

The Relationship between the Defense Standardization Program (DSP) and the DoD Information Technology Standards Program

During a Defense Standardization Council (DSC) meeting, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Systems Engineering) presented the findings and recommendations of the Modular Open Systems Architecture Technical Standards Working Group (TSWG). The TSWG was tasked with investigating standards that enable MOSA; exploring MOSA efforts in DoD; canvassing MOSA efforts in Industry; and examining the role of the DSC in MOSA. The findings of the TSWG indicated that:

- The use of widely accepted standards enables MOSA implementation
- There are issues identified with standard selection, implementation, standards conformance and compliance validation
- There is inconsistent knowledge about standardization practices

As a result of those findings, the DSC tasked the Defense Standardization Program Office, with assistance from the DISA Standardization Executive, to develop a document to explain the differences in, and the interrelationship between, the Defense Standardization Program and the DOD IT Standards Program. The table below, developed with input from DSPO, DISA, DOD-CIO, and the Departmental Standardization Offices, is provided for your information.

COMPARISON OF DEFENSE STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM AND DOD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS PROGRAM

The following table shows how the Defense Standardization Program and the DoD Information Technology Standards Program are complementary and interrelate.

| TOPIC | Defense Standardization Program | DoD IT Standards Program |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Authority in Law | Cataloging and Standardization Act of 1952, Public Law 82-436, directed the Secretary of Defense to establish the DSP to achieve the highest degree practicable in the standardization of items, materials, processes, technologies, and engineering practices by using a common set of military and federal specifications and standards, and cooperating with industry in the development of non-government standards that could satisfy defense requirements. The DSP implements this Public Law by providing the policies, procedures, and infrastructure for the development, maintenance, and access of government standardization documents, including military and federal specifications, standards, and handbooks, commercial item descriptions, data item descriptions, and other related standardization | 10 U.S. Code § 2223 directs the Chief Information Officer of Department of Defense to ensure that information technology and national security systems standards that will apply throughout the Department of Defense are prescribed (this is the basis for the DoD IT Standards Registry (DISR)). There is also basis in Public Law 108-237, Standards Development Organization Advancement Action of 2004 and Public Law 108-113, National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995. Guidance is provided in OMB Circulars A-119 and A-130. |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | documents, as well as the adoption of non-government standards. | |
| Organizational Tasking | <p>Under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(AT&L), DoDI 5134.16 assigns the DASD(SE) the responsibility as the Defense Standardization Executive (DSE). The DSE chairs the Defense Standardization Council (DSC), which establishes policy regarding standards within DoD.</p> <p>Under the authority, direction, and control of the DSE, the Director of the Defense Standardization Program Office (DSPO) oversees the operation of the Defense Standardization Program (DSP). See DoDI 4120.24 and DoDM 4120.24 regarding DSP policy and procedures.</p> | <p>This responsibility is found in the DoDD 5144.01, the Charter for the DoD CIO. Based on this, DoDI 8310.01 establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides direction for identifying, developing, and prescribing DoD standards for information technology (IT), to include national security systems (NSS) and defense business systems (DBS). This issuance established the DoD IT Standards program and the Director of Defense Information Systems as the DoD Executive Agent. The issuance also provides the linkage with the DSP.</p> <p>The committee covering the DISR is the Joint Enterprise Standards Committee (JESC), established in 2013. The JESC is co-chaired by individuals designated by the Director of National Intelligence CIO and DoD CIO respectively.</p> <p>The JESC has a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) providing the details of how the DISR is maintained. The DISR is posted online in the Global Information Grid</p> |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | <p>Technical Guidance – Federation (GTG-F). NSA, per direction of the DNI CIO, has a portal on JWICS that include the DISR, IC Enterprise Standards Baseline, actual standards, and other standards related resources.</p> <p>The JESC DoD CIO co-chair reports to the Enterprise Architecture and Services Board (EASB) under the CIO Executive Board. The IC has its own governance structure, which includes implementation direction.</p> |
| <p>Selection and Compliance with Standards</p> | <p>With the exception of standards mandated by law and regulation (such as DoD directives, instructions, and regulations), there is no DSP policy requiring use of, or compliance with standards.</p> | <p>Differs from the DSP. In addition to standards mandated by law, the standards provided in the DISR are mandatory for inclusion by acquisition programs in program documentation.</p> |
| <p>Primary Tools and Content</p> | <p>The “ASSIST” is the repository of standardization documents developed or adopted under the DSP procedures, including military and federal specifications, standards, and handbooks, commercial item descriptions, data item descriptions, selected NATO standards, and non-government standards adoption notices.</p> | <p>The DISR is a ‘registry’ containing pointers to authoritative sources for those IT Standards that are categorized as “emerging,” “mandated,” or “retired,” as defined in DoDI 8310.01. “Mandated” means mandatory.</p> <p>The GTG-F also includes profiles of standards that pre-select options and default values as an aid to interoperability. Profiles</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>ASSIST is the authoritative source for MIL STDs and serves as a pointer to the authoritative source for other listed standards.</p> | <p>are typically generated by communities of interest for the interfaces between systems.</p> <p>The DISR is the authoritative resource for programs to build the listing of applicable standards.</p> |
