VCOI Call Notes

5 October 2020

# Attendees

* Pete Rivett
* Claude Baudoin
* Rob Nehmer
* Mike Bennett
* Richard Robinson

# Agenda

* Continue from last time
  + URIs
  + MVF / SKOS
  + Etc.

# Meeting Notes

## Acronyms

### Terminology for Acronyms and Similar Things

Not every string of letters is an acronym. Strictly, acronym is a string of letters that make up a word.

See literature on this. More general term for these things is ‘Initialism’. That is the technically correct term for the overall class of things of which Acronym is a kind. The generic term for these is ‘Abbreviations and acronyms’. Most people want to combine the two.

Acronym is when an abbreviation creates a new pronounceable word, or a word that already exists in the dictionary.

"An abbreviation is a truncated word; an acronym is made up of parts of the phrase it stands for and is pronounced as a word (ELISA, AIDS, GABA); an initialism is an acronym that is pronounced as individual letters (DNA, RT-PCR)." (from the CDC)

We want to recognize this, even if we present it differently.

[MB adds: I just notice in re-reading this that the above definition suggests a taxonomy, where it says “an initialism is an acronym that…”. So Initialism is the more specific term and it is not not an acronym; it is also an acronym. Under this definition. As noted, usages vary and we need to find our own.]

There is a 3rd kind of thing that may or not fit:

Fannie Mae: where abbreviation is FNMA, and Fannie Mae is a nickname based on a pronunciation of this.

Sallie Mae and Freddie Mac - these are ones which are not such a natural rendition of the abbreviation but follow the same scheme.

### In general:

Abbreviation (or initialism) PLUS nicknames (whatever we call those).

### Others to consider:

Things like:

GREAT Act – where GREAT is an acronym but ‘GREAT Act’ is the actual term.

So we could say GREAT Act is an Initialism, but it’s not an Abbreviation or an Acronym.

**Internal language to use:** Initialisms

(even if we call it something else for presentation purposes)

### Presentation Requirements

In presentation we have:

* Table
* Page per entry

In Table – caption Table as something like

* Abbreviations
* Abbreviations and [what?]

Terms and Abbreviations – but we these on separate tables anyway (for the Tables output; what about the per-page ones??)

IIC Vocabulary Task group has similar conversation. Resisted having Abbreviations in a separate place. Also if they don’t know what an abbreviation stands for.

So an alternative is to combine these in one alphabetical listing.

#### Alternatives

Say ‘If you are looking for Abb, look in Table 2’ etc.

Alternative:

* In the one page per entry area (per Nick Stavros thing) have ONG alphabetical listing, where entries may be Term or Acronym or other nym.
* In the Tables- to the extent that we have different columns requirements (e.g. some acronyms refer to a Reference?) have separate table for Term v Acronym.

**Usage:** if people are searching – doesn’t matter where they find it. Takes them to the row for that search. In a linear doc it matters.

Linear Document – see OMG Specification Template. Here they are separate BUT there’s another thing…

### Other Listable Things

As seen in most Specification and Document templates, there are also

* ‘Symbols and Abbreviations’
* Unusual terms / local usages in this document / specialist terms etc.

May also include things like Greek letters, with specific local usages; or terms from a particular formalism) Most documents have a section for this, with a Definitions section up front before the terms are used: ‘In this document’ – sets the local vocabulary before you use the terms (or abbreviation)

e.g. Greek small Sigma represents Standard Deviation.

Often called: ‘Terms and Abbreviations’

ISO and ASI – Section called Definitions, to over-ride what people might think is meant, by what the authors intend within the scope of this document only (**Context**).

This exactly matches our ‘Context’ usage notion.

Legal: front material will list in full once and give a ‘hereinafter referred to as’ + some local word or abbreviation.

