

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

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Chapter 12: Information Resources Standards Program

Originating Office: Office of Information Resources Management

375 DM 12

12.1 Purpose. This chapter describes the development, application, and maintenance of information resources standards.

12.2 Description of Information Resources --Standards Program. The Information Resources Standards Program coordinates the development, adoption, implementation, and review of information management, automated data processing, and telecommunications standards. The program seeks the most efficient and cost-effective means of standardizing technology for creating, acquiring, cataloging, maintaining, storing, using, processing, disseminating, and disposing of information and the sharing of that information among bureaus, with other Federal agencies, and with the public.

12.3 Objectives. The primary objectives of the Information Resources Standards Program are to:

- A. Promote compatibility and interoperability to minimize costs for information system;
- B. Establish minimum acceptable levels of performance for information systems;
- C. Provide baselines for use in information technology procurements;
- D. Establish common practices and processes for creating, acquiring, cataloging, maintaining, storing, using, processing, disseminating, and disposing of information; and
- E. Establish an inventory of the Department's information resources standards and standards groups in which the Department participates.

12.4 Scope.

A. The Information Resources Standards Program encompasses all standards for information processes and resources within the Department that are concerned with creating, acquiring, cataloging, maintaining, storing, using, processing, disseminating, and disposing of information in electronic or non-electronic form.

B. Information resources standards reflect agreements on products, practices, or operations by nationally or internationally recognized industrial, professional, trade association, or governmental groups. This description applies to formal, approved information resources standards as contrasted to de facto (widely accepted though informal) and proprietary (owned by an individual or corporation) standards.

12.5 Policy. The Department of the Interior supports the development and implementation of efficient and cost effective standards for information resources and processes. Information resources standards used in the Department will normally be existing Federal, bureau, or voluntary information resources standards, consistent with applicable laws and regulations. The Department will develop information resources standards in areas where it has singular expertise and interests. The costs of conversion and implementation will be considered in developing and adopting new information resources standards.

12.6 Authority. The Information Resources Standards Program is based on the authorities assigned to the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget. Certain of these responsibilities are assigned to the Director, Office of Information Resources Management (212 DM 7 and 112 DM 7). Authority is also derived from applicable public laws, Federal regulations, and Executive Orders relating to information resources.

12.7 Definitions.

A. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) - the principal voluntary standards development group in the United States. Formed in 1918, it is a non-profit, non-governmental organization.

B. Bureau - bureau or office.

C. Bureau Information Resources Standards Coordinator - the person in each bureau responsible for liaison with the Office of Information Resources Management and the Technical Information Resources Standards Representatives to develop and recommend information resources standards. The Bureau Information Resources Standards Coordinators and the Department Information Resources Standards Coordinator meet as the Information Resources Standards Coordinators Work Group to administer the Information Resources Standards Program.

D. Departmental Information Resources Standards - all information resources standards approved for use throughout the Department.

E. Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) - standards concerned with computer sciences, telecommunications, and information management that are developed under the Federal Governments standardization program. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) drafts standards (FIPS Publications or FIPS PUBS) for approval and issuance by the Secretary of Commerce under Public Law 89-306.

F. Federal Standard (FED-STD) - standards developed and recommended by the Federal Telecommunications Standards Committee, and approved and issued by the Administrator, General Services Administration, under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended.

G. International Standards Organization (ISO) - a non-treaty organization founded in 1947. Each member nation assigns its principal standardization body to the ISO. ANSI is the body representing the United States to the ISO.

H. Information Resources Standards - all standards for information resources and processes concerned with creating, acquiring, cataloging, maintaining, storing, using, processing, disseminating, and disposing of information.

I. Standard - documentation that reflects agreements on products, practices, or operations by governmental groups or nationally or internationally recognized industrial, professional, or trade associations. This concept applies to formal, approved standards, not to de facto and proprietary standards, which are exceptions to this concept. Within the Government, standards may be voluntary or mandatory.

J. Standards Developing Groups - committees, boards, or any other principal subdivisions of groups established to develop, revise, or review standards.

K. Technical Information Resources Standards Representatives - a bureau representative with technical expertise in a particular information technology area (e.g., automated data processing, telecommunications).

L. Voluntary Information Resources Standards - information resources standards that are established by private sector groups which are available for use by any person or organization, private or governmental. They are commonly called "industry standards" or "consensus standards." They do not include proprietary standards or standards mandated by law.

