

The NISO logo is rendered in a dark blue, serif font. The letters are bold and closely spaced. The background of the entire cover is a vibrant blue with a complex digital aesthetic. It features a network of white dots and lines, resembling a globe or a data network. There are also faint, overlapping text elements in white and light blue, including XML tags like '<?xml', '<list', '<building>Partnerships</building>', '<companyName>Communication</companyName>', '<productName>data Safe</productName>', and '<product>Trust And Information</product>'. There are also phrases like 'real solution. Work' and 'Partnerships'. The overall effect is one of high-tech connectivity and data security.

NISO

Two white silhouettes of people are shown shaking hands. One silhouette is on the left, leaning forward, and the other is on the right, leaning back. They are positioned against a dark blue horizontal band that runs across the middle of the cover. The background behind them is a light green color. The overall composition suggests a partnership or agreement.

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2005**

**NATIONAL
INFORMATION
STANDARDS
ORGANIZATION**

An Invitation to Participate

Sometimes when I am deeply immersed in a particular piece of standards work, I feel a kinship with my Renaissance ancestors. Like the artists of the period, my colleagues and I bring abstract concepts to life. And, like the period itself, the process of standards development makes it okay to make work fun.

Let's follow the analogy. Renaissance painters used perspective based on rigorous mathematical principles to infuse their work with a sense of living reality. Information standards developers apply technical acumen and a rigorous approach to create a lively and spirited scholarly exchange that is trusted in part because of this strong foundation. Sound familiar?

All this occurred to me as I considered how to answer, "What should this letter say?" What I most wanted to get across is that developing standards is the opposite of boring and dull; instead, it is fun. It requires using your head to think and communicate with precision and your heart to empathize with those who will use this standard in their daily work. And at its core, it involves you in forging a common sense of purpose with others. Indeed, you work with a variety of peers in a way that makes them your colleagues. This work engages your full being.

There are aspects of managing NISO—preparation for an audit, vetting papers, coordinating meetings—that I would not label "fun," but the process of developing standards that serve people who need trusted information is definitely fun in the truest sense. It gives meaning to the other activities and lifts the spirits of participants, because the invention of our efforts is a contribution to literacy and scholarship.

As you review the standards activities that NISO members can proudly claim as 2005 accomplishments, ask yourself where you fit. I invite you not only to relive the satisfaction of making contributions that shaped these accomplishments, but also to feel energized by the prospect of doing more. And to consider how you would like to engage in some standards fun.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Stevens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PAT STEVENS
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As NISO Moves Forward

A standards organization that lives in the past will die of obsolescence. One that lives purely in the future will miss imminent urgent needs and opportunities. So, a standards organization must live in the moment—eyes open to issues and trends, ready to act on them.

The value of a good strategic plan is that it keeps the organization looking in the right place for issues and trends. This Annual Report outlines how the Board and management of NISO have worked to develop such a plan while delivering substantial value for your membership dues. We believe these planning efforts will increase your return on investment in 2006 and the years to come.

During 2005, NISO experienced dramatic changes. It was a year of detailed preparations to take NISO in new directions. In response to the Blue Ribbon Panel, funded by the Mellon Foundation, the Board took several positive steps, including our new Strategic Directions document. This document is a living text that helps the membership understand where we work, who must participate in crafting solutions and what those solutions must do for the community NISO serves.

As part of developing the plan, the Board refined NISO's mission statement:

NISO fosters the development and maintenance of standards that facilitate the creation, persistent management, and effective interchange of information so that it can be trusted for use in research and learning.

With this mission in mind, the Board is also drafting a Strategic Map, a “synthesizing framework” in the words of the Blue Ribbon Panel, to guide NISO's decision making. This is the all-important how-to component of the strategic planning effort.

Further responding to the Panel Report, the Board asked Roy Tennant of the California Digital Library to evaluate our standards development process and recommend ways to improve it. Implementation will engender open and efficient standards development.

