The ISO PPST Guide – Tool or Irrelevance?
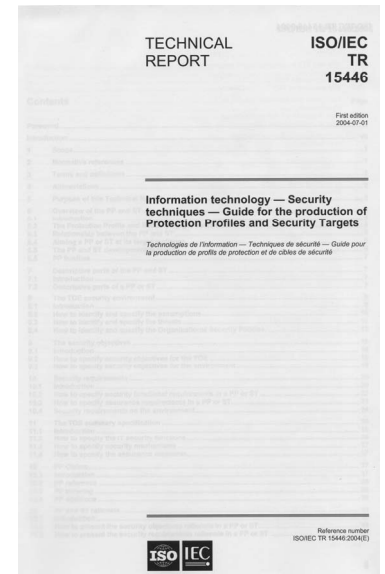
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What is ISO/IEC TR 15446?

- Guide for the production of Protection Profiles and Security Targets

- A Technical Report
  - *Not Quite A Standard*
  - *In this case, an advisory guide.*

- ISO Document, not endorsed by CCDB
  - *Refers exclusively to ISO/IEC 15408*
  - *But actually equally applicable to CC V2.1*

History

- Need for supporting document to CC/15408 identified:

  - *First Draft 1996*
  - *Approved for Publication 2000*
  - *Published 2004*
  - *Available for Free Download 2005*

- Not an example of prompt and efficient standardisation!

- Why?

Personnel

- Large document, therefore key role for editor

- Editor assigned other work responsibilities by employer

- Eventually resigned editorship and left WG3

- Hiatus before this speaker took over

Consensus

- Standards Working Groups work by consensus

- Guidance is subjective and best practice continually develops

- Difficult to avoid revisiting past decisions
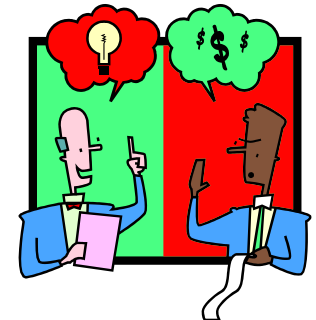
Availability

- Standards Bodies make lots of money from selling standards

    - *BSI: TR 15446 GBP 160*
    - *ANSI: TR 15446 USD 165*
    - *JSA: TR 15446 JPY 20,034*

- Reluctant to permit free downloading

- And to advertise it when it exists!

A Reminder:
ISO/IEC TR 15446:2004 is available for free download from:

http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2489/Ittf_Home/ITTF.htm

(select "freely available standards" and page through list)

What Does It Contain?

■ Section by Section guidance for PP and ST Contents

■ Appendices:

➢ *Guidance Checklist*
➢ *Generic examples of threats, policies etc.*
➢ *Section on cryptographic functionality*
➢ *Three worked examples:*
  - Firewall PP, Database PP, Trusted Third Party PP

Origin

- Produced by people trying to understand new criteria, not people passing on real-world experience

- Mainly produced by evaluators, not product and system developers
  - *Very little on identifying threats, policies, assumptions*
 - *Nothing on composition, evaluation reuse etc.*

Consequences

■ Mainly about "What", not "How" or "Why"

■ Applicable to and influenced CC V2, much less relevant to CC V3

Common Criteria

How Useful Is It?

- Varies from section to section

- Often helpful, but not in depth

- Worked Examples now obsolete
  - *Produced originally against CC V1*
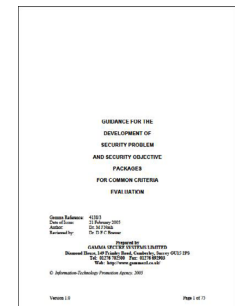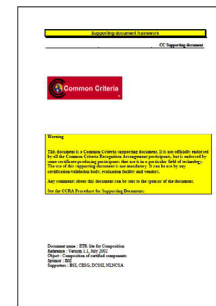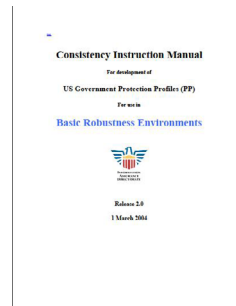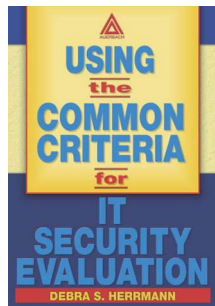 - *Better models (real PPs) exist*
  - *No proper examples of STs*
