

Who Cares About Standards? YOU Should!

By Kathleen M. Robinette, ISO Standards Committee Chair

Many people think standards development is as boring as reading a user's manual. But if you want lots of people to buy your products or services, then you should consider participating in standards development. First of all, not only will you be able to ensure that your products or services are taken into account in the standard, but you will be able to promote them. The level of detail you can communicate in a standards meeting is much more than you can communicate in almost any other forum, and the standards groups are intentionally composed of diverse organizations that will include some of your customers as well as your competitors.

Second, the process of developing a standard necessarily involves sharing your information, and that is a boon for business. In my case, for example, the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) shared anthropometric (body size) data and methods for the development of an apparel sizing standard. Not only did a sizing standard result that included a reference to AFRL, but apparel companies hired AFRL to help develop their products for specific markets. After all, who better to hire than someone who developed the information and wrote the document?

In addition, AFRL has shared the CAESAR body measurement data with various universities and companies around the world, which in turn have developed software for use in human animation and 3-D shape searching over the Internet. Now AFRL has the software these groups developed without having to pay the development or maintenance costs, and the organizations that developed the software are also providing AFRL with free advertising when they sell their products. As a result, more and more people want the CAESAR data for their own software development, and they want AFRL's assistance in extracting the information pertinent to their particular product or in gathering new information in a similar manner.

Third, whenever you attend standards meetings and participate in the process, you learn about the marketplace, the competition, and consumer needs for developing new products and/or services. This helps to ensure that you stay in touch with your customers and remain at the innovation forefront.

Fourth, competitors who participate in standards committees often team up to share costs for the development of capabilities that they all need but that are too expensive for any one group. For example, the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) G-13 Committee, made up of competitors from the automotive and aerospace industries, and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International D-13 Committee, made up of competitors from the apparel industry, teamed up to fund the CAESAR study. The umbrella organizations for the standards development – such as SAE, ASTM, and HFES – have ways to facilitate these kinds of collaborations.

Finally, the best part of standards work for me is personal satisfaction. Not only do I get satisfaction from helping to ensure that better, safer products are in the marketplace, but I have met wonderful, interesting people from all over the world.

If you are interested in participating in HFES standards, indicate your area of interest and send an e-mail to HFES Executive Director Lynn Strother at lynn@hfes.org. She will forward it to the appropriate committee chair within the HFES Institute, the Society's umbrella body for standards development. ☒

ANNUAL MEETING

Human Factors Standards: Get Involved!

By Clete Booher

In today's world of rapidly expanding technology, human factors/ergonomics (HF/E) standards are becoming exceedingly important in the design of usable human-systems interfaces. Are you aware of all of the HF/E-based standards, handbooks, and other guidance documents that are available for use in the development, testing, and evaluation of various products? Despite our Society's long involvement in such standards development and promotion, many HF/E practitioners probably aren't aware of the existence or usefulness of these documents. This article presents two opportunities to learn more about HF/E standards during the 49th Annual Meeting.

The Executive Council recently reaffirmed the importance of HFES participation in standards development as a component of the strategic objective to transition science to practice. But we need more Society members to get involved in the creation of HF/E standards and best practices documents. This involvement needs to include participation by HF/E practitioners to ensure that these documents are relevant and useful.

Historically, only a small subset of Society members have had the time and institutional support to actively participate in standards work. The members involved in this work (of whom I am one) believe, however, that human factors standards and best practices documents would benefit substantially from broader expert participation in their creation. We also think that younger HF/E professionals will benefit from exposure to these documents and the principles and practices behind them. To help expand participation in the Society's standards activities, we are proposing the formation of a Human Factors Standards Technical Group. Members of such a TG would be kept aware of all ongoing national and international HF/E standards and best practices programs. They could volunteer to serve as reviewers or as authors of standards documents in their areas of expertise. They could also ensure that the Society's positions are reflective of the experience and expertise of our very broad constituency.

You are cordially invited to drop by our Standards Booth

(#10-11) in the Exhibit Hall at the HFES 49th Annual Meeting to speak to some of the individuals involved in human factors standards work. If you agree that an HF/E standards TG would be useful, we also invite you to take time to sign our petition to establish it.

In addition, please join us at a special meeting to discuss the Society's standards activities. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 28, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Banda Sea 1 at the Loews Royal Pacific Resort's Conference Center.

Clete Boober retired from the Johnson Space Center in Houston following a 40-year career with NASA. During the last 15 of those years he was responsible for the maintenance and updating of NASA-STD-3000, NASA's definitive human factors specification.

Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice

By *Betty Sanders, Immediate Past HFES President*

One of the major challenges facing the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society and the human factors/ergonomics (HF/E) profession in the past, present, and future is bridging the gap between research and practice. Most HF/E professionals focus on one of these two areas throughout their careers, but remarkably few professionals work on both. Too few researchers devote time and energy to translating their results into language that can be easily used by the practitioner, and too few practitioners identify for the researcher the information they need to improve the quality of their tools and methods.

Therefore, I have chosen to make "Research to Practice" the topic of the President's Forum at the 49th Annual Meeting in Orlando. The following group of Society leaders has been assembled to express their views on the topic and stimulate discussion:

- Randolph G. Bias, associate professor at the University of Texas in Austin
- Kenneth R. Boff, chief scientist at the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
- Marvin J. Dainoff, HFES president-elect for 2005–2006
- K. Ronald Laughery, Jr., president of Micro Analysis & Design
- Arnold Lund, usability engineering manager at Microsoft Corporation

Special guest panelist R. Delon Hull, associate director for Research & Technology Transfer at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), will talk about the Research to Practice Program (r2p) developed and implemented for NIOSH. He will also provide insight into how such a program could be designed and implemented for the HF/E profession.

The President's Forum will be held on Tuesday, September 27, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Pacifica 3, immediately following

the opening plenary session. As HFES strives to expand its influence outside the profession, this seminar will focus on the Society's need to consider internal expansion as well. This is an event you will not want to miss.

HFES Oral History

HFES Pioneers Video Series Editor Dennis Beringer, who has been capturing video interviews of pioneers in human factors, is interested in extending this project for the HFES 50th Anniversary year. Beginning at the HFES 49th Annual Meeting, Beringer will be conducting brief (5–15 minute) video interviews to capture recollections and reminiscences about the history of the field and the Society. If you will be at the 49th Annual Meeting and would like to share an anecdote, please send an e-mail message to him at dennis.beringer@faa.gov. For members who will not be at the meeting, Dennis would also be interested in receiving DVDs of your contributions to the HFES Oral History Project. You may contact him at the same e-mail address.

HFES 50th Anniversary

Many ideas and suggestions have been received from members for ways to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society. Based on review by and inputs from members and ex-officio members of the 50th Anniversary Task Force and the Executive Council, these have been consolidated into a set of eight principal efforts, and plans for their implementation have been developed.

To provide an opportunity for members to review and discuss these plans and to offer additional suggestions for their refinement and implementation, the task force will conduct a meeting at the 49th Annual Meeting in Orlando on Thursday, September 29, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Pacifica 10. ☒

ELECTIONS

2005 Election Results

The following HFES members were elected to serve beginning in Fall 2005:

President-Elect

Waldemar Karwowski, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

Secretary-Treasurer-Elect

William S. Marras, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Executive Council Members-at-Large

Arnold M. Lund, Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA
John Brian Peacock, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott, AZ ☒