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EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Pendulum Swings Both Ways



For more than 100 years, the private sector has led the way on standards development in the United States. That role was institutionalized by Congress in 1995, when it instructed the Federal agencies to get out of the "government unique" standards business and participate in private sector standard setting organizations instead. And indeed, this "bottom up" standards model has served the public and private sectors well.

Recently, though, the limits of this bottom up methodology have become increasingly obvious. Ambitious policy imperatives, such as providing the myriad standards needed to make the SmartGrid feasible would be impossible to realize without the economic support and active promotion of the current administration. In short, it's time for the pendulum of the American public-private standards development partnership to begin swinging back a few degrees to ensure the best results.

In this month's **Editorial** I highlight a Request for Information (RFI) issued earlier this month by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and call for the private sector to embrace, rather than resist, that swing. All too often in the past, businesses have greeted offers by the Federal government to participate other than at the working group level with trepidation. That's a response we can no longer afford.

In my **Feature Article** I review the ways in which standards-related policy needs have evolved in the United States since Congress opted out of the standards business, and offer my suggestions on how the Federal agencies can more productively participate in, support and catalyze the standards development process in furtherance of the national interest.

A brief note follows for those of you that have not yet thoroughly explored ConsortiumInfo.org, the host site for this publication. One of the resources you can find there is the [Standards News Portal](#), updated daily and containing more than 6,000 archived entries.

For this month's **Standards Blog** selection, I turn to the European Union, which has taken a far different approach to standards since the inception of the Common

Market. Unlike the U.S., the E.U. has actively incorporated standards into public policy, setting successive high water marks of sophistication along the way. Earlier this month, however, the pendulum took a step back there as well, in this case towards a more conservative approach.

I once again follow with a chapter from my cybersecurity-focused thriller titled ***The Alexandria Project***. If you enjoy it, feel free to read ahead – the rest of the book can be found [here](#).

As usual, I close with a ***Consider This*** essay. If you're an American football fan, half time during your favorite bowl game would be a good time to sneak this one in.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue. But either way, it's always great to hear what you think. Let me know, why don't you? My email address is andrew.updegrove@gesmer.com Wording

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Award for Journalism

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