Idaho Technology Authority (ITA)

ENTERPRISE IT STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

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The Idaho Technology Authority (ITA) was established in Idaho Code 67-5745 (previously the Information Technology Resource Management Council). ITA is directed to *"…establish statewide information technology and telecommunications policies, **standards**, guidelines, conventions and comprehensive risk assessment criteria that will assure uniformity and compatibility of such systems within state agencies;...."*

In February 2004, the then ITRMC Council adopted a revised State of Idaho Information Technology Strategic Plan. Five key goals were outlined in the Plan:

1. Simplify delivery of government services and information;
2. Manage information from an enterprise (statewide) perspective;
3. Protect the privacy and confidentiality of citizen information;
4. Promote collaborative relationships between State agencies, public and higher education, and local governments; and
5. Use "state-of-the-art" procurement practices for acquisition of information technologies.

While State departments, agencies and institutions of higher education will continue to oversee their traditional business programs and services as prescribed by statutes and regulations, they will be expected to address the need to effectively leverage the information technology (IT) infrastructure from desktop to server, to control costs and realize efficiency across the State enterprise. To accomplish this, it is necessary to establish enterprise standards.

For purposes of this document, the term *agency* means "…all state agencies or departments, boards, commissions, councils and institutions of higher education…." (67-5745A (2) I.C.).

I. BACKGROUND

In the past, agencies adopted what is commonly referred to as a "stove pipe" approach to IT. While individual agencies created standards to govern their own activities, there was little

coordination between State agencies. The IT Strategic Plan outlines the transition from this view to an enterprise perspective. The establishment and governance of enterprise technical standards lays the foundation to facilitate:

1. Long-term systems planning and budgeting;
2. Cost-effective acquisition of technology products;
3. Transparent connectivity and interoperability across systems;
4. The sharing of technical resources;
5. Improved management by limiting alternatives; and
6. Improved quality of information for decision-making.

Standards help State agencies develop technically compatible systems using a consistent approach and promote migration to enterprise solutions with reduced complexity and support requirements.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

ITA is adopting a set of enterprise technology standards that provide some flexibility, so that the State's business is not constrained, while at the same time ensuring maximum efficiency across the State enterprise. Standards may indicate an architectural direction, a particular vendor or even a specific product from that vendor. The State may adopt a specific product standard based on performance in the marketplace and a technical evaluation of the product in a state government setting or through a competitive bid process. In other cases, a standard may be more generic, such as compliance with a recognized international, national, or industry standard.

The technology standards process is governed by the ITA. The ITA establishes priorities and creates advisory teams, as appropriate, to assist in the formulation of a clear, consistent direction for information technology within the State. As a guiding principle, the advisory teams or the ITA Staff recommend technical and functional standards with the goal to minimize total cost of ownership and to optimize:

1. Economies of scale in purchasing;
2. Support;
3. Maintenance;
4. Training; and
5. Reusability.

Once the need for a standard is identified, the ITA assigns the ITA Staff to research and draft a proposed standard for the review and adoption by the ITA. Whenever a standard is considered for adoption, the following three questions are considered:

1. Is there a recognized national, international, or industry technical standard in place that would serve the needs of the State?
2. Is there a "de facto" standard, either technically or vendor-specific, that would serve the needs of the State?
3. Have the majority of State agencies already invested resources in a technical standard or vendor-specific product?

It is preferable to select a technical standard based upon a recognized national, international, or industry standard that is supported by a variety of vendors and products. When an established

technical standard is not available, a "de facto" standard or vendor-specific product standard may be adopted. In some cases a "hybrid" product standard - one that also conforms to open technical standards - may be adopted. For example, a hybrid product standard may be the optimal standard for ITA to select to minimize the State's total cost of ownership, enhance statewide capabilities, and provide opportunities to more efficiently leverage the State's IT investment.

During the drafting of a proposed standard, the ITA Staff solicits input and comment from the agency and higher education IT community and from a number of established ITA committees and work groups before submitting the proposed standard to the ITA for adoption.

