

**BOOK REVIEW:**  
***Open Systems Standardization, A Business Approach,***  
**by Carl F. Cargill, Prentice Hall, 1997**

**Reviewed by Ken Krechmer**  
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Mr. Cargill is a long time information technology standards participant who writes with a considerable depth of experience on standard development organizations and corporate standards departments. This book builds on his previous book, *Information Technology Standardization: Theory, Process and Organizations*. It appears targeted towards those active in the standards professions as it quickly jumps into the language of the field without benefit of a glossary or definitions section.

The over 300 page book is divided into three sections. The first section of the book explores the basis for standardization and discusses the need for open systems and the concomitant need for open standards and open organizations. Chapter 5 explains two dimensions of standards: practice/conceptual standards and process/product standards and then develops a four state model of standards. Chapter 6 identifies and develops two different views of standards: user and provider, which is expanded in the following chapters into a useful standardization planning model consisting of five elements: reference model, industry standards, functional profile, systems profile and applications implementation. The extensive discussion of company organizational structures in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, while interesting and related to the idea of open organizations, seemed a bit off-topic.

In section two, *The Application of Standardization*, the author's considerable background in standards development shows. He provides an insider's view of the operation of a company standards department, a detailed explanation of how a standardization development organization (SDO) operates, and explains the operation of different SDOs with a focus on the American National Standards Institute procedures. This section also offers a business-oriented view of standards discussing standards as "infratechnologies," the effect of standards on the product life cycle, and business expenditures on standardization.

In section three, *The Organizations*, again the author's depth is evident as he describes the operation of the major international SDOs (ISO, IEC and ITU),

consortia (not formal SDOs: Open Software Foundation [OSF], X/Open Company, Limited, Unix International, Object Management Group and others), Regional Standards Bodies (ECMA, CEN, CENELEC and ETSI), along with IETF, ANSI, IEEE and US governmental standards bodies. This reviewer finds this the most detailed and accurate tour of the information technology and telecommunications standards world (US-centric) available in a single volume. The only formal US organization left out was the Telecommunications Industry Association.

In summary, Carl Cargill is a "Standards Man", steeped in the legends, language and lore of his field. If standards are your chosen field, this work is worth reading.

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