

AUSTEL supports global standards for information superhighway

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Technical standards for the information superhighway will be market driven, not technology driven, said AUSTEL Member, Dr Bob Horton, who recently attended a meeting on international standards for the superhighway.

The Global Standards Collaboration Meeting (GSC), held in Ottawa, Canada, in early June 1995 attracted telecommunications standards decision-makers from Australia, Canada, Europe, the USA, Korea and Japan, together with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Information on the convergence of radio communications, telecommunications, information technology and attendant intellectual property rights was shared between delegates and high profile issues such as broadband ISDN, intelligent networks and multimedia were also discussed, as planning for the global information infrastructure begins to take shape.

AUSTEL Member Dr Bob Horton, who headed a delegation of the Australian Telecommunication Standardization Committee (ATSC) at the meeting, said keeping the development of standards focused on the market rather than technology, ensures that users' needs are considered foremost and services are delivered according to demand. Other members of the ATSC delegation included Telstra, the Consumers' Telecommunications Network, Standards Australia and the Department of Communications and the Arts.

'The successful delivery and use of services via the information superhighway in Australia depends on a coordinated global approach to the development of standards and this meeting marked an important step in collaboration between countries,' said Dr Horton.

The Global Standards Collaboration meeting is the successor to the an-

nual Interregional Telecommunication Standards conferences that were first instigated in 1989. Its efforts are turning the tide away from regional standardization, based on trading blocs, towards the pre-eminence of international standardization and the greater benefits of economies of scale through early cooperation and agreement at the pre-competitive stage. The major beneficiaries will be end-users and corporate multinational businesses. 'The global information infrastructure can only come about through collaboration on a global level. Otherwise, it will remain a pious future concept with only academic value,' said Dr Horton.

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