to be acted on by SGFS, need to be submitted as contributions as opposed to submitted as informal e-mail messages. (In SGFS.108, point 7, "submit this conclusion to SGFS" should be "submit this conclusion as a contribution to SGFS".