M. Voluntary Standards Groups - nongovernmental groups, including nonprofit organizations, industry associations, professional and technical societies, institutes, groups, and recognized test laboratories, that develop, establish, or coordinate voluntary standards. Examples are the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), the Electronics Industry Association (EIA), and the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA).

12.8 Responsibilities.

A. Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget (AS/PMB), as the Department's senior official for information resources management, is responsible for:

- (1) Approving Departmental information resources standards; and
- (2) Enforcing adherence to mandatory Federal Information Processing Standards (44 U.S.C. 3505 (3)(C) and 3506 (a)).

B. Director, Office of Information Resources Management (PIR), as principal advisor on information resources management to AS/PMB, is responsible for:

- (1) Serving as the central point of contact for the Department with outside agencies regarding the Information Resources Standards Program;
- (2) Referring requests for waivers and deferments to adopting mandatory Federal and Departmental information resources standards to AS/PMB;
- (3) Representing and acting for the Department and the bureaus on appropriate information resources standards committees;
- (4) Coordinating the review of existing and proposed information systems acquisitions to assure adherence to information resources standards;
- (5) Participating in Departmental information resources standards groups to ensure that proposed and adopted standards meet Departmental needs and are efficient and cost-effective;
- (6) Coordinating the development of proposed Departmental information resources standards before submission to AS/PMB for approval;
- (7) Disseminating information to bureaus on adopted information resources standards;
- (8) Maintaining an inventory of Federal and Departmental information resources standards and standards groups in which the Department participates; and
- (9) Establishing temporary work groups necessary to develop specific information resources standards.

C. Heads of Bureaus are responsible for:

- (1) Implementing and maintaining Federal and Departmental information resources standards;
- (2) Advising PIR of their bureau's position on proposed information resources standards, the necessity of new standards, needed revisions, and requests for waivers;
- (3) Developing and implementing a bureau information resources standards program and information resources standards to supplement Federal and Departmental information resources standards that are efficient and cost effective in support of bureau missions; and
- (4) Appointing a Bureau Information Resources Standards Coordinator.

D. Bureau IRM Coordinators are responsible for performing all IRM program coordination functions for their respective bureaus. The Bureau IRM Coordinator also serves as the primary liaison with PIR (375 DM 1.6F).

E. Information Resources Standards Coordinators will:

(1) Report to or work closely with their respective Bureau IRM Coordinators to ensure the efficient and cost-effective development and implementation of information resources standards,

(2) Serve on the Information Resources Standards Coordinators Work Group, and

(3) Maintain an inventory of bureau information resources standards and standards groups in which the bureau participates.

F. Technical Information Resources Standards Representatives are responsible for serving as working members of their respective technical information resources standards group and advising their bureaus of new and developing information resources standards.

12.9 **Waivers.**

A. Federal Information Resources Standards.

(1) AS/PMB may request that any Federal information resources standard be waived when it can be shown that there are production or cost advantages to be gained and that the overall interests of the Federal Government are best served by granting the requested waiver. Waiver requests must be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The waiver request must address the criteria stated above as justification. The Secretary of Commerce and the Administrator, General Services Administration, must be advised of the waiver and may request the full justification for the waiver.

(2) Bureaus seeking waivers from Federal information resources standards will submit requests through their Assistant Secretary to PIR.

(3) Bureaus and Offices should not deviate from a mandatory standard prior to the receipt of a waiver. Departmental review of the waiver request will normally be completed in 45 days.

B. Departmental Information Resources Standards.

(1) Heads of Bureaus may request, through their Assistant Secretary, that the requirements of a Departmental information resources standard be waived by AS/PMB. Waivers may be granted in instances where there are appreciable production or cost advantages to be gained and the overall interests of the Department are best served by granting the waiver.

(2) Bureaus should not deviate from a mandatory Departmental standard prior to the receipt of a waiver. Departmental review of the waiver request will normally be completed in 45 days.

(3) Bureaus may appeal denials of a waiver request within 45 days of the denial. The Secretary's decision on an appeal is final.

12.10 Membership in Information Resources Standards Groups.

A. Departmental Information Resources Standards Groups.

(1) PIR will be represented on Departmental information resources standards groups to assist in developing standards.

