

## Process Concerns: The JTC1 Directives and P-Member Voting On DIS 29500 (OOXML)

Oracle Corporate Architecture Group  
March, 2008

The JTC1 directives are very clear on the voting status of P-Members vs O-Members; only P-members hold a vote during the BRM when votes are called. The BRM is governed under JTC1 rules, and as such, O-members should not have been included in vote tallies per JTC1 Directives.

The relevant passages of the JTC1 Directives are available online at the JTC1 web site (<http://www.jtc1sc34.org/repository/0856rev.pdf>):

- **Section 1.2** on page 13 - identifies the principle and definition of consensus.

These Directives shall be complied with in all respects and no deviations can be made without the consent of the Secretaries-General.

These Directives are inspired by the principle that the objective in the development of International Standards should be the achievement of consensus between those concerned rather than a decision based on counting votes.

[Note: Consensus is defined as general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity. (ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996)]

- **Section 13.8** on page 63 - the section that describes the BRM and again identifies consensus and normal JTC1 procedures.

"13.8 At the ballot resolution group meeting, decisions should be reached preferably by consensus. If a vote is unavoidable the vote of the NBs will be taken according to normal JTC 1 procedures."

- **Section 9.1.4** on page 48 - identifies the normal JTC1 procedure.

"9.1.4 In a meeting, except as otherwise specified in these directives, questions are decided by a majority of the votes cast at

the meeting by P-members expressing either approval or disapproval."

- **Section 9.1.5** also on page 48 - identified further information on paper ballots - not necessarily pertinent - but also identifies P-Members for voting, and a focus on minority views.

"9.1.5 For votes by correspondence (letter ballots) in JTC 1 and its SCs, except as specified elsewhere in these directives, questions are decided by a majority of the votes cast by P-members expressing either approval or disapproval. Letter ballots may be cast by web based balloting, e-mail, facsimile or, if absolutely necessary, by mail. Due account shall be taken of minority views."

Opponents of this assessment of the JTC1 Directives claim that **Section 9.5** "Combined Voting Procedure" applies to BRM votes. If one operates with the premise that the JTC1 directives provide instructions on what procedures to use, it is important to note that the combined voting procedure is for letter ballots provided to a National Body when making a final decision on a DIS. To be clear, the purpose of the BRM was not to hold a vote on a DIS, but to seek to agree on a set of proposed changes to DIS 29500. All national bodies will have a chance to indicate their vote on DIS 29500 by the end of March.

The JTC1 Directives are clear, and any concerns about the process could have – and should have – been resolved well before delegations arrived in Geneva for the BRM. Discussion of voting process during the BRM was clearly at the expense of resolving technical concerns, and occurred in spite of sustained opposition by all of the national bodies present. The IEC representative at the BRM also made it very clear the primary reason for a discussion on voting was due to concern about how the meeting results would look to the Press, rather than out of any concern for making quality technical decisions about DIS 29500.

If reaching consensus on outstanding technical concerns is not possible due to the lack of time available at the BRM, and a vote is necessary, it should at least take place under the proper application of the JTC1 Directives.