RECOMMENDATION TO GISB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Request #: 97023

Request to Further define GISB Standard 4.3.6 on formats for non-transactional data.

Type of Request (check all that apply) (E-5):

A-3	___	New Document (Data Dictionary attached)
A-1	___	New Data Element (Data Dictionary attached)
A-6	___	Revision to Data Element (Data Dictionary attached)
A-2	___	New Code Value (Table attached)
A-2	___	Revision to Code Value (Table attached)
	___	Revision to Business Process Documentation
	___	Revision to X12
A-4	___	New Business Practice Standard
A-5	X	Revision to Business Practice Standard

Abstract/ Discussion (E-1, E-3, E-4):

Standard 4.3.6 states that Notices, Affiliated Marketer Information, Unsubscribed Capacity, Index of Customers and Tariff's must be accessible via the World Wide Web. The FTTF examined the best format for posting this non-transactional data. The task force recommends the following:

> **"The documents identified in GISB Standard 4.3.6 should be made available in HTML or RTF format."**

At the Future Technology Task Force Meeting Monday, March 17, 1997 they readdressed Request R97023. In the original discussion of the request the FTTF examined each document listed in GISB standard 4.3.6 individually (for details see FTTF meeting minutes October 14 & 15, 1996). They addressed the purpose and requirements for each document. In the original discussion they decided that Hyper-Text Markup Language (HTML) and Rich Text Format (RTF) both meet the requirements. In their review of the recommendation, the FTTF determined that neither the requirements or the available technology have changed.

HTML has many advantages. It is the recognized by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) as the standard for documents. As it is the standard, any web browser can read it. Because the web browser reads it directly, you do not have to wait for another application to load before you can view it. Similarly, anyone wanting the information only requires the one tool to view it. It has strong search capabilities. A large document (like a tariff) can easily be broken into sections and linked so that someone looking for information can navigate easily to find it.

Any word processor can read RTF. As with GISB standards, word processor manufacturers can and do exceed the standards so some features that are available in

one product may not be available on all. If a document is posted in RTF it can be read by the word processor of your choice and saved.

With both RTF and HTML the document may not look identical to its original format but the only way to do that is to standardize on a proprietary product (such as Word, WordPerfect, Acrobat, etc. . . .). That would require anyone doing business in with the Natural Gas Industry to purchase the product on which we standardize. HTML and RTF are non-proprietary and would allow participants to choose which product they want to purchase.

RTF and HTML give the service provider the option of posting the document in a format that works best for them without causing inconvenience for anyone trying to read the document.

Any time you view a document on-line with your web browser, you have downloaded it to your browser cache. If the document is in HTML format, it is downloaded and displayed in your web browser. If the document is not in an HTML format (like the PDF file stored on the GISB web page), the document is downloaded and then it is loaded into another application to be viewed.

If a document is in HTML format, you can save to a specified file from your web browser. While viewing the document, select the File menu and choose the "Save As" command. Once this document is saved, you can view it any time with your web browser. You can also load the document into some word processors. Today, a limited number read HTML but it is quickly becoming a standard feature on most wordprocessors.

The Task Force did considerable testing of converting documents to and from the RTF format. The test proved that the most commonly used word processors had little difficulty converting to and from RTF. The original font maybe lost if the wordprocessor reading the document did not have that font. Another concern was that large documents could sometimes take a few minutes to convert. The FTTF was satisfied with the test results and decided RTF was appropriate because:

- Any commonly used word processor can read an RTF file.
- Any commonly used word processor can save a file in RTF format.
- There is no other, non-proprietary word processing format that can be read by nearly all word processors.
- Service providers can easily convert documents from their current format to RTF.

Why both? HTML is the recognized standard tool used to develop Web pages. HTML allows for fast-easy loading and flexible, user-friendly searching and linking features. Converting a document to HTML can be time consuming for some therefore RTF is a reasonable option for those who do not wish to convert documents. If GISB were to standardize on RTF, then service providers who wanted to provide the added features of HTML would be required to post in both formats. The two options presented in the

request allow the service provider to choose the format that works best for them without causing any inconvenience for those who are accessing the information.

The FTTF's understanding of 4.3.5 was that the "GISB specified electronic structure" would be specified document by document and therefore examined the list in 4.3.6. The task force was uncomfortable trying to determine a format for an heretofore undefined document.

Associated Revisions:

Is Revision Required to Support an Existing GISB Standard? If So, State Standard Number and Language:

Applicable to Upstream/Downstream Process? If So, State Task Force Referred To:
Not Applicable

Sense of the Room Results: Unanimous affirmation from all segments that were represented at the 3/17/97 meeting (please refer to the minutes from the 3/17/97 FTTF meeting)

GISB Subcommittee/Task Force: Future Technology

Requester: Future Technology

What is the IETF?
The Internet Engineering Task Force is a loosely self-organized group of people who make technical and other contributions to the engineering and evolution of the Internet and its technologies. It is the principal body engaged in the development of new Internet standard specifications. Its mission includes:

- Identifying, and proposing solutions to, pressing operational and technical problems in the Internet;
- Specifying the development or usage of protocols and the near-term architecture to solve such technical problems for the Internet;
- Making recommendations to the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) regarding the standardization of protocols and protocol usage in the Internet;
- Facilitating technology transfer from the Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) to the wider Internet community; and
- Providing a forum for the exchange of information within the Internet community between vendors, users, researchers, agency contractors and network managers.

What is RTF?
A standard developed by Microsoft Corporation for specifying formatting of documents. RTF files are actually ASCII files with special commands to indicate formatting information, such as fonts and margins. Most word processors both read and save files in RTF format.

What is HTML?
Short for Hypertext Markup Language, the authoring language used to create documents on the World Wide Web.

What is SGML?
Abbreviation of Standard Generalized Markup Language, a system for organizing and tagging elements of a document. SGML was developed and standardized by the International Organization for Standards (ISO) in 1986. SGML itself does not specify any particular formatting; rather, it specifies the rules for tagging elements. These tags can then be interpreted to format elements in different ways.

SGML is used widely to manage large documents that are subject to frequent revisions and need to be printed in different formats. Because it is a large and complex system, it is not yet widely used on personal computers. However, the growth of Internet, and especially the World Wide Web, is creating renewed interest in SGML because the World Wide Web uses HTML, which is one way of defining and interpreting tags according to SGML rules.