TopicMaps.Org Moves Development Efforts to OASIS ISO Standard for Navigating Information to Be Advanced by OASIS TCs

Boston, MA, USA; 2 October 2001 -- OASIS, the XML interoperability consortium, added support for the XML Topics Maps (XTM) specification to its technical agenda, as industry group, TopicMaps.Org, announced its decision to continue development within the OASIS Technical Process. XTM (ISO/IEC 13250:2000), which provides a model for organizing, retrieving and navigating information resources, will be advanced by a series of newly formed OASIS technical committees.

Topic maps provide a 'knowledge layer'--independent of the information resources themselves--to capture and manage corporate memory, improve indexing and enable the integration of information that spans multiple, disparate repositories. Applications include the semantic web, distributed ontologies, business processes, workflow, search and retrieval tools, knowledge management, diplomatic communication, cultural dialogue and various other disciplines and functions.

"Topic maps help people find the information they need quickly and easily. They serve, in effect, as a GPS for the Web," explained Charles F. Goldfarb, the father of markup languages and inventor of SGML. "By extending the power of XML to make information self-describing, topic maps offer the potential to create a new generation of search engines."

"As XTM moves to becoming part of the ISO standard, OASIS is the logical forum to advance its acceptance in the marketplace," said Eric Freese of ISOGEN International, chair of TopicMaps.Org. "Participation and support from the OASIS membership will help XTM realize its enormous potential to improve the manageability of information."

Steven R. Newcomb, one of the three co-editors of the ISO Topic Maps standard, agreed, "Topic Maps offers a simple and extraordinarily scalable way to control 'infoglut' and amalgamate sets of knowledge-bearing assertions from disparate sources. To derive maximum benefit from Topic Maps, communities and industries should establish sets of 'published subjects' and other best practices. The combination of the OASIS technical development process and the vision and dedication of the TopicMaps.Org contributors should yield good results for participating communities and industries--and everyone else, too." To advance XTM, the OASIS Topic Maps Published Subjects Technical Committee has been formed, and the consortium expects to announce additional OASIS topic maps technical committees over the next 30 days.

"Many current OASIS technical committees advance development work that began outside the Consortium," said Karl Best, director of technical operations at OASIS. "Increasingly, independent industry groups are realizing the benefits of working within the open OASIS technical process, where they gain access to OASIS infrastructure, resources and expertise. OASIS broadens participation and lets groups focus on their technical
work, rather than the administrative details of running a member association. Topic Maps is an exciting addition to the OASIS technical agenda."

Organizations contributing to the OASIS Topic Maps Technical Committees include Boeing, DataChannel, emolis, Reuters, Sun Microsystems and other OASIS Contributors and Individual members. Information on joining OASIS can be found on http://www.oasis-open.org/join [1].

OASIS will host an open mail list, topicmaps-comment@lists.oasis-open.org [2], for public comment on XTM. Completed work will be freely available to the public without licensing or other fees.

About OASIS
OASIS (http://www.oasis-open.org [3]) is the international, not-for-profit consortium that advances electronic business by promoting open, collaborative development of interoperability specifications. With the United Nations, OASIS sponsors ebXML, a global framework for electronic business data exchange. OASIS operates XML.ORG, the non-commercial portal that delivers information on the use of XML in industry. The XML.ORG Registry provides an open community clearinghouse for distributing and locating XML application schemas, vocabularies and related documents. OASIS serves as the home for industry groups interested in developing XML specifications. OASIS technical work embraces conformance, security, business transactions, repositories and other interoperability issues.

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