

The InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards INCITS

Abstention Voting in INCITS

June 8, 2022

Voting Responsibility

Voting is one of the key responsibilities of an accredited U.S. TAG.

As a P-member of JTC 1 or an ISO or IEC committee, we have an obligation to ensure all votes are cast.

The positions and comments developed by U.S. TAGs help to drive the development of international standards and give U.S. stakeholders the opportunity to influence the content of these global standards.

U.S. can lose P-membership if we miss votes.

Voting Responsibility

Acceptable voting positions:

Approval, Approval with comments*, Disapprove*, and Abstain
(*) Comment is required.

Important – When casting an abstention vote, there are no associated general, editorial or technical type comments. If it was required, the comment should be ‘Abstain due to lack of national expert input.’

For many years, the INCITS default position on ballots and documents has been to ‘approve’. When we cast these blanket type of approvals, it can give the impression the U.S. supports the project and that may not be true.

- Reasons for submitting blanket approval votes:
 - Lack of subject matter experts
 - Lack of time to review documents
 - U.S. has no interest in the project
 - Don’t want to hold up a project

For most actionable items, the INCITS Secretariat issues action items with default position to approve.

Best Practice Tips

Recommendations:

- **Establish a Task Group (TG)**
 - Specific projects can be assigned to the TG to make recommendations to the TC
 - Assign full TAG responsibility to the TG – requires Executive Board approval
- **Establish an Expert Group (EG)**
 - EG can mirror the Working Groups (WG) and be assigned those projects to make recommendations to the TC. Requires TC vote and Executive Board notified
- **Establish WG/Project Leads**
 - Assign project or WG responsibility to specific experts on the TC
- **Always Abstain**
 - Institute an 'always abstain position for action items unless alternate position is received' by action item due date. Requires TC vote and Executive Board notified.
- **Establish an auto-abstain list for projects with no US interest**
 - Auto-abstain list is approved by TC and the Executive Board
 - Allows committee focus on more important projects
 - TC won't see any ballots for the projects auto-abstain list
 - Removing projects from the auto-abstain list can take time. Requires TC vote and Executive Board approval

U.S. Adoption of Standards

- Existing INCITS Adoption Policy:

The INCITS adoption process shall be used only for the identical adoption of ISO or IEC standards for which the U.S. TAG voted or will vote:

affirmative on the international standard or technical report/specification, and for which no claims of conflict or duplication with an existing American National Standard have been upheld.

- Changes to INCITS Adoption Policy:

Will include situations where the U.S. vote was to abstain on the international standard or technical report/specification, and for which no claims of conflict or duplication with an existing American National Standard have been upheld.

The INCITS Secretariat will provide at least a thirty-calendar day period to the U.S. TAG so that the TAG can present reasons why adoption of a particular document should not occur. Review period is for the TAG to determine if the reasons for the abstention vote still exist.

Thank you