(2) Bureaus may participate in any standards group which develops Departmental information resources standards.

(3) Each participating bureau must appoint a member and an alternate member. Members should have appropriate knowledge of pertinent issues and be able to represent the interests of the bureau.

B. External Information Resources Standards Groups.

(1) The Department will participate in information resources standards groups whose activities benefit the Department and clearly further the Department's missions and responsibilities.

(2) PIR will coordinate the Department's representation to these groups. Representatives will normally come from bureaus in the appropriate functional area and will represent the Department. The number of Departmental participants in a given information resources standards group will be kept to a minimum.

(3) Bureaus and offices should notify PIR in instances where an individual wishes to attend an information resources standards body meeting on a regular basis but is not the officially designated representative. The individual will not represent the interests of the Department at meetings of the group.

(4) Departmental representatives will periodically provide PIR and appropriate Departmental information resources standards groups with a written report of external information resources standards group meetings.

C. Voluntary Standards Groups.

(1) The Department endorses participation in voluntary information resources standards developing groups.

(2) PIR will coordinate the Department's IRM representation to Federal, national, and international voluntary information resources standards groups. Bureaus most affected by the activities of information resources standards groups may be asked to represent the Department.

(3) Participation in voluntary information resources standards groups by representatives of the bureaus or the Office of the Secretary does not, of itself, connote agreement with or endorsement of decisions reached or of information resources standards approved and published by these groups.

(4) The Department's objective in participating in the activities of voluntary information resources standards groups is to contribute to the development of voluntary information resources standards and eliminate the need for the development of Departmental or bureau information resources standards.

(5) Adoption of voluntary information resources standards, whenever practicable and appropriate, is expected to reduce the cost of developing and using information resources standards. Adoption of voluntary information resources standards is consistent with the policy of relying on the private sector to supply the Government's needs for standards, as stated in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-119, "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Standards."

12.11 Procedures for Establishing New Departmental or Interagency Information Resources Standards Groups.

A. Departmental Information Resources Standards Groups. The bureau recognizing the need for a new Departmental information resources standard should contact PIR to determine whether a group exists which addresses the area of interest. If a group does not exist, PIR will normally authorize the establishment of a new group. The requesting bureau should contact each of the other bureaus to determine interest in participation and sponsor a meeting of the interested bureaus to draft terms of reference (name and scope of the activity, specific goals and objectives, composition of the group, planned duration of the activity) for coordination among participants, PIR, and the Departmental Committee Management Officer (308 DM 1.3A). PIR will notify Bureau IRM coordinators of the formation of the group and coordinate information resources standards developed by the group.

B. Interagency Information Resources Standards Groups. The bureau recognizing the need for a new interagency information resources standards group should contact PIR with the request to establish a group. PIR will contact NIST and OMB to determine whether a group exists which addresses the area of interest. If a group does not exist and there is a governmentwide need to establish a new group, NIST or OMB will authorize establishment of the group. PIR will contact other Federal agencies to determine interest in participation and sponsor a meeting of interested agencies to draft a charter to be coordinated among participating agencies, NIST, and OMB. PIR will include approved information resources standards developed by the group in the Departmental information resources standards inventory.

12.12 Procedures for Approval of Bureau-Originated Departmental Information

Resources Standards. There are three levels of review for bureau-originated Departmental information resources standards. Information resources standards approved by all review levels will be adopted as Departmental information resources standards and implemented by all bureaus. The levels of review are:

A. Information Resources Standards Development Group Level. The first level of review is the information resources standards group in the bureau where the standard is developed. When a consensus is reached within this group, the standard is forwarded to the next level.

B. Bureau Review. The second level of review is by the subject matter specialists within the bureau. This review should be coordinated by the Bureau Information Resources Standards Coordinator. Upon completion of coordination, the proposed information resources standard will be forwarded to PIR.

C. Departmental Review. PIR will coordinate the internal Department level review following a consensus review by the Information Resources Standards Coordinators Work Group. Upon completion of Department level coordination and approval, the information resources standard will be published and implemented.

12.13 Maintenance of Information Resources Standards. The Information Resources Standards Coordinators Work Group will review Department and bureau information resources standards at least once every 5 years to determine their continued applicability. The group will determine whether the standards should be reaffirmed, revised, or canceled.

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