INCITS Contact:
Shannon Feaster
(202) 626-5725 or sfeaster@itic.org

INCITS' Approves Five Standards Proposals from the V2 Technical Committee Supporting Universal Remote Consoles

Areas of Impact: Universal Remote Control, Natural language control, Machine control

Washington, D.C. April 22, 2004 - The InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS) today announced the approval of project proposals from the INCITS Technical Committee V2 (Information Technology Access Interfaces) for the development of five national standards on remote control of appliances and services. The approved projects are:

- "Protocol to Facilitate Operation of Information and Electronic Products: **Universal Remote Console**" (INCITS Project Number 1678)
- "Protocol to Facilitate Operation of Information and Electronic Products: **User Interface Socket Description**" (INCITS Project Number 1679)
- "Protocol to Facilitate Operation of Information and Electronic Products: **Presentation Template**" (INCITS Project Number 1680)
- "Protocol to Facilitate Operation of Information and Electronic Products: **Target Properties Sheet**" (INCITS Project Number 1681)
- "Protocol to Facilitate Operation of Information and Electronic Products: **Resource Description**" (INCITS Project Number 1682)

The purpose of these standards is to facilitate the development and deployment of a wide variety of devices (from different manufacturers) that can act as Universal Remote Consoles (URCs) for other devices and services. The standards will allow users to control any number of Information and Electronic Products in their environment.

The technologies that would be affected by these new standards include products and services ranging from simple devices such as light switches and thermostats to more complex items like audio visual equipment, home appliances, electronics in cars, and web-based services.

The products to be controlled may be in the same location as the individual who desires to control them through the URC or at any distance from the URC/user as long as there

is a network connection between the URC and the product. Distance control is possible because the URC provides the user with all of the necessary controls as well as prompts and other information displayed by the product. Because the information provided by the product is modality neutral, products could be controlled using visual interfaces, natural language interfaces, or even braille.

URC functionality could be provided by common devices such as personal computing and other information technology devices (e.g. laptops, PDAs), telecommunications/ WAP devices (e.g. cell phones), etc. URCs could also be implemented as functions in assistive technology devices, or new devices could be specially built to function as Universal Remote Consoles. URCs may also be built to serve as remote consoles for a particular family of products (e.g. a remote console designed to control components of an integrated home audio-visual system), and would also be able to control any other device that is URC compatible.

One of the most exciting aspects of these new standards is their potential to enable the use of intelligent agents and natural language to control products. They provide for "virtual interface sockets" on products so that they can be controlled from other programmed or intelligent devices. The ability to talk naturally to a PDA or cell phone and have it control all of the products in one's environment may now be possible with the adoption and implementation of these standards.

These five projects are based on an earlier work and are advanced in their development. Current standard drafts are based on modern Web technologies such as the Extensible Markup Language (XML) and XML Schema Definition (XSD). They are designed to allow implementation on top of existing connectivity technologies and existing networking platforms.

The next meeting of the INCITS V2 Technical Committee is scheduled for June 14-15, 2004. Additional information on these projects and the V2 meetings can be found at (http://www.incits.org/tc_home/v2.htm).

About INCITS

The InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS) is the venue of choice for information technology developers, producers, and users for the creation and maintenance of formal IT standards. INCITS is accredited by, and operates under rules approved by, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). These rules are designed to ensure that voluntary standards are developed by the consensus of directly and materially affected interests. Contact: INCITS Secretariat, Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC), 1250 Eye St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005 (www.incits.org).