

*FWNBSC*

October 5, 1970

Mr. Lewis M. Branscomb  
Director  
National Bureau of Standards  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20234

Dear Mr. Branscomb:

May I extend to you our thanks and appreciation for the consideration shown us in your letter of September 1, 1970, wherein you invite us to provide a member of our office to participate in your FIPSCAC activity.

As you may know, Executive Order 11556 assigning our functions, was promulgated on September 4, 1970. We are working to meet the requirements of that order and as a primary effort we are formulating an approach to our relationship to all agencies of telecommunications interest within the Federal establishment.

One of the priority areas under study is that of the various committees and panels to which this office must respond. We recognize the tremendous effort required to develop standards but our limited staff and need to emphasize policy activities will inhibit our ability to contribute substantively to the FIPSCAC. It is, therefore, with regret that we are unable to accept your invitation at this time.

Sincerely,

Clay T. Whitehead


AR Cooke:avr:5 Oct 70

bcc: Dir. OTP (2)

ARC Reading

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Bureau of Standards**  
Washington, D.C. 20234

SEP 01 1970

Dr. Clay Whitehead  
Director  
Office of Telecommunications Policy  
1800 G Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20504

*Answer*  
*Plummer* | *Nominee*  
*Dean* | *?*

*SED*

Dear Dr. Whitehead:

As you know, the National Bureau of Standards is authorized under the Brooks Bill (PL 89-306, 79 Stat 1128) to make recommendations to the President relating to the establishment of uniform Federal ADP standards. In order to assist NBS in carrying out this responsibility a set of Federal Information Processing Standards Task Groups (FIPS Task Groups) has been established. In addition, we have set up the Federal Information Processing Standards Coordinating and Advisory Committee (FIPSCAC) to serve as a vehicle for coordinating the work assignments of the FIPS Task Groups and as a policy advisory group to NBS on information processing standards. The enclosures to this letter spell out the operations of the FIPSCAC and FIPS Task Groups in more detail.

Members of the Office of Telecommunications Policy and the Office of the Manager, National Communications System, have contributed to FIPS Task Group activities. There has, however, up until now been no representation on the FIPSCAC. Due to the close relationship between telecommunications and data processing, it would be highly desirable to have representation of the Office of Telecommunications Policy on the FIPSCAC. Accordingly, I take pleasure inviting you to nominate a member.

The next meeting of the FIPSCAC is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9 at the National Bureau of Standards from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. I hope that a member from the Office of Telecommunications Policy will be able to join us.

Sincerely,

*Lewis M. Branscomb*  
LEWIS M. BRANSCOMB  
Director

2 Enclosures:  
Role of FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee  
FIPS Task Groups





## ROLE OF FIPS COORDINATING AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND METHOD OF OPERATION OF FIPS TASK GROUPS



May 12, 1969

### (a) Role of FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee

The Center for Computer Sciences and Technology in the National Bureau of Standards in performing its functions in developing proposed Federal Information Processing Standards under the Brooks Bill (P.L. 89-306) needs to obtain advice and assistance from other Federal agencies. One way of obtaining this is by means of ad hoc Task Groups formed to review proposed NBS actions and to deal with specific standards problems. The FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee will serve as a vehicle for coordinating the work assignments to such FIPS Task Groups, and as a general advisory group to NBS on Information Processing Standards.

The FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee will consist of (1) the Chief of Office of Information Processing Standards, Center for Computer Sciences and Technology, NBS, as Chairman, (2) the Chairmen of the FIPS Task Groups, (3) the Chairman of the Interagency ADP Committee, and (4) such other members as the Chairman of the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee may designate. The composition of the Committee will also include members from NBS, BOB, and GSA, the three agencies principally responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Brooks Bill.

### (b) Purpose of Task Groups

NBS recognizes that it must coordinate its Standards Program on an inter-agency basis. It is the purpose of FIPS Task Groups to assist NBS to provide better coordination of the Federal ADP standards program. Technical personnel with a knowledge of each agency's requirements can assist NBS in matters regarding development, adoption, and implementation of the standards.

This participation by agencies will enable NBS to gain greater insight into their respective agency problems and requirements. Such participation also allows NBS to more effectively evaluate its own standards program, and focus efforts on Agency needs.

### (c) Specific Role of Task Groups

The National Bureau of Standards is charged under the Brooks Bill (P.L. 89-306) with recommending uniform Federal ADP standards through the Secretary of Commerce and the Bureau of the Budget to the President of the United States. This responsibility requires detailed coordination with and advice from Federal departments and agencies regarding their ADP operations and objectives. FIPS Task Groups will be organized on a selective basis for such purposes as:



(1) providing advice to NBS on specific draft proposals in the standards area, (2) making recommendations on specific problems, and (3) developing draft proposals in specific standards problem areas, as assigned in work scope statements.

(d) Initiation of Task Groups

Four Task Groups have already been established to deal with (1) Definition of Federal Information Processing Standards objectives and requirements, (2) Recommendations on Standard Control Procedures and Header Formats for Remote Computer Terminals, (3) Recommendations on ASCII character subsets, Algebraic Sign Conventions, and Packing Techniques, and (4) Preparation of Subsections for Uniform Implementation of Approved Federal ADP Standards for Inclusion in Requests for Proposals.

