Once a man entered a small town and asked a small child: “Have any great men and women been born in your town?” “Oh, no!” the child answered. “Only babies are born in our town.”

This story is told in From the Heart of the Lotus: the Teaching Stories of Swami Kripalu, compiled and edited by John Mundahl. It’s offered as a metaphor for the slow development of faith and devotion between disciple and guru, but it’s applicable to standards. They take time to develop, too. There’s work involved, but lots of time: time to think, time to comment, time to reconsider, time to write—which runs through all the previous three time-steps—and then repeat until we can finally call it done . . . until the next revision.

I’m writing about time because we have had only one working group meeting since the last edition of TSP News—only one event—but a lot has moved forward since that time. The one meeting was for the Control Protocols Working Group, which met via WebEx on May 1. The two major agenda items were a last consideration of the one objection to accepting BSR E1.33, Message Transport and Management for ANSI E1.20 (RDM) Compatible and Similar Devices over IP Networks, as an American National Standard, and to approving the start of a new project BSR E1.68, Recommended Practice for Evaluating DMX512 (ANSI E1.11) Interoperability. Javid Butler has written elsewhere in this issue about the BSR E1.68 project, and Bob Goddard has written another article urging people to do now what this project will eventually describe in more detail. I will leave it to their articles to describe BSR E1.68 and the incompatibility problems it will address. However, I will add that if you want to be involved, you can do so by commenting in the future public reviews or by joining the Control Protocols Working Group. Please see “A Call for Members” accompanying this story for information on joining working groups.

Considering the objection on accepting E1.33 was the other big item of business. ANSI and our procedures require that any No vote against the final acceptance of a standard be carefully considered. We don’t work on a simple majority-wins/minority-loses basis, as do American political elections. The side voting against the proposal has to explain why they are voting against it, and those in favor have to listen. Indeed, there have been cases in ESTA’s standards work where a voter said No and explained why, and people who had voted Yes said, “He’s right,” and changed their votes. In this case with BSR E1.33, no one sided with the No voter, and there was no way to resolve the objections by tweaking a detail. The reasons for the No vote were essentially that the project had taken too long to complete and the protocol is complicated and unnecessary. Neither argument was persuasive. Voting against acceptance delays publication for a few months or for eternity, which doesn’t make much sense if the argument is that the
process has taken too long. Furthermore, all our standards are voluntary; no one has to use a protocol if he thinks it is too complicated or unnecessary. A safety standard might be enforced by an Authority Having Jurisdiction, but AHJ enforcement is unlikely with a lighting control protocol. A prospective customer might want products that use a particular protocol, but no one is required to provide all products to all prospective customers. One can always offer a different product, saying it is simpler, better, or cheaper.

Coming soon—probably

The objections were considered and answered at the May 1 CPWG meeting, following ESTA’s ANSI-approved procedures. The approval motion was moved to the Technical Standards Council, which voted to accept it, and now is before the ESTA Executive Committee. On the day I am writing this, half have voted in favor of the motion, but the other half have not yet voted. Unless someone sees a problem, by the time you read this, a BSR 9 form for final approval by ANSI will be filed—and then ANSI staff take anywhere from a few days to a few months to approve a project, depending on how much back-up documentation they want to see for public review comments and votes, and the attempts to resolve objections. If all goes well, by the time you read this, or shortly thereafter, there should be an ANSI E1.33, Message Transport and Management for ANSI E1.20 (RDM) Compatible and Similar Devices over IP Networks, a companion standard to ANSI E1.31, Entertainment Technology – Lightweight Streaming Protocol for Transport of DMX512 Using ACN.

Another standard that should be approved soon is BSR E1.53, Overhead Mounting of Luminaires, Lighting Accessories, and Other Portable Devices: Specification and Practice. ("BSR" means "draft." It gets changed to "ANSI" when something is approved.) This is a revision of the existing ANSI E1.53 – 2016. The revision loosened the working load limit marking requirements, which had specified text too big to fit on some hardware, and moved a requirement that hardware be suitable for the environment from where it only applied to C-clamps to where it would apply to both C-clamps and safety cables. So far, all the votes in the Technical Standards Council have been Yes votes, but one voter has not voted yet. There is still time. If he doesn’t vote No, the final approval motion will move directly to the ESTA Executive Committee, and then to ANSI. No one commented during the public review, all the working group votes were Yes, so there should be no lengthy interrogation by ANSI staff about resolutions to objections.

