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November 2, 1989

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C++ STANDARD COMMITTEE X3J16

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Items for discussion

Item included in the list below relate to the organizational phase of the committee work. I believe the way we structure the committee work will significantly impact the results of this work, in particular a successful and timely completion of the project.

I. Committee Goals

It is very important to define a set of goals that would guide the committee in its work and help measure its success and progress.

1. Language Definition Goals

Each language has its own purpose and spirit. What are these for C++ ?

a. What areas of software development does C++ address ? *general purpose*

a.1. System software development. *high level*

a.2. System application development. *library development*

a.3. Others ? *scientific programming*

b. What are major language design criteria ? *real time*

b.1. Efficiency.

b.2. Expressiveness. *static analysis / checking*

b.3. Support of software reuse.

b.4. Portability.

b.5. Others ?

Balance of needs

2. Scope of Standard

What should be included in the standard ?

a. Base language definition - AT&T 2.0 Reference Manual.

Do we need any significant amount of work here ?

b. Additional features.

c. Libraries.

d. Implementation issues.

e. Environment support - Set of recommendations.

f. Validation suites.

g. Others ?

*We are not here to redesign the language
(code generation of current practice)
We are here to standardize C++
(coexists with ANSI C
public domain validation suite?)*

3. Standard dates.

How are we going to define which standard documents and when will be produced by the committee ?

a. Phase (or horizontal) approach.

Several generations of all standard documents will be produced in this case.

b. Functional (or vertical) approach.

In this case the committee would work on language features first, then on libraries, etc.

c. Full definition approach

All standard documents will be published just once at the end of the project.

4. Other groups of goals ?

II. Committee structure and procedures.

Productive discussions, careful and objective consideration of each work item, and little time spent on formal votes are very important factors in the success of the committee work.

1. Working groups.

The C++ standard committee has generated significant interest. We can assume that it will have about 40 prime members. So some meetings may involve up to 60 people. In this situation it would be more productive to delegate at least some work to smaller working groups.

a. Should we have any permanent working groups ?

An example of a working group would be a group in charge of libraries or a group in charge of public comments. Such groups would allow the committee to make package decisions rather than discuss many small issues.

b. Should the committee consist of permanent working groups only ?

Working groups would represent all major aspects of the committee

work. Members could transfer from one group to another as needed.

c. Ad-hoc working groups.

These represent a different approach to the organization of the committee work. Such groups could be created when needed for certain groups of work items.

2. Procedures.

a. Do we need to establish a procedure for making important decisions ?

Such procedure may require an important issue, language extension, or work item to be discussed during several meetings at the working group level and then to be presented to the committee for a short additional discussion and final vote.

b. Conferences.

Experience of the CODASYL committee shows that conferences on significant changes to the language are very useful in choosing the right approach for introducing the changes into the language. Such conferences involve not only committee members but also other experts in the subject and representatives of the user community. Should we include such conferences as a desirable evaluation step for certain work items ?

3. Public comments.

a. When should the committee start collecting public comments ?

b. Does the committee need a permanent working group for collecting and evaluating public comments ?

4. Schedule of meetings.

III. International involvement

Early international involvement is very important to assure that only one international standard definition of C++ will exist and that no delays in producing standard documents will occur because of late comments and suggestions from the international community.

1. Should we support a distribution list for the international community ?

People on the list would receive all or most important documents and would be able to submit their comments

2. Should we invite representatives of National Standard Organizations to participate in the committee work ?

3. ISO New Work Item for C++ and ANSI C++ standardization effort.

We need to define our position.

IV. Agenda for the next meeting

1. Goals.

2. Committee structure and procedures.

3. International involvement.
4. Any technical discussions ?
5. Other items ?
6. Date: February, 1990 ? *March*
7. Host: HP