

QM&T September 2004 Newsletter

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New ISO Guidelines

ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) will be developing an International Standard for social responsibility. The ISO SR conference, which was hosted by the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS) in June 2004, drew 355 participants from 66 countries, including 33 developing countries. The aim is to produce a guidance document, written in easy to understand, plain language that can be used by non-specialists and is not intended for use in certification. To develop the SR standard, ISO will set up a new working group answering directly to ISO's Technical Management Board (TMB) that oversees the activities of the organization's 186 standards-developing technical subcommittees. Initially, it has formed a task force to recommend the terms of reference and operating processes for the working group who will be meeting in September 2004. In deciding to develop a SR guidance standard, ISO emphasizes that this is intended to add value and not replace existing inter-governmental agreements with relevance to social responsibility, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and those adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and other UN conventions. For more information please visit www.iso.org.

Airport Security Improvement

According to a recent article a new method for identifying explosives and metals could provide an important tool in fighting against terrorism.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, security in airports has been increased. The need to use a quick and effective method for detecting weapons and security threats has become an important element. With the introduction of this new method, passenger screening at airports can become more effective and quicker. The technology could reduce queues at airports. The system uses terahertz light and has been developed by company called TeraView. Terahertz light sits between microwave and infrared on the electro-magnetic spectrum. Unlike X-ray, it is perfectly safe to use on people. The device could be used by airport security guards to scan passengers and will beep when suspicious objects are found. The light can pass through clothing, paper and plastics to detect metal, ceramic or plastic weapons. It can identify explosives by reading their characteristic spectral 'fingerprints'. The company is developing a handheld security wand. It is expected that the product will be available for commercial use within two years, following a trial at an as yet unspecified airport. The company is working together with a detection equipment organisation called Smiths Detection. Eventually they hope to make a walk-through portal that uses the same techniques as the wand to scan passengers. The technology is not likely to replace current methods of scanning, and there is no real substitute for old-fashioned human alertness, but is a good method of additional security. For more information please see BBC news.

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ISO Healthcare Standard

ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) is developing a new set of International Standards that intends to revolutionise worldwide healthcare delivery by allowing healthcare professionals to access patient's medical history in different countries. *ISO 21549*, which consists of eight parts under the general title, *Health informatics - Patient healthcard data*, will provide a uniform set of guidelines to ensure that healthcard data can be read by medical staff in different countries and by different health organizations. With the first three parts already published and the remaining five parts expected to be published sometime next year, the collection of ISO standards on patient healthcard data holds a huge potential for lowering administrative costs, improving patient information, and, most importantly, facilitating healthcare delivery. Language and cultural barriers often make travelling in foreign countries a challenge, and these challenges become even more difficult when faced with a situation where you or one of your family members fall ill and need to be taken to a hospital. If all our health history could be carried on a credit card-sized microchip smart card i.e. your doctor, all illnesses and operations, blood type, current medications, allergies etc, in a password protected format available only to you and medical care providers, it could make the delivery of the medical care needed much easier. ISO 21549-1:2004, ISO 21549-2:2004 and ISO 21549-3:2004 are available from ISO national member institutes and from ISO Central Secretariat. The remaining five parts are expected to be published sometime next year. The new standards are the work of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 215, *Health informatics*, working group WG 5, *Healthcards*. For more information please visit www.iso.org

Government Endorses's BSI's Kitemarks

It has been recently reported that the government has selected the BSI Kitemark as one of the UK's leading safety and quality marks for electrical installation work. The Kitemark is over a hundred years old and is

widely recognised by the public in the UK as a sign of safety and quality. The Kitemark scheme will help the public identify trustworthy contractors, who would be qualified and assessed regularly. It will also allow the contractors to professionally market their services using the Kitemark as a means of showing the public they can be trusted. The new Kitemark scheme is based on conformity to BS 7671:2001 Requirements for Electrical Installations. The scheme meets the specific needs of new legislation covering electrical installations in England and Wales - Part P of the Building Regulations. The new legislations will come into effect in January 2005. The electrical contractors who pass the checks will be able to issue 'electrical completion certificates' carrying the Kitemark. Certificates are included in a 'home information pack' that will provide proof of correctly installed electrical work that meets the standard required. For more information please visit www.bsi-global.com

