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Dear Jan,

Following is an extract from the suggestion I made at last week's X3T10 meeting in Harrisburg re our conversation.

"In Gene Milligan's ISO Report last November, he advised the members that there would be no action at ISO SC25 WG4 on ATA or CAM.

"The ballot of ISO members for the New Work Items failed because there were not sufficient countries interested in participating.

"Gene suggested that there be no dark motives subscribed to this action as no country is against our standards. ISO support for an interface standard can be interpreted as a rubber stamp activity on a US standard.

"The members were offered three choices:

- a) Do nothing
- b) Look for another country to support
- c) Wait for ANSI approval and then Fast Track at ISO

"Several years ago, the equivalent to X3T9 was ISO SC13, which met once every 18 months. ISO processing was fairly laborious then, but a few years ago a political maneuver within JTC/1 resulted in the disappearance of SC13 to become WG4 of SC25. In effect, a demotion.

"There is another alternative to making standards, and it has become the primary way for optical media standards to become ISO standards, and that is through ECMA (European Computer Manufacturers Association). While in Europe earlier this month I had a long conversation with Secretary General Jan van den Beld about whether the same principles could be applied to interface standards.

"Not only has processing optical media standards become more efficient, ECMA has excellent editorial capabilities and is capable of taking over the complete role of documenting a standard for ISO publication.

"ECMA holds a General Assembly twice a year, and conducts letter ballots at the request of working groups, so there is little or no lost time between completing a project and beginning its standardization.

"The typical time between completing a project and having an approved ECMA standard is 6 months. The document is then forwarded for Fast Tracking to ISO, which can take another 6 months.

"One of the requirements for any project at ECMA is that three member companies (note companies, not countries) support the effort. There is a large overlap between ECMA membership and X3T10/X3T11 companies.

"Sixteen companies overlap with General Assembly members:

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 3M | Exabyte | Siemens |
| AT&T | Hewlett Packard | StorageTek |
| Bull | Hitachi | Sun Microsystems |
| Compaq | IBM | Unisys |
| Conner Peripherals | Maxoptix | |
| Digital Equipment | Ricoh | |

"Although ECMA has European in its name, meetings are not restricted to being in Europe and holding meetings in the United States is a consideration. Many many years ago, during SCSI-1 development there was a joint meeting of ISO (then under Dara Hekimi) in Washington DC.

"It would be possible for every member to become more involved with ISO standards, if ECMA met once per year with X3T10 (in an odd month) and once with X3T11 (in an even month). Our International Representative could attend the General Assembly meetings in Geneva twice a year.

"This approach would broaden each committee's opportunity to take action on standards under development.

"Jan indicated that ECMA would be interested in supporting our activities, which raises the question of why. First, ECMA supports itself by membership fees, and there is a strong possibility that more companies will join ECMA if interface activities are included in its scope of ISO standardization. Secondly, I suggested that the direct costs for holding meetings in the United States that we can all attend be covered by the members. This cost is estimated to be in the ballpark of \$100/member/year.

"In a nutshell, the benefits are higher efficiency at lower cost:

- More meeting opportunities to take action on international standards.
- Participation in international activities available to all members.
- Direct editorial support from the ECMA support organization.
- Lower costs for processing of ISO standards.

"I do not propose that the members accept working with ECMA as a direct substitute for the process we understand through ANSI because this system is new to most of us. I do propose that we conduct a trial by forwarding one of our pending standards to ECMA, and try out the system that succeeded for optical media.

The members were interested, and approved a motion to authorize one of the member companies to send an X3T10 document to ECMA for processing.

The preferred document is ATA (AT Attachment) but there was uncertainty. ATA has already been forwarded to become an ANSI standard and there was a concern over copyrights which Chairman John Lohmeyer is going to check out. The other is CAM (Common Access Method), but it is not yet ready to forward out of the working group.

There was general interest in the activities of ECMA, and John is going to supply me with a list of all the members and alternates so that you can send them a copy of your small information booklet. I have included your email address so that John can send the list directly to you.

Depending on the outcome of John's inquiries on ATA, we shall follow up on this end to have a member company submit a proposal.

Let me know if there is any further information I can provide.

Yours sincerely,



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