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Information Technology

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1. The purpose of fast track is to make into an IS without change something which exists already as a "standard" (cf. ISO/IEC Guide 2 definition). This is the purpose, not an absolute rule, so there is no implication that a standard changed during the fast-track approval process is in some sense second-class or illegitimate. However, it is important to note that the normal case is one where no changes are required, since if there were changes foreseen there would be no natural reason not to submit it to the five-stage process, designed to make changes to an original draft document.
2. The purpose of fast-track is also, and in this case I maintain that it is also an absolute rule, to make into an IS a specification which can be used as it is as a useful contribution to the world community. This to me is a sine qua non of a fast track. Any other situation (e.g. preconditions, constraints, extra work needed etc. before being able to use the results) seems to disqualify the fast track. This follows from the fundamental purpose of an IS, which is to help world trade, as well as from the rules of ISO and IEC, which are democratic and transparent. If any other work was required, this would have to be done in the ISO/IEC system and not by each user separately, and therefore we would be back to the five-stage process.
3. In one special case (which it is true has been the most frequent) amendments have been fast-tracked without objection, even though an amendment does not in the least fulfil condition 2. above. That is where the amendment and a pre-existing IS form an entity just like a normal IS and its subsequent normal amendment: a purely mechanical process combining the two allows all readers easily to derive a valid up-to-date IS. (The amendment and a pre-existing IS can form such an entity in the special case where the IS was derived without any change whatsoever from the identical specification to which the amendment applies.)
4. Without trying to put in doubt the usefulness of this tried and true process, I would like to stress that it represents a short cut, and that what is truly being fast-tracked is the virtual object derived from the original specification combined with the amendment, a virtual object which does fulfil condition 2.
5. In order to avoid some of the problems we experienced with the WAPI fast-track "amendment"--some of which were unavoidable and not relevant to the current discussion, but some of which were caused by exactly this situation (details available on request)--it would be extremely useful to change the rules so that only the specification as amended may be accepted for fast-track, and not the amendment as such. I believe this would not cause any additional problems or effort (or not significant ones--a little more routine work, perhaps), but would avoid some.