Safer Trains

A new technology is being developed by Warwick University, which could prevent a repeat of tragedies such as the Hatfield rail crash, where four passengers died and 30 were injured in October 2000. The developers, Dr. Steve Dixon and Dr. Rachel Edwards from the Department of Physics, have developed this technology, which can determine the exact location of a crack by observing the loss of a signal as it is blocked by the flaw in the track. It can also be used to detect which sections of the track are more likely to develop a crack. The system can be attached to trains travelling at high speeds to detect and measure cracks in rail tracks. The technology uses ultrasonic techniques, which are currently being used to detect cracks, but only work when trains are travelling at much slower speeds such as 20 to 30mph. For more information please see BBC news.

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Testing Disaster Recovery Plans

Disaster recovery is part of a business' response to risk. It is an investment, and often a large one and the purpose of which is to mitigate the risks. There is only one way to test a disaster recovery plan and that is to turn all systems off and then turn them on again, obviously, outside office hours to avoid disruption, but this may not truly reflect the working environment. All information needs to be backed up and there must be a

contingency plan just in case it doesn't go as planned. You must remember to tell Management before switching off. Top management must be informed in advance and they must buy into the risk of such a trial against what would happen if it occurred "naturally", unprepared and unannounced. Also, a simulation could cause more disruption than the real thing. A real disaster will never be the same as the tests. A risk analysis should also be carried out to establish the likelihood of an event taking place, the cost to the business of such an event and the amount and type of mitigation that is called for. Many organisations believe that if they have published a plan they are covered, but often these are out of date and do not have a nominated owner or method of review. Regular risk assessment and analysis should highlight the main areas that need testing, and where there are organisational or personnel changes, it should be revised and the plans updated. If plans are focused solely on the business and not other organisations in the supply chain, this could have a major impact on long term recovery. The results should identify potential weaknesses, which could be the plan, the roles and responsibilities, documentation and the technology. For more information please visit www.computerweekly.co.uk

Micromuse Gains BS 15000 IT Support Management Certification

Micromuse is one of the leading providers of real-time business and service assurance software. They have recently achieved certification to BS 15000 "IT Service Management" as assessed by DNV (an independent third party accreditation body). Very few organizations have gained certification to this standard and this is the first time Quality Management and Training have assisted an organization to gain approval to this standard. BS15000 is accepted and recognized as an excellent model for IT Service Management. The standard is in two parts:

BS 15000-1:2002 IT service management.

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Specification for service management. It describes the specific requirements that an organisation needs to address to comply with to deliver managed services of specified quality level (Service Level Agreement - SLA) for its customers. The requirements cover:

- Requirements for a management system
- Planning and implementing service management
- Planning and implementing new or changed services
- Service delivery process
- Relationship processes
- Resolution processes
- Control processes
- Release process

BS 15000-2:2003 IT service management. Code of practice for service management. This standard interprets BS 15000-1:2002 IT service management for application purposes. Providing a guide for application and useful for organisations preparing to be assessed against the requirement of BS 15000 or used as a model for introducing service improvements.

Micromuse have gained many benefits from this approval which include:

- Opportunity to review and wherever possible improve Technical Support and Customer Liaison services and

processes.

- Ensuring a continued focus on delivering the services that business customers need.
- Confirming a positive return on Technical Support investment - Putting the processes in place that improve utilisation of resources and ultimately their effectiveness. Together with reducing the potential for duplication of effort.
- Improving the perception that customers have of the Technical Support and Customer Liaison function. Increasing their confidence in Support service, which in turn improves staff morale and performance.
- Show customers the ability to meet this standard as confirmed by the independent third party certification body. (DNV).
- Differentiator between Micromuse and their competitors. Very few organisations have been successfully registered and approved. Only four to date according to <http://www.bs15000certification.com/lookuplist.asp?Type=5>

For more information on this standard, please visit www.bsi-global.com