EURAS Conference 2023

Introduction to the Special Issue

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Conference report

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EURAS Conference 2023: introduction to the special issue

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Abstract: This special issue presents peer-reviewed papers from the 2023 EURAS/SIIT conference on 'Responsible Standardisation for Smart Systems'. The event, held in Aachen, Germany, featured 18 papers across seven sessions, along with panels, keynotes, and workshops. The special issue includes a report of the conference and three peer-reviewed papers. Topics covered are the historical functions of standards, the relationship between certificates for minimum quality and patent applications at the country level, and the importance of reference implementations in ICT standards for open source software, among others. These papers offer insights into various aspects of standardisation, such as its history, its impact on innovation, and the importance of a flexible standardisation process.

Keywords: standards, standardisation, European Academy for Standardisation, conference, Aachen

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The 2023 edition of the European Academy for Standardisation's (EURAS) annual standardisation conference was held in Aachen, in June. Precisely, it was a joint EURAS/SIIT conference (Standardisation and Innovation in Information Technology). This special issue presents a compilation of peer-reviewed versions of the invited papers that were presented at this event, along with a detailed conference report.

Around 40 people attended the event, which is about average for EURAS conferences. The conference theme was '(Responsible) Standardisation for Smart Systems'. Traditionally, this theme is addressed on day one; the remainder of the conference covers a broad range of aspects relevant to the EURAS community. All in all, 18 papers were presented in seven sessions. The conference programme also featured panels, keynotes, a role-playing game, a book presentation-cum-discussion and a dedicated workshop for early-stage PhD students (to present their ideas and discuss them with experienced researchers).

First, you will find a conference report, put together by Juho Vepsäläinen, of Aalto University, Finland (Vepsäläinen, 2023). It provides more detail to many of the topics discussed throughout the three days, such as the geopolitical role of standardisation for AI and open source systems, and the rising need for education on standardisation.

The invited paper 'Standards project the future' was presented by Ken Krechmer, University of Colorado at Boulder, USA (Krechmer, 2023). This article is a historical overview of standards as inherent and necessary tools to all human societies, from the stage of the early

hunters and gatherers via our current information age to the (not that distant) future. He discusses standards' main functions, which differ between the six individual stages he identifies. Standards may also help to get a clearer picture of these stages. A certain focus is on stages 4 and 5 ('Industrial' and 'Information', respectively), for which networks and information are crucial, which, in turn, heavily rely on standards.

The following paper, entitled 'Two Sides Of The Same Coin? A Panel Data Approach To The Innovation-Standard Relationship', was written by Didier Wayoro, Wilfried Nonguierma and Michelle Parkouda, all of whom are with the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) (Wayoro et al., 2024). The paper contributes some new insights and may revive the discussion about the (nature of) the links that exist between standardisation and innovation. Taking the ISO 9001 standard as an example and using a panel dataset of 81 countries (both developed and developing), they find a clear positive association between the number of patent applications and ISO 9001 certificates. This is a bit at odds with the widely held conviction that standards may both foster and hamper innovation.

Paper number four is titled 'Open Source Software reference implementations for standards issued by different standards setting organisations: availability, perceptions and practices (Gamalielsson et al., 2024). It represents an co-operation between academia and industry and was written by Jonas Gamalielsson, Björn Lundell (both University of Skövde), Christoffer Brax (Combitech AB), Tomas Persson (Digitalist Sweden), Anders Mattsson (Husqvarna AB), Tomas Gustavsson (PrimeKey Solutions AB) and Jonas Feist (RedBridge AB), all from Sweden. They discuss the importance of reference implementations in ICT standards, supporting interoperability and verification, and with implications on the entire standards setting process. The paper looks at Open Source Software (OSS) implementations of 24 standards, issued by eight standards setting organisations (SSOs) and at these SSOs' associated policies. For all standards, OSS implementations are available and are widely deployed; some of these have been developed by the respective originating SSO. They are not necessarily labelled 'reference implementation', though. All SSOs under study are aware of the importance of software implementations and of OSS's impact on standardisation. Accordingly, all have developed policies and best practice concerning collaboration with and contributions to the OSS community, albeit at rather different levels of detail and engagement.

We wish the readers to enjoy their read!

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