Standards as a Tool for Achieving Public Policy and Regulatory Goals
An Initiative of the
InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS)

Why International Standards?

Technical standards play an essential role in addressing emerging challenges related to information and communications technologies (ICT). Standards for cybersecurity, data protection, and privacy are just a few of the areas where multiple stakeholders have come together to develop solutions for the benefit of governments, industry, and consumers. Standards also give regulators voluntary tools to ensure safety, security, consistency, and the best fit for the technology, while fostering innovation.

International technical standards are developed in consensus-based standards development organizations (SDOs) that are open to global participation (including large and small businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations, and academia), ensuring that the best standards are developed to address what are often highly technical problems. U.S. organizations are highly effective in this work, contributing proposals that are responsive to current technology, business and consumer needs and that can be adopted globally to address related issues.

When regulators and legislators draft legislation and regulations relevant to ICT products and services, it is important that they consider relevant, established and/or developing international standards that can make it easier to develop effective laws and regulations. Doing so can also help address concerns and ensure that the United States is aligned with and leveraging existing approaches to issues of mutual interest. Ensuring alignment with international standards prevents technical barriers to trade and enables US developed products and services to operate smoothly and securely across markets.

By taking appropriate international standards into account when formulating legislation and regulation, the U.S. government:

- ✓ maximizes the choice of products available;
- ✓ lowers costs by not creating unnecessary technical barriers to trade;
- ✓ sets a positive precedent for other governments (U.S. states & other countries);
- ✓ shapes global markets and meets consumer needs;
- ✓ ensures reliability and interoperability and fosters trust; and
- ✓ accelerates the adoption of best practices.

Standards, Public Policy, and Regulation (SPuR)

Through SPuR, ITI and INCITS[1] are working together to create an avenue for engagement between policymakers and the standards community. The primary goals of the Initiative are to facilitate policymakers' visibility into international standards development (enabling them to use international standards to inform and shape legislation, regulation, guidelines, and other policies)

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[1] INCITS, the InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards. INCITS is the central U.S. forum dedicated to creating technology standards for the next generation of innovation.

and to make US developers of international standards more aware of US policymakers' interests and concerns. In areas where standards do not yet exist, the standards community can discuss whether new international standards are needed. Where widely-accepted international standards are available, it is important that legislators and regulators consider how to leverage them. Examples of standards and technical reports under development include:
Data Usage Framework, IoT Security and Privacy, and Bias in Artificial Intelligence.

About INCITS

INCITS is an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited standards development organization. INCITS is the U.S. national representative to Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC 1) – Information Technology -- under ISO and IEC[2]. ISO and IEC standards are recognized in every country as international standards. INCITS is sponsored by the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI).

About ITI

ITI is the premier policy advocate and thought leader in the United States and around the world for the ICT industry, representing over 70 leading companies from across the ICT sector.

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[2] The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is an international standards organization that prepares and publishes international standards for all electronic and related technologies.

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