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INCITS Technical Committee M1, Biometrics, Takes Steps to Enhance the Usability of Its Family of Open Systems Standards for Biometric Data Interchange and Interoperability

August 24, 2006 - Since the first meeting of [INCITS M1](#), Biometrics, in January 2002, [INCITS](#) has rapidly approved a critically needed family of American National Standards for biometric data interchange and interoperability. This family of standards specifies requirements that solve the complexities of applying biometrics to a wide variety of commercial and government personal recognition applications in an open systems environment.

This biometric family of standards consists of a layered set of standards for the biometric data formats, interfaces, and application profiles. The biometric data format standards include a number of biometric modalities, such as finger, face, iris, hand geometry, and signature. The biometric interface standards include the Biometric Application Programming Interface (BioAPI) and the Common Biometric Exchange Formats Framework (CBEFF). The biometric profiles include application of biometric based recognition of transportation workers, travelers at national borders, and customers at points-of sale.

Many of the INCITS biometric standards have been adopted by large organizations within the US. The US Department of Homeland Security has included INCITS biometric standards requirements within its Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Program and has adopted INCITS 385-2004 for face recognition. The biometric requirements ([NIST SP 800-76](#)) for the Personal Identity Verification (PIV) of Federal Employees and Contractors Program include conformance requirements to the INCITS data format standards for finger minutia template (INCITS 378-2004), finger image (INCITS 381-2004), and face image data (INCITS 385-2004). The PIV Program also requires conformance to the Common Biometric Exchange Formats Framework (CBEFF) (INCITS 398-2005). The common header for PIV biometric data specified in NIST SP 800-76 conforms to CBEFF.

At its June 2006 meeting, INCITS M1 affirmed a strategic direction to enhance even more the usability of these standards and to promote further adoption. This includes developing guidance for inclusion in each standard, to clearly delineate their usage and which clarifies how this family of layered biometrics standards is intended to work together in an efficient and flexible way in support of open system solutions. Additionally, steps are being taken to ensure that there are consistent and non-overlapping requirements specified in each of the standard layers (i.e., data format standards, interface standards, and biometric profile standards) with the goal of optimizing conformance testing for these standards and to facilitate standards-based implementations from the applications, interfaces and technology perspective. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to offer a clear and comprehensive set of layered standards that should be used together for achieving full biometric interoperability and data interchange in an open systems environment.

Information on how to participate in INCITS M1 can be found on the INCITS web site.

About INCITS

The mission of the InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS) is to promote the effective use of Information and Communication Technology through standardization in a way that balances the interests of all stakeholders and increases the global competitiveness of the member organizations. INCITS serves as the U.S. Technical Advisory Group for ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1, which is responsible for international standardization in the field of information technology.

INCITS and the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) are jointly accredited by, and operate 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. For further information, please contact INCITS, 1250 Eye St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005 (www.incits.org).

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