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For more information on SAM standards visit IBSMA.com.

Frequently Asked Questions: International Standards for Software Asset Management

Who creates international standards for software asset management (SAM)?

SAM standards are currently published by the world's premier standards developer, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), in conjunction with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

What is ISO/IEC 19770?

ISO/IEC 19770 represents international standards work to date in the area of software asset management. ISO/IEC 19770-1 outlines requirements for effective SAM processes. A proposed ISO/IEC 19770-2 covering software tagging is undergoing formal revision procedures and is expected to be published in 2008 or 2009.

What is ISO/IEC 19770-1?

The first international SAM standard, ISO/IEC 19770-1 was published in May 2006, establishing requirements for effective SAM governance processes. Companies that adopt 19770-1 can reduce costs and risk by improving their procurement, inventory tracking and license compliance practices.

What is ISO/IEC 19770-2?

ISO/IEC 19770-2 is a proposed international standard pertaining to software tagging practices. This tagging standard will allow software publishers to provide consistent product identification data across all versions and releases.

What are software tags?

Software tags are digital files used to identify products, determine their usage rights and facilitate their management.

Why standardize SAM tagging practices?

Standardized software tags that are uniform across multiple operating systems and platforms can bring order and consistency to software asset environments, making the jobs of both SAM administrators and tool vendors easier. Data requirements for tags ensure that identification information is provided with all released software in a manner consistent with other releases, thereby enhancing the processes, policies, practices and tools for managing software and license compliance.

Will auto-discovery inventory and reconciliation tools conform to ISO/IEC 19770-2?

Leading tool vendors are doing all they can to remain at the SAM standards vanguard. Support for ISO/IEC 19770-1 is already embedded into most product suites, and many tool manufacturers have invested significant time to help draft the proposed ISO/IEC 19770-2. For more information on conformance, see *Tools Manager 2007 Annual Review* (March 2007, at ECPweb.com).

Will ISO/IEC 19770-2 preclude the need for tools altogether? How do tool vendors stand to gain from its adoption?

With improved discovery and reconciliation capabilities resulting from standardized tag data, tool vendors can enhance best practices and product lines. Tools will also be able to more easily discern licensed from unlicensed applications and improve reconciliation of discovered applications.

How will my company benefit from ISO/IEC 19770-2?

Software purchasers have the most to gain from industry-wide acceptance and implementation of an international standard for software tagging. Consistent and uniform tag data from publishers will make asset environments more consistent and manageable and lend assurance to software license compliance efforts.

Why should my company articulate support for early adoption of ISO/IEC 19770-2?

Publishers and tool vendors enhance their products in response to customers' demands. Vendors are likely to produce conforming software and tools if you tell them your company's plans to implement SAM standards and preference for tools and software that conform to industry standards.

How can we best articulate our support?

Show your support by involving your company in drafting processes for SAM standards, and by getting managerial and executive level support within your organization behind the standards movement. Inform software publishers that you will purchase products from companies in favor of the tagging standard—and all the cost reduction, risk management and competitive advantage the standard offers. Ask them if they plan to implement 19770 standards, and what steps they will take—or have already taken—to facilitate standardized tagging practices.

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What terms and conditions can I add to my software license contract to encompass standards-compliant software as it becomes available?

One way to plan for the future of SAM would be to insert a clause into current licensing contracts mandating full or partial conformance to ISO/IEC 19770-2 upon its formal release. The data standard will, in fact, be used to develop such agreements between publishers and their customers, with specific clauses being selected for reference. Be sure to have the latest draft of the standard at hand when determining contract specifications.

When can we expect to see publishers and tool providers deliver products conforming to SAM standards?

Industry adoption has already been anticipated by major publishers, and IBSMA expects accelerated acceptance of standardized tags, created and consumed in accordance with the 19770 standards, throughout 2008-09. For more information on the SAM standards timetable visit ecpweb.com/ibsma_samstds.html.

Where can I obtain copies of the draft ISO/IEC 19770 standards?

Published standards are available for purchase from ISO.org, ANSI.org and others. To access the draft 19770-2, visit ecpweb.com/publications.html.

Is it too late to get involved in the drafting process?

Not at all. Contact IBSMA to find out more on how you can get involved.

Where can I learn more about SAM standards?

Visit IBSMA.com for all the latest SAM standards developments and news regarding software license compliance certification programs for organizations seeking partial certification in ISO/IEC 19770-1 process outcomes.