

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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Standards Committee: Membership in ANSI

(Prepared by: Co-Chair Marcy Flynn and Council Liaison Dennis Meissner)

BACKGROUND

A year ago, the Council charged the Standards Committee to investigate the potential costs and benefits of becoming a member of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) so that SAA-developed standards could also be certified as official ANSI standards. Standards Committee Co-chair Marcy Flynn did some preliminary research by phone and browser, just to gather enough information to launch an initial Council discussion of the issue at the January 2012 meeting. Marcy's findings appear below.

ANSI Standards Development Process¹

Standards Developer Accreditation Process

- Must be accredited in order to be a standards developer.
- Accreditation requires audit.

ANSI Membership Fees and Obligations

- Organizational member: Full membership required to apply for and maintain ANSI accreditation as a developer; audited every 5 years.
- Organizational member fee structure is tiered, based upon operating budget, ranging from \$3,355 to \$4,870 annually.²
- Audited Designator is another category of developer with different procedures and fees. Organization undergoes audit process each time a document is submitted.
- Additional annual fee per document accredited. With 0-3 hosted standards: \$1,905; with 4-54 standards: \$4,130.
- Additional costs: ISO secretariat/s, US tag to ISO tech committee, international representation.

¹ Based on information on the ANSI website and discussion with Betsy Fanning, AIIM Standards Director (12 May 2011). ANSI's standards activity page:

http://www.ansi.org/standards_activities/overview/overview.aspx

² ANSI's organizational membership application:

http://publicaa.ansi.org/sites/apdl/Documents/Membership/Organizational_Application.pdf.

Review Cycle

- SAA still responsible to do the standards work and manage standards development.
- Must conform to ANSI accreditation due process operating procedures.³
- Balanced consensus body required; it must be representative of the community (Standards Committee might qualify).
- 5-year review cycle for standards; 3-year review cycle for technical reports.

Other ANSI Standards Developers: There are about 200 accredited ANSI standards developers, including AIIM, ARMA, IEEE, NIST, SMPTE.

AIIM: Full-time Standards Director on staff and could be interested in partnering on standards development related to electronic information.

In addition to a much wider promotion of SAA-developed standards, ANSI membership would also give us a seat on discussion forums in industry sectors that promulgate similar standards. ANSI also helps its members identify standards that may overlap with their own, and gives members some recourse to influencing the development of standards by other organizations that may affect their profession.

With those benefits comes a certain loss of autonomy, in which other ANSI members may have the power to influence SAA's standards during review cycles. Review and maintenance of SAA standards will be driven by ANSI maintenance structures, and revisions will need to be accepted by relevant ANSI committees.

DISCUSSION

No recommendation is being made to the Council. The information presented here is intended to facilitate an initial discussion of the issue.

There are significant costs to ANSI membership, both financial and in terms of the loss of some autonomy. Benefits certainly include a higher level of visibility and recognition for SAA-developed standards. We could expect a fiscal impact of roughly \$6,000 per annum if three standards are maintained, or \$8,200 if four or more are maintained.

Questions:

- What are the compelling benefits that we see in ANSI membership?
- Do these benefits outweigh the costs?
- How would ANSI membership affect future standards development, review, and revision?
- Who would perform the additional work required by ANSI membership? The Standards Committee?

³ ANSI's Due Process Requirements:
<http://publicaa.ansi.org/sites/apdl/Documents/Standards%20Activities/American%20National%20Standards/Procedures,%20Guides,%20and%20Forms/2010%20ANSI%20Essential%20Requirements%20and%20Related/2010%20ANSI%20Essential%20Requirements.pdf>