| MIL-STDs Addressing IT | <p>The DSP designates Lead Standardization Activities (LSAs) for standardization areas under which MIL-STDs may be developed, such as DISA for communications and IT; and NGA for geospatial products; and other activities, as appropriate.</p> <p>These organizations may have additional authorizing policies that provide tasking for specific areas of interest.</p> <p>When a new IT MIL-STD is approved for publication it appears in ASSIST before being posted in the DISR primarily due to administrative processes needed to approve the MIL-STD.</p> | <p>JESC TWGs recommend selection of standards published by recognized standards bodies for citation in the DISR based upon criteria established in the JESC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Some commercial STDs posted in the DISR may also appear as ‘adopted’ STDs in the ASSIST database.</p> <p>There is no attempt to ensure that ASSIST-adopted IT STDs and DISR databases are synchronized when addressing other than MIL-STDs.</p> <p>Given the active management of the DISR it would not be likely that the DSP would elect to adopt a non-MIL-STD for IT that was not already in the DISR. Once such a STD is in the DISR, it can be used whether or not it appears in ASSIST.</p> |
| Registry and Repository | <p>ASSIST is a database operated by the Defense</p> | <p>The DISR [and IC ESB] are registries, hence do</p> |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Logistics Agency Document Services that provides electronic access to over 100,000 active, inactive, and cancelled defense and federal specifications and standards, military handbooks, commercial item descriptions, data item descriptions, and related technical documents prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the DSP.</p> <p>Besides DoD-prepared documents, ASSIST also has selected international standardization agreements, such as NATO standards ratified by the United States and adoption notices for selected non-government standards. In addition to online PDF files, ASSIST contains extensive metadata for each document and allows for full text searches of unrestricted documents. ASSIST also functions as an online tool for standardization management activities to develop, coordinate, distribute, and manage documents produced under the DSP.</p> <p>The ASSIST URL is https://assist.dla.mil. Registration for a user identification and password</p> | <p>not contain actual standards documents but provide pointers to the authoritative sources of the listed documents, which includes the ASSIST registry for MIL-STDs applicable to IT, and to NIST for FIPS and SP-800 series IT standards.</p> <p>It also points to commercial/industrial standards bodies as authoritative sources for standards they publish.</p> <p>In addition to standards, the DISR also includes technical guidance and best practices information that do not qualify as formal standards but are useful within the community of interest. The DISR is included in the GTG-F, which also includes capability-specific standards profiles (e.g., DoDAF StdV-1).</p> <p>The GTG-F controls access to its unclassified website, which requires a CAC/PIV and account.</p> |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>or CAC access is required. Accessing PDF files of unrestricted documents, conducting searches, or viewing basic information such as the document title and date can be done with ASSIST Quicksearch at http://quicksearch.dla.mil/ without user identification or password.</p> | |
| <p>Complementary and Supplemental Content</p> | <p>ASSIST holds standards ranging over many topics, to include MIL-STDs related to IT but does not address profiles or other forms of guidance. ASSIST is a database of standardization documents as noted above. Copies of government standardization documents are available on-line directly from ASSIST.</p> <p>ASSIST is updated daily.</p> | <p>For completeness, the DISR includes the IT MIL-STDs that are listed in ASSIST, and points to ASSIST as the authoritative source for these documents. The DISR does not store any complete standards; it points to the authoritative source where the standards can be found. There is minimal duplication of standards between the two databases.</p> <p>The DISR also lists supplemental information (e.g., white papers), best practices, and other guidance that is not formatted as standards but can be useful to IT practitioners.</p> <p>The DISR is updated 3 times a year.</p> |
| <p>Creation & Selection of Standards</p> | <p>When it is determined that a new MIL-STD is needed the DSP-designated Lead Standardization Activity (LSA) can authorize the development of the</p> | <p>Under DoDI 8310.01: the DIRNSA serves as the DoD lead for approving and enforcing tactical signals intelligence standards; and Director,</p> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>standard based upon the need; and lack of an alternative standard from a recognized standards body. DISA is the LSA for IT MIL STDs.</p> <p>On occasion, the DSP may “adopt” a standard created by a recognized standards body. When this is done, ASSIST will list the standard with pointers to the authoritative source, as is done for STDs in the DISR.</p> | <p>NGA, serves as the DoD lead for geospatial intelligence standards. NGA also has an agreement with a recognized SDO.</p> |
| <p>Standards Priorities have been established by PL 104-113; OMB Circular A-119; and the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy (ICSP) chaired by NIST.</p> <p>Both the DISR and ASSIST follow the same priority sequence. See table in DoDI 8310.01 for greater detail.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Federal Law, Regulation, or Instruction 2. Internationally Accredited and Treaty Based 3. National 4. Professional Society, Technology Consortia, Industry Association 5. Federal 6. Military | <p>The DSPO is the DoD representative to the ICSP.</p> <p>Current policy is to only write a MIL-STD when there is no higher priority STD that addresses a topic.</p> | <p>DoDI 8310.01 follows the same rules to comply with these priorities. There are situations where International Standards may conflict with United States policy or laws in which case lower priority standards may be used.</p> <p>NOTE: Among Federal Standards, NIST publishes Federal Information Policy Standards (FIPS) and the SP-800 series standards for the Internet, both of which apply to DoD. Other Federal agencies (i.e. FCC, FAA, etc.) also publish standards and regulations that apply to DoD IT.</p> |