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ECMA-340 “Near Field Communications - Interface and Protocol (NFCIP-1)” ISO/IEC JTC1 Fast-Track Procedure

1. Introduction

In document N2285, dated 2003-02-10, I alerted members of SC17 to the stated intention of ECMA International to submit their standard ECMA-340, entitled “Near Field Communication - Interface and Protocol (NFCIP-1)”, to JTC1 for transposition to an International Standard via the fast-track procedure and how it was ECMA International’s intention to cite SC6 - Telecommunications and Information Interchange between Systems - as the target SC within JTC1 through which to handle the transposition.

It is my understanding that ECMA International have now approached JTC1 in this regard and as a consequence JTC1 can be expected to instigate the fast-track procedure in the near future.

2. Response from SC17/WG8

From N2285 members will know that I asked WG8 to consider the ramifications of this transposition for SC17 and to advise SC17 accordingly. This note incorporates the advice I have received from WG8 to date, as conveyed to me by the Convenor of WG8, but contains my own interpretation as to what that advice might mean in practice for National Bodies (NBs) participating in the fast-track DIS ballot.

Broadly, the experts in WG8 support the transposition of the new technology conveyed in ECMA-340 but seek reassurance that this will be undertaken within JTC1 in a manner that is sympathetic to the body of existing work already developed by SC17. In particular, to avoid any contradictions occurring between SC17’s work, principally IS14443, and ECMA-340 now **or in the future** as these different but overlapping technologies develop independently in the market place.

3. The Fast-track Procedure

For those unfamiliar with the fast-track procedure what follows is my understanding of the process as conducted within JTC1.

The fast-track procedure consists of a 5 month DIS ballot. **Any** body which is a member of ISO or IEC, which means both P and **O-Member** countries in SC17 regardless of whether they are P-members of either JTC1 and/or SC6, is eligible to vote in this fast-track DIS ballot and have a responsibility, therefore, so to do.

Two separate criteria have to be met for the DIS to be approved. The first requires that two-thirds of the P-Members of JTC1 voting, approve. The second, that no more than a quarter of **all the votes cast** are for disapproval. It is this second criteria that is important as far as any SC17 Member who is not a P-Member of JTC1 is concerned and the reason why they should be encouraged to vote regardless of whether they be P or O-Members of SC17.

Regardless of NB’s status, the permissible responses to the ballot are:

- Approve,
- Approve with comments,

- Disapprove **always with comments** (a Disapproval absent of comments is automatically disregarded),
- Abstain.

Following an incident with an earlier fast-track transposition, JTC1 has now instituted a one month enquiry at the start of the process. (N2038 - Resolution 19 from the JTC1 meeting in Hawaii, 2001-10-29/11-02.) This one month enquiry is a 30 day review for NBs to determine if there are any **contradictions** in the proposed standard with respect to any other JTC1, ISO or IEC standards.

If such a contradiction is alleged, the matter shall be resolved by the ITTF and JTC1 Secretariat before ballot voting can commence. If no contradiction is alleged, the fast-track ballot voting commences immediately following the 30 day period. In either case, the ensuing DIS ballot period shall be five months.

4. Application of the Fast-track Procedure to ECMA-340

In order that the outcome of the fast-track ballot on ECMA-340 is the result of the fullest information available, I would encourage members of SC17 (regardless of whether P or O-Members) and particularly experts from WG8 who are involved with this issue to acquaint themselves with the process within their particular national body whereby their NB determines the vote it will cast in this JTC1 ballot and ensure their views on this matter are known to those within the NB responsible for casting the vote.

Initially NBs will be faced with the one month enquiry period. Wording taken from the cover sheet of a recent similar 'ECMA sponsored' transposition where as follows :

“This fast track document is forwarded to National Bodies for a 30 day review period to determine if there [are] any contradictions to other JTC1, ISO or IEC standards. National Bodies that identify a contradiction are asked to inform the JTC1 Secretariat by the due date. If no contradiction is alleged on the fast track ballot, voting will commence immediately and the voting period shall be five months.”

In order to respond to such an enquiry, therefore, a NB would have to detail clearly the nature of the **contradiction** it perceives.

Detailed points arising from WG8's consideration of the matter included:

- **Test Procedures** - it is a requirement that any new technology standardised by SC17 be accompanied by suitable test procedures,
- **Bit rates** - there is a query surrounding the low choice of bit rate for the passive mode contained within ECMA-340, i.e. 424k bps, when earlier discussions included much higher rates and whether the reasons for this are relevant to SC17/WG8's own consideration of higher bit rates in 14443,
- **Type A compatibility** - The strategy for interoperability in 14443 is for cards to be either Type A or Type B but for readers to support both modes. ECMA-340 appears to be compatible with Type A but not support Type B.

Whilst the experts from some countries present at the last meeting of WG8 (e.g. France, Israel, Spain, UK and USA) wanted a wider consultation on these points, and WG8 duly initiated an 8 week enquiry on them, it is unlikely the results of that consultation will be known before the fast-

track process is initiated although they would most likely be known before the one month enquiry period concludes.

On the face of it, these point, with the possible exception of Type A Compatibility, seem more relevant to the 5 month DIS ballot rather than of themselves being contradictions between ECMA-340 and 14443. If, however, NBs decide that these or other considerations do constitute a contradiction then they should notify the JTC1 Secretariat as soon as possible and in any event prior to the expiry date of the 30 day review period.

Turning to the 5 month DIS ballot; where experts have significant concerns they should work within their NB to ensure these are raised as part of that country's ballot response. Unresolved issues raised to date include:

- SC17 would be a more appropriate target sub-committee than SC6 in which to transpose ECMA-340, or, that SCs 6 and 17 should establish a joint working group to oversee the transposition, or failing either, that SC6 establish a close and active liaison with SC17/WG8 to consider this and any future developments of ECMA-340 in so far as they affect SC17 and the air-interface it has standardised.
- Appropriate and comprehensive Test Methods should be provided with the text of the standard or within a finite time of it being transposed, e.g. 18 months,
- Support for 14443 mode Type B needs to be added.

Given the nature of the last of these points, i.e. a major technical addition, if a NB feels Type B needs to be added to the standard then this may be reason enough to forego fast-track processing in favour of accelerated 5-stage processing. Alternatively, a faster approach would be to accept the fast-track transposition with the proviso that a revision of the standard commence immediately to add the additional mode.

Any qualification to their vote that NBs feel the need to stipulate is of course entirely up to them although the general approach of 'Disapproval with Comments' with a commitment to switch to 'Approval' upon satisfactory resolution is to be recommended over 'Approval with Comments' which does not have anywhere near the same force of action.

5. Recommendations/Next Steps

- i) **All members of SC17**, regardless of whether P or O-Members, are urged to seek out whoever or whatever process is responsible within their NB for submitting their vote in the fast-track processing of ECMA-340 and make them fully aware of the issue in as far as it affects SC17's programme of work.
- ii) The SC17 Secretariat will advise SC17 members as to the details and dates of the 1 month enquiry and 5 month DIS ballot as soon as these are known.
- iii) I will keep SC17 members informed of any further developments regarding the transposition of ECMA-340 as soon as I know of them.

R.A.Mabbott
Chairman ISO/IEC JTC1/SC17