The need for any additional Task Groups will be considered by the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee. Such additional FIPS Task Groups will be formed, as required, by NBS. For each new Task Group, NBS will inform the Interagency ADP Committee of the scope of work proposed and invite participation of appropriately qualified technical representatives. In addition, NBS will send a letter to appropriate department heads (selected in accordance with the nature of the specific problem) to request qualified participants.

(e) Approval of Task Group Work Programs

In order to insure a system approach and to avoid duplication of efforts, task group work assignment statements must be coordinated. Therefore, such work statements will be reviewed by the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee and approved by NBS. Specifically, the Coordinating and Advisory Committee will review the initial statement of scope and broad program of work for each FIPS Task Group; and subsequently request each Task Group to develop detailed work plans with target dates for completion of sub-tasks and the work assignment as a whole. Subsequent revised work statements and completion dates would then be subject to review and approval as above. Task Groups which are unable to complete their assigned tasks by the scheduled dates should notify the Coordinating Committee as soon as foreseen, giving the reasons therefor.

(f) Internal Operation of Task Groups

Each Task group's effort will be directed toward accomplishing the tasks in its approved work statement. A task will normally be to review a proposed recommendation or directive concerned with Federal Information Processing Standards. On occasion, however, a task may consist of developing a draft proposed standard in a particular area. In any event, the final product will be a recommendation to NBS via the FIPS



Coordinating and Advisory Committee as outlined in (h) below.

In conducting the business of the Task Group, the keeping of formal minutes and other associated documents should be minimized consistent with the accomplishment of the Task Group's work.

When a consensus cannot be reached by a task group on a particular matter, the majority view will form the basis of the recommendation. However, minority positions will accompany the recommendation forwarded to the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee.

(g) Life of Each Task Group

Upon the completion of all of its assigned tasks, a task group will be dissolved by NBS with the advice of the Coordinating and Advisory Committee.

(h) Transmittal of Task Group Recommendations

Task Group recommendations will be transmitted to the Secretary of the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee for the Committee's review and comments. Recommendations of FIPS Task Groups, with the comments of the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee, will be considered as advice to NBS. The Chairman of FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee in his dual role as Chief of the Office of Information Processing Standards will receive the recommendations as advice to NBS.

The Chairman of the Interagency ADP Committee (as a member of the FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee) will inform the membership of the Interagency ADP Committee as appropriate about the work of the FIPS Task Groups.

(i) Extent to Which Task Group Members Represent Their Agencies

Members of FIPS Task Groups will participate as qualified experts having knowledge of their agencies' interests in the subject under study. The FIPS Task Groups will not, however, replace the formal solicitation by NBS of agency comments on proposed Federal standards (as outlined in BOB Guidance Letter to the Secretary of Commerce dated December 15, 1966). Accordingly, each agency is not bound by the individual views of its Task Group representative.

Approved: H. R. J. Grosch, May 12, 1969

Director,  
Center for Computer Sciences and Technology

FIPS TASK GROUPS

FIPS Coordinating and Advisory Committee  
J. O. Harrison, Chairman  
W. H. Gammon, Secretary

...provides advice to the Office of Information Processing Standards and assists in coordinating the work of the FIPS Task Groups who are developing proposed Federal Information Processing Standards.

FIPS TG-1 Objectives and Requirements (work completed)  
H. S. White, Chairman

...assisted in translating the very general objectives of the Brooks Bill (PL 89-306) into specific objectives and requirements for uniform Federal ADP standards.

FIPS TG-2 Controls and Formats for Terminals  
G. E. Clark, Acting Chairman

...examines the control and procedural requirements of commercial remote computer terminal devices as well as the interface relationships to the National Communications System with the objective of providing standardization guidance.

FIPS TG-3 Subsets, Sign Conventions, etc.  
J. L. Little, Chairman

...directs its attention to uniformity in implementing character subsets of ASCII, conventions for algebraic sign in input/output, and processing and conventions for packing data. An example of packing is packed numeric data on magnetic tape.

FIPS TG-4 Uniform Terminology for ADP Equipment Solicitations(work completed)  
G. L. Johns, (GSA), Chairman

...assisted in drafting proposed language (for inclusion in Requests for Manufacturer Proposals for Equipment) to assure compliance with applicable Federal Information Processing Standards.

FIPS TG-5 Federal Information Processing Vocabulary  
J. L. Walkowicz (OCI), Chairman

...reviews the USA Standard Vocabulary for Information Processing and other relevant documents and will develop a proposed Federal information processing vocabulary.



FIPS TG-6 Magnetic Reference Tapes  
P. S. Johnson, Chairman

...identifies problems involved in exchanging recorded magnetic tapes among Government ADP installations and will propose requirements for reference tapes and/or calibration services to assist in solving such problems.

FIPS TG-7 Magnetic Tape Label Standard  
F. E. Holberton, Chairman

...develop proposed Federal magnetic tape labels for information interchange.