III. CATEGORIES

The following is a list of categories for which enterprise standards have been defined or will be defined in the future:

Category	Standards Examples
Software – Desktop and Notebook	▪ Operating System ▪ Office Suite ▪ Electronic Mail
Software - Server	▪ Network Operating System
Network and Telecommunications	▪ Network Services – Internet/Intranet Web Server ▪ Network Services – Internet/Intranet Web Browser ▪ Network Services – Data/Network Integrity ▪ Network Services – Video Conferencing ▪ Security – Firewall ▪ Security – Virtual Private Network ▪ Network Connectivity and Transport – Transport ▪ Network Connectivity and Transport – Local Area ▪ Network ▪ Network Connectivity and Transport – Wireless LAN ▪ Network Connectivity and Transport – LAN Backbone ▪ Network Connectivity and Transport – Structured Cabling
GIS (Geographical Information Systems) Data	▪ Projection
Information/Data	▪ Metatags ▪ Web Publishing

IV. STANDARDS FORMAT

A consistent number identification and format for documentation of standards is used and the following items are defined for each:

1. <u>Title</u> – Identifies the category and standard;
2. <u>Definition</u> – Description of the standard;
3. <u>Rationale</u> – Reason for the standard based on the enterprise business needs;
4. <u>Approved Standard(s)</u> – International, industry standard(s) that support the category;
5. <u>Approved Product(s)</u> – Product(s) selected by the State;
6. <u>Justification</u> – Reasoning behind adopting the proposed standard;
7. <u>Technical and Implementation Considerations</u> – Any technical and implementation information that assists in the application of the product in support of the standard;
8. <u>Emerging Trends and Architectural Directions</u> – Discussion of developing or emerging trends in the specified standard for planning purposes;
9. <u>Review Cycle</u> – How often the standard is reviewed; and
10. <u>Time Line</u> – Dates that reflect changes in the standard.

V. DISSEMINATION

Once a standard is adopted, it is posted on the ITA web site and agency heads and IT managers are notified.

VI. TRANSITION

As enterprise standards are established, transition from the current environment to the new standard environment usually requires planning and funding. The intention of establishing standards is not to enforce compliance immediately upon issuance of the approved standard. Rather, the transition to the enterprise standard may be exercised over a period of time to take into account the current environment, the priorities, and business directions for the agency to move towards the established standard, and recognizing the cost of compliance.

VII. COMPLIANCE

All State agencies, as defined in statute, are given two (2) years from the date of adoption to review and respond to the standard, and incorporate an implementation plan as part of their overall IT plan. Non-standard products may not be used within the enterprise environment, unless an exemption has been granted by the ITA. Agency heads must assume responsibility to follow established enterprise standards during the procurement process and this should be reinforced throughout the agency.

VIII. PROCUREMENT

The procurement of hardware, software, network, and computing services is a vital process for the successful implementation of technology initiatives. To be effective, consistent linkages must exist between the standards and procurement. Where possible, a direct relationship between standards and products on State contracts will be established to support the purchasing process. For standards or products that have active price contracts available, agencies should refer to the most current information available from the Division of Purchasing.

IX. REVIEW

The enterprise standards are reviewed and updated on a regular basis under the published review cycle. It is critical that on-going maintenance of established standards be addressed to assure the accommodation of existing technologies as well as emerging ones. The technology in many areas, such as personal computing, is evolving rapidly and the standards in these areas will need to be reviewed as the technology changes. The standards in other areas, such as network protocols, may change more slowly but need to be reviewed and evaluated regularly. The enterprise standards process also allows for an agency to present a business case to the ITA when there is a need to add a new product or submit a request for an exemption to the adopted standards.

X. EXEMPTIONS

ITA Policy 1010 – Information Technology Standards and Guidelines Framework governs exemptions from ITA enterprise standards. Agencies desiring to purchase or maintain equipment or software that does not meet the standards must submit an Exemption Request Form (See *ITA Guideline G120 – Exemption Process*) that includes the following:

1. Description of Current IT Environment – Provide a description of the current IT environment relative to the requested exemption. The description should include the current hardware, software, infrastructure, and associated support resources.

2. Justification of the Non-Compliant Products and/or Services – Provide a detailed justification for the non-compliant products and/or services including costs of the procurement with associated implementation costs; previous agency expenditures for capital, operating, maintenance, and training for existing products and/or services that provide similar functionality; expected tangible and intangible benefits of non-compliant products and/or services; and reasons why the product and/or service best meets agency needs versus use of compliant products and/or services. Include a statement of why compliant products and/or services are inadequate to meet agency needs.

3. Migration Strategy for Moving to Compliance – Describe the strategy and migration plan for moving from exemption status to compliance. Describe required tasks, products and/or services, costs, and timeframes associated with the migration.

4. Funding Sources – State the funding sources for the request, such as General Fund, Federal, Dedicated Fund, Grant Funds, etc. If funding sources are split, indicate the amounts or percentage by type.

Upon receipt of the completed Exemption Request Form, the ITA Staff will review and make a recommendation to the ITA for consideration at the next scheduled ITA meeting. The ITA may grant an exemption for a specified period not to exceed twenty-four (24) months. Agencies wishing to extend their exemption must submit a new request at least ninety (90) days before the exemption period ends.