



Notes from General Membership WebEx Session On **Product Certification** 26 January 2006

Attendees:

- Brandon Iskey/PIAGATF
- Claudia Alimpich/IBM
- Heiner Schilling/MAN Roland
- JD Bagnell/EFI
- Jim Harvey/CIP4 Organization
- Johannes Steinhauser/Printplus
- Karl Oertel/i-teba Ltd.
- Kodak Vancouver (*Multiple participants*)
- Lee Farrell/Cannon Inc.
- Marco Kornrumpf/arvato systems GmbH
- Margaret Motamed/EFI
- Mark Bohan/PIAGATF
- Mark Wilton/Kodak
- Mike Scruton/Adobe
- Rainer Prosi/Heidelberg
- Richard Keeney/EFI

Notes on Questions and Answers:

Please see the presentation PowerPoint file in the CIP4 archives entitled 0601certificationv2.ppt for background information.

Folks from Kodak Vancouver asked, “What guidelines do the working groups receive as to how to ensure we are defining ICS’ that are certifiable?” There are no published guidelines, but the TSC does review the ICS documents before they are accepted. The Kodak group also asked about self-certification and its status. Self-certification is where member companies are provided the certification tools and are responsible for self-testing and self-evaluation. The TSC and Certification WG were opposed to that option, said Mark Bohan. Dave Kaufman of Kodak said that they are opposed to self-certification also. Furthermore, they felt that everyone would likely declare self-certification immediately, and that could weaken the value of self-certification. Rainer said that his position (and EFI chimed in) is the same as what Dave articulated. We need a bit of check and balance in place.

Heiner Schilling of MAN Roland said these positions are essentially correct, but this doesn’t take into account large machinery such as printing presses (not so easily “submitted” for certification at a central site like GATF). To get reliable results, one must consider workflow and he felt that the cost of certification for heavy equipment would be too cost prohibitive if shipping equipment was required. Dave Kaufman of Kodak explained that at Kodak they do some testing remotely and then visit customer sites to complete testing when they work on their own products.

We discussed that perhaps PIAGATF representatives should go to a reference site following software testing to complete testing of heavy equipment. Heiner mentioned that completing testing at a manufacturer’s demonstration center is not ideal, as it isn’t a real workflow that is being reviewed. David articulated that PIAGATF could first test the ability of worker devices to “parse and appropriately process” data at a software level only. Appropriate process is going to be device-dependent and can be costly to determine what acceptance criteria apply. Dave mentioned the difference between devices is part of the competitive mix and cannot be avoided. Rainer said that if a RIP can read JDF/JMF, but its output isn’t very good, it could pass

JDF Certification, but still be unacceptable to the market as a RIP, in other words our job is to verify the goodness of the JDF interconnectivity.

Rick Keeney of EFI asked if a device cannot perform one of the processes required by an ICS, does it not comply? Rainer explained no, you should look for another ICS to work with. However, Rainer pointed out, that you need to support each required element, but not necessarily support all possible attributes (ex. if your device doesn't do duplex printing, it need not process duplex printing.) Of course, if nobody (or very few) can pass testing for an ICS, we may need to revisit/revise the ICS.

It was asked, will PIAGATF only test the data processing and not the physical output? Rainer said that PIAGATF should review physical output to verify that processing was done correctly. It was suggested that we have pricing tiers; one for the data review and one for verification onsite including physical output review, as this may require travel by PIAGATF or shipping and installation charges. Margaret of EFI said that we need to make site visits optional, as the cost may be prohibitive to many. Mark Bohan of GATF said that the Certification WG had discussed site visits and they also want to minimize the need for site visits. An alternative to a site visit or installation at PIAGATF is running such tests remotely. Mark said that remote testing is desired if the proper connections are available. Mark said that site visits won't be required. Mark said that if, for instance, someone from PIAGATF travels a distance to do a site visit for a company and within the first half hour they discover there is a problem, then that travel expense would have been wasted and this is one of the potential problems with site visits.

It seems that the participants were converging on agreement that there should be two tiers or steps to certification: read-write validation and verification of output/processing. Rainer pointed out that some devices may only read JDF; are they by default JDF Certified because there is no data output to review? In such a case, output may be physical and there can be a review of the physical output to ensure the parameters provided via JDF have been applied. The counter point is that we cannot possibly test or check every possible combination of JDF provided values to every device. Rainer countered that that is true, but we can test those things that we agree are the basic necessities for each ICS manager and worker device. The features to be tested by PIAGATF must be identified to do so (are they looking at positioning, rotation, etc.). In the case of MIS systems, this is easier in that there is no physical output to test.

Rainer concluded that PIAGATF will have to ascertain what is to be checked in testing in conjunction with the working groups. Participants said that if changes are made to ICS the working groups must be required to also consider how those changes will be tested (and whether or not testing is possible.)

It was asked if these tests will be made available to the vendor for use prior to formal submission so that vendors can act with confidence. Rainer pointed out that the reference worker and manager (e.g., Alces and Elk) are meant to provide a system to test against. However, it was pointed out that this is how demonstration systems are build ... with known input and predictable output ... but that doesn't mean that the system really works! It was agreed that PIAGATF should use "similar but not identical" to the materials circulated to member vendors for pre-testing.

Regarding self-certification vs. public testing only, that can only formally be resolved in the Certification Working Group, but the purpose of this call was to gather wider-input for their consideration.

In conclusion, the group felt that this call was valuable; however the invitation was made it seem that there was going to be a vote and it was suggested that the email invitations to future general session meetings be a bit more subdued.