Published and done for now

Two standards have gone through the process and been published since the last installment of TSP News. In order of approval date, they are:

ANSI E1.6-1 – 2019, Entertainment Technology – Powered Hoist Systems

This standard establishes requirements for the design, manufacture, installation, inspection, and maintenance of powered hoist systems for lifting and suspension of loads for performance, presentation, and theatrical production. This standard does not apply to the structure to which the hoist is attached, to the attachment of loads to the load carrying device, to systems for flying people, to welded link chain hoists, or to manually powered hoists, which are or will be covered by other ESTA Rigging Working Group standards. This was approved by ANSI on May 10.


This standard addresses common show file requirements for automated stage machinery control systems used in entertainment venues. It establishes a minimum level of design and performance guidelines for the integrated software design of processor-based machinery control equipment. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that users will be able to transfer, modify, and customize a “least common denominator” show file for the data required to tour entertainment productions from one facility to another, even when the facilities’ physical conditions, hoist inventories, and placements, and the machinery control consoles and data...
Only babies are born
topology differ.
This is a reaffirmation of the 2014 standard. No substantive changes were made, but the standard has been moved from the scope of the Rigging Working Group to the Stage Machinery Working Group. The standard was approved by ANSI on May 23.

These new editions are available at https://tsp.esta.org/freestandards at no cost, the free download being made possible by the generosity of ProSight Specialty Insurance—a gift to the industry from ProSight. They also are available for purchase for $40 from ANSI and IHS.

But wait, there’s more!
We have a couple of standards that have been going through the approval process and will be published soon. It takes some time to make sure that highly-formatted documents are correct, that we haven’t broken a table into two confusing chunks or made XML code, which is hard to read at its best, completely incomprehensible—but look for them soon on our website.

**ANSI E1.30-11 – 2019, EPI 33 – ACN Root Layer Protocol Operation on TCP**
This is part of the E1.30 suite of standards documents that specify how conforming implementations are to operate in a particular environment or situation in order to guarantee interoperability. This part of E1.30, EPI 33, is an interoperability profile that specifies the operation and formats for the ACN Root Layer Protocol operating on TCP. E1.30 has been filed with ANSI as a suite of standards, multiple parts. This obviates the need to file a new Project Initiation Notification Form with ANSI for each document, and waiting 30 days to give people an opportunity to comment on the start of the project (e.g., “Hey, we have a standard for that. Get off our lawn!”) ANSI approved it on May 21, and it was announced to the world in the May 24 issue of ANSI’s *Standards Action*.

**ANSI E1.37-7 – 2019, Additional Message Sets for ANSI E1.20 (RDM) – Gateway & Splitter Messages**
E1.37-7 provides additional Get/Set Parameter Messages for use with the ANSI E1.20 Remote Device Management protocol. This document contains messages relating to configuring managed splitters, proxy devices, and RDMnet (E1.33) Devices. It’s part of a larger E1.37 project, which has been filed with ANSI as having multiple parts. ANSI approved this final version on May 23, and it was announced to the world in the May 31 issue of ANSI’s *Standards Action*.

Look for these to be posted at https://tsp.esta.org/freestandards soon—maybe by the time you read this. There you will be able to download them at no cost, the free download being made possible by a gift to the industry from ProSight Specialty Insurance. If you really want to buy them, you will be able to do so for $40 from ANSI and IHS.