This is where we came in…

Context = the specification

#### OMG Document Template Clauses

The OMG document template has:

* Section 4: ‘Terms and Definitions’
  + Gives a table of Terms with their definitions
* Section 5: ‘Symbols and Abbreviations’
  + Sub-section 5.1: Symbols
  + Sub-section 5.2: Abbreviations

(Symbols and Abbreviations are sub sections)

### Our outputs:

* Word doc table
  + Wiki Tables (the same)
* Wiki alpha listing with one page per entry
  + That can combine Abbreviation, Terms, Symbols in one list
    - (In UNICODE order??)
    - Or there may be an ANSI standard for ordering for alphabetical tables for things anyway, so we are not reliant on ASCII or UNICODE – so use that
      * So we are happy this exists and can be found when we need it
      * Use the ISO one if there are others
      * See Wikipedia article on this (Claude)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Manual_of_Style/Glossaries#Alphabetize>

But look for an ISO standard in case it does exist: ISO 12199 covers this. Multilingual terminological and lexigraphical data:

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:12199:en>

**Consensus:** Yes to

1. One listing for the page-per-entry styling (the ‘Stavros style’)
2. Tables - follow what’s in OMG Spec:

* Terms with Definitions
* Symbols
* Abbreviations

These can be dropped into 4, 5.1 and 5.2 in an OMG Spec template.

For things that are not Abbreviations:

Symbols – taken care of (separate table)

Nicknames / non Abbreviation things e.g. Fannie Mae

* Do we put those in Terms
  + FNMA would go under Abbreviations

For the single listing – would we have one page for e.g. Fannie Mae, with Name and Acronym.

Then link onwards to References since these are individual organizations.

### The ‘Stavros Style’

What we mean by this verbal shorthand is the kind of wiki vocabulary listings that Nick Stavros has been propagating in various wikis, in parallel with the work we are doing here. You have an index that is part of a page hierarchy display on the left, and under each letter the hierarchy display pops out o give an alphabetical listing of words that begin with that letter, each word there being a link to a single wiki page dedicated to that word or term.

Like this:

* A
* B
* C
  + Cloud
  + Camera
  + Cushion
  + CDEF
* D
* Etc.

Where each of the leaves above is a link to a single page

So in this style:

* We combine Terms and Abbreviations

### Conventions

#### Use of the definite or indefinite article

Available styles:

* Something Something (the)
  + Versus
* The Something Something

(filed under S for Something).

The United States of America

* List as ‘United States of America (the)’

Sometimes it’s obvious but this way we deal with any potential misunderstandings.

### Decision on Articles and Listing

Which one to use? And are there script limitations?

**Option 1:** ‘Something Something (the)’

**Option 2:** natural language usage: ‘The Something Something’ filed under S.

If script – if generating from the original term that would not be an issue

Term ‘Something Something’ and label ‘The Something Something’ then the TERM would still begin with S.

**Consensus:** do people feel strongly either way?

PR: Option 1

MB: Option 2

CB: Option 1

RR: Option 1

RN: Option 1

**Conclusion:** we go with Option 1: ‘Something Something (the)’

#### Other conventions?

None yet.

## Terminology

See

"An abbreviation is a truncated word; an acronym is made up of parts of the phrase it stands for and is pronounced as a word (ELISA, AIDS, GABA); an initialism is an acronym that is pronounced as individual letters (DNA, RT-PCR)." (from the CDC)

Taxonomy of constructs, on the above definition:

* Parent (most general – no terms for it) (Symbol)
  + Acronym (pronouncable)
  + Initialism (individually pronounced)
* Abbreviation = truncated word
  + FinTech
  + Hype
  + etc.

(on that basis, things like FinTech want to go in the ‘Terms’ table)

Abbreviations in THIS (truncated word) sense fit more alongside Symbols – special usages.

#### On what we were using earlier

* Initialism – the parent of these i.e. any set of letters
  + [But see MB note on re-reading the definition – seems to say Initialism is a kind of Acronym!]
* Abbreviation – any set of letters representing the words
* Acronym as a set that looks like a word
* We had no name for things like
  + Fannie Mae
  + GREAT Act

## AoB

None

## Next Meeting

Next week? 12 Oct

Shall we observe the US holiday?

We meet as usual