During this last year, we also continued to bring well-respected individuals to serve on the NISO Board. Their viewpoints, advice and expertise have been invaluable in transforming NISO. The year ahead will see more change. The Board sees revised bylaws, operational guidelines and intellectual property policies as necessary to support the work described above.

On behalf of the Board, I thank you for the support you've shown throughout the year. We look forward to your continued support—a critical component of our mutual success.

The Board and NISO's members are a rare breed. This diverse community has coalesced throughout this planning process and the result will be a coherent standards program that meets their needs in a timely manner. It's NISO “living in the moment.”

Carl Grant

CARL GRANT
NISO CHAIR



A Vision for the Future

Approved by the Board on June 30, 2005, NISO's new Strategic Directions document answers critical questions about what NISO must do today and tomorrow. The inclusive process that led to NISO's new plan had the benefit of input from NISO members, a prestigious Blue Ribbon Panel and support from the Mellon Foundation. They addressed fundamental questions.

“Why change now?”

The demand to act rapidly in response to technical needs, the imperative to collaborate with other organizations that serve the community and financial challenges all drove the need for a change in NISO's strategic direction. In articulating desired outcomes and rationale for change, the Board concluded that NISO's evolution hinges on

- **Rapid development and deployment of information standards**
- **Fundamental focus on functionality**
- **Relations with other standards bodies**

“What guides the changes?”

NISO's core mission: commitment to the creation, persistent management and exchange of trusted information in support of research and learning.

To fulfill that mission, NISO will rely on a Strategic Map—a synthesizing framework to guide standards development and decision-making.

The result: a coherent program of products and services. These products are standards, white papers, best practices, profiles, technical reports, and guidelines. Services include standards maintenance, education programs, advocacy and intelligence. In addition, the Board is weighing the pros and cons of involvement in certification programs.

The Board is also exploring ways to supplement membership fees to support a thriving and coherent program.

3M

American Association of Law Libraries
American Chemical Society
American Library Association
American Society for Information
Science and Technology
American Society of Indexers
ARMA International
Armed Forces Medical Library
Art Libraries Society of North America
Association for Information and
Image Management (AIIM)
Association of Information and
Dissemination Centers
Association of Jewish Libraries
Association of Research Libraries
Auto-Graphics, Inc.
Baker Robbins & Company
Barnes & Noble, Inc.
Book Industry Communication
California Digital Library
Cambridge Information Group
Checkpoint Systems, Inc.

College Center for Library Automation
Colorado State Library
Copyright Clearance Center
CrossRef
DAISY Consortium
EBSCO Information Services
Elsevier
Endeavor Information Systems, Inc.
Ex Libris, Inc.
Factiva
Fretwell-Downing Informatics
Geac Library Solutions
H.W. Wilson Company
Helsinki University Library
Index Data
Inera Inc.
INFLIBNET Centre
Infotrieve, Inc.
Innodata Isogen, Inc.
Innovative Interfaces, Inc.
International DOI Foundation
Ithaka/JSTOR/ARTstor
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Membership in NISO is open to any organization

VOTING MEMBERSHIP in NISO is for companies and larger non-profit organizations around the world that want to be directly involved in standards development and support NISO's goals.

BENEFITS OF VOTING MEMBERSHIP

- Inform your strategic business decisions by getting early access to leading industry developments and thinking
- Directly influence the direction of new standards and gain critical business intelligence by participating in NISO's pre-standards events, through membership on NISO committees, and voting and commenting on NISO standards
- Network with competitors and find allies in the neutral setting that NISO meetings and workshops provide

- Leverage your company's leadership position by identifying your organization as a supporter of standards, the sign of a customer-oriented organization
- Impact NISO's agenda and priorities

OPPORTUNITIES

- Stay informed through email alerts, the monthly NISO Newslines, and Information Standards Quarterly, the official NISO newsletter reporting on standards news and activities worldwide
- Comment and vote on all upcoming standards
- Take part in NISO standards committees and serve on the U.S. Technical Advisory Group to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee on Information and Documentation

Library Binding Institute
The Library of Congress
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Lucent Technologies
Medical Library Association
MINITEX
Modern Language Association
MuseGlobal, Inc.
Music Library Association
National Agricultural Library
National Archives and Records Administration
National Library of Medicine
National Security Agency
NFAIS
OCLC Online Computer Library Center
Openly Informatics, Inc.
Paratext
Polaris Library Systems
ProQuest Information and Learning
Random House, Inc.
Recording Industry Association of America
Ringgold
RLG

SAGE Publications
Serials Solutions
SirsiDynix
Society for Technical Communication
Society of American Archivists
Special Libraries Association
Standards Australia Ltd
Swets Information Services
TAGSYS
Talis Information Ltd
Thomson Gale
Thomson Scientific
TLC (The Library Corporation)
Triangle Research Libraries Network
U.S. Department of Defense,
Defense Technical Information Center
U.S. Department of Energy,
Office of Scientific & Technical Information
U.S. Government Printing Office
VTLS, Inc.
WebFeat
Zone & Zone Co. Ltd

tion interested in supporting the goals of NISO

- Elect Officers and Directors of NISO to chart NISO's course
- Vote on matters influencing the direction of NISO

NISO'S STANDARDS ALLIANCE
brings together academic, public,
and government-sponsored libraries
to support NISO's mission.

BENEFITS OF ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

- Identify your organization as a supporter of standards, so your vendors and service providers use them
- Contribute your expertise on new standards and on updating existing standards

- Receive early alerts about new standards and drafts of standards available for comment, as well as standards news you need to know
- Get early notification of NISO-sponsored meetings and workshops and take advantage of discounted registration fees

OPPORTUNITIES

- Access all NISO standards and reports for free on the NISO website
- Stay informed through the monthly NISO Newline and Information Standards Quarterly, the official NISO newsletter reporting on standards news and activities worldwide
- Contribute your ideas on new areas for standardization

2005 Action in the Standards Pipeline

From fact-finding workshops through standards maintenance, NISO supports a full standards lifecycle. NISO also advances work in the Internet arena, with efforts such as the work that led to INFO URI (Uniform Resource Identifier).

Pre-Standards Research helps NISO map the business and technology landscape where its standards must operate.

- A pre-standards workshop focused on Digital Rights Expression.
- An exploratory workgroup on RFID examined the need for standards to support use in the library and book industries.

In its **Active Standards Development**, NISO charters groups to create standards and best practices.

- The Metasearch Initiative produced a guideline, two draft standards and a best practices document.
- The Standardized Usage Statistics Harvesting Initiative (SUSHI) will help librarians track usage of online content.
- A License Expression Working Group will develop a single standard for the exchange of license information between publishers and libraries.
- The Web Services and Practices Working Group will produce best practices and interoperability mechanisms documents.

Draft Standards in Trial Use enable implementers to test the product.

- Collection Description Specification and the Information Retrieval Service Description Specification work together to make it easier to find and use resources from the hidden Web.

Several Z39 **Standards** went to ballot; others earned approval from ANSI.

- Data Dictionary—Technical Metadata for Digital Still Images
- The OpenURL Framework for Context-Sensitive Services
- Bibliographic References
- Scientific and Technical Reports—Preparation, Presentation and Preservation
- Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Controlled Vocabularies
- Information Services and Use: Metrics and Standards for Libraries and Information

Maintenance Agency appointments keep standards living documents.

- ALA became Maintenance Agency for Information Services and Use: Metrics & Statistics for Libraries and Information Providers—Data Dictionary.
- The DAISY Consortium became Maintenance Agency for Specifications for the Digital Talking Book.

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NISO

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Invited Expert to the Committee

CLIFFORD LYNCH
Coalition for Networked Information

NATIONAL INFORMATION STANDARDS ORGANIZATION

4733 Bethesda Avenue, Suite 300
Bethesda, MD 20814 USA
Telephone: 301-654-2512
Fax: 301-654-1721
Email: nisohq@niso.org
URL: www.niso.org