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In public review

As I write this, five ESTA standards are posted for public review on the ESTA website at http://estalink.us/pr. By the time you read this, they will certainly have passed out of public review, but this listing gives you an idea of what the projects are being worked on. Any public review comments—or lack of them—will be fodder for the next set of working group meetings, scheduled for Thursday, July 18 through Monday, July 22 at the Marriott Solana in Westlake, TX. Please visit http://estalink.us/pr when you read this to see what is open for review at that time. In order of due-date and then alpha-numeric designation, the documents in review as I write this are:

BSR E1.4-2, Entertainment Technology – Statically Suspended Rigging Systems, is a new draft standard for statically suspended rigging systems (dead-hung battens and grids) permanently installed in performances spaces, places of assembly, and other areas used for entertainment purposes. It establishes minimum performance criteria, recommendations, and guidelines that can be used for installation, use, maintenance, and inspection purposes. Comments are due before the end of the day June 17, 2019.

ANSI E1.27-2 – 2009 (R2014), Entertainment Technology – Recommended Practice for Permanently Installed Control Cables for Use with DMX512-A Products, is an existing standard being considered for reaffirmation. It’s the second part of a two-part standard for DMX512 cabling, and is for permanently installed cables. The first part, ANSI E1.27-1, is for portable control cables. Comments are due no later than July 1, 2019.

ANSI E1.30-3 – 2009 (R2014), EPI 25 Time Reference in ACN Systems Using SNTP and NTP, is another existing standard being considered for reaffirmation. It’s another recipe in the E1.30 cookbook for ACN. It offers ways of providing a time reference so events can be synchronized. Comments are due no later than July 1, 2019.

ANSI E1.30-10 – 2009 (R2014), EPI 32, Identification of Draft Device Description Language Modules, is another existing standard being considered for reaffirmation. It recommends ways of identifying a Device Description Language Module for ACN as a trial version, one under development, not for release yet. ANSI E1.30-10 is part of an open series of E1.30 documents that suggests ways of doing common tasks with ANSI E1.17, Architecture for Control Networks. Comments are due no later than July 1, 2019.

BSR E1.59, Entertainment Technology – Object Transform Protocol (OTP), is a new draft standard describing a mechanism to transfer object transform information such as position, orientation, and velocity over an IP network using a subset of the [ACN] protocol suite. It covers data format, data protocol, data addressing, and network management. Data transmitted.
is intended to coordinate visual and audio elements of a production and should not be used for safety critical applications. The document’s authors are anxious to get some public review response on the document. Please respond with “Yes” if the draft is acceptable; responses need not be limited to objections. Comments are due no later than July 1, 2019.

If any of this sparks your interest and you want to become personally involved in a project’s working group, please look at “A Call for Members” to see how you can join and what in interest groups people are particularly being sought.

Karl G. Ruling is ESTA’s Technical Standards Manager. He also serves as Protocol’s Technical Editor. Karl can be reached at karl.ruling@esta.org.

A call for members

ESTA’s TSP works to maintain a balance of the interests represented by the volunteers on the working groups to help ensure that the standards developed are for the benefit of everyone: the people who make equipment, the people who sell or rent it, the people who specify it, and the people who use it. To do this, periodically the TSP issues a call for new members in particular interest categories. At this time, the following working groups are looking for voting members in the noted interest categories to help balance the interests in the working group.

- **Control Protocols**: General interest, dealer/rental companies, designers
- **Electrical Power**: Custom-market producers, designers, general interest
- **Event Safety**: Performing artists, insurance companies
- **Floors**: Custom-market producers, designers, dealer/rental companies
- **Fog and Smoke**: All categories except users
- **Followspot Position**: Custom-market producers, dealer/rental companies, mass-market producers
- **Photometrics**: Dealer/rental companies, designers, general interest, users
- **Rigging**: Designers
- **Stage Machinery**: Users, dealer/rental companies

Voters in the Technical Standards Program are required to attend meetings and to vote on letter ballots. Membership in ESTA or any other organization is not a requirement for participation in ESTA’s Technical Standards Program, but there is a $100 a year per person participation fee—a flat rate, regardless of voting status or the number of working groups a person joins. The fee is levied to help defray the costs of running the TSP, which has always run a deficit. There is a scholarship fund, with an initial endowment from Chris Kaiser, to help those who would like to participate for whom the participation fee would be a hardship. More information about becoming involved in the Technical Standards Program and links to application forms are available at http://tsp.esta.org/.

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