

## Technical Corner

### ISO/IEC DIS 14908 and LON – What is it?

*What exactly is the ISO/IEC DIS 14908-series; and perhaps more importantly, why should I care about it?*

If you missed the sidebar to the last Technical Corner article in Volume 4, Issue 1 (“The ISO Standard”), then let me bring you up to speed:

The LONWORKS technology protocol, free-topology twisted-pair wiring (TP/FT-10), power line signalling (PL-20), and Internet-protocol tunnelling (IP-852) specifications are already American, European, and Chinese national standards (through the ANSI/CEA-709, ANSI/CEA-852, EN 14908, and GB/Z 20177 –series of specifications). While these are very important – and great steps in the growth of LON adoption – they are localized. As steps, however, they can be used to climb the proverbial ladder to the top: global standardization. What global standardization gives us is an easier adoption of LON from many countries and industries around the world. Those countries’ standards bodies needn’t expend any of their local energies to create a national standard from scratch but rather, they can simply adopt the global LON standard.

I think it’s safe to say that ISO and IEC are the most-widely recognized global standards organizations in the world. On electro-technical matters, IEC subcommittees and technical committees bring potential standards to the world through joint cooperation and coordination with ISO.

The Technical Committee 247 (TC 247) of the European CEN group has brought the EN 14908-series of standards (-1 through -4) to ISO/IEC through the ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC 1) for a Fast Track ballot. Fast Track balloting is one where an existing de facto can become standardized without additional technical discussion, based on the merits of use in industry and ability for fair and open use/competition (that’s my description; not the official one). For example, the Portable Document Format (PDF) used to represent text, images, and layout in a platform-independent way, was made into an ISO standard (several standards, really) through the Fast Track procedure. With around 100 million installed devices around the world and nearly 20 years of development/deployment, I, for one, think LON qualifies as a mature technology that is appropriate for a Fast Track.

*Why wouldn’t everyone use the Fast Track to simply bypass all of the formal committee work?*

Fast Track ballots are not simple. The hurdles are higher to jump. The requirements are more strict. It’s easier to fail a Fast Track than to pass it. We’ve chosen this route not for its ease but due to a great number of obstacles on the other possible paths to ISO standardization – obstacles we feel are harder to overcome.

The “DIS” in “ISO/IEC DIS 14908-1” (and -2, -3, and -4) means that it’s a Draft International Standard, which, as you may have guessed by now, is why I’ve written this article: the standard needs your help to succeed.

*What can I do?*

...you may ask. If your company uses LON networking, your voice is important to the process. Your country representatives need to know the importance of LON to your company and thus to your country’s economic position. Asking your representatives to vote favourably on the proposals

– especially for those smaller countries that don’t normally get heard – can mean the difference between you selling/sourcing LON products globally or selling/sourcing them only locally.

If you don’t know where to start, that’s OK. Contact the LONMARK staff ([www.lonmark.org/contact](http://www.lonmark.org/contact)) or your local LONMARK Affiliate office ([www.lonmark.org/affiliate](http://www.lonmark.org/affiliate)) to see how you can help. For the latest status on the balloting progress, visit us online: [www.lonmark.org/iso](http://www.lonmark.org/iso).

### Streetlighting Update

*What are you doing for the Streetlighting efforts, since this magazine’s focus is on Streetlighting?*

I’m glad that you asked. Our LONMARK Lighting Task Group is working to produce functional profiles that will allow companies and municipalities to have a selection of lighting devices with a very high level of “interchangeability,” in addition to the core goal of interoperability among devices from different manufacturers. Presently, the Task Group is working on an Outdoor Light Controller; with their latest in-person meeting held in Frankfurt, Germany at the end of February. For more information, look to the Streetlighting section of the LonMark International website, where multi-language descriptions of the group’s progress is available to the public: [www.lonmark.org/streetlighting](http://www.lonmark.org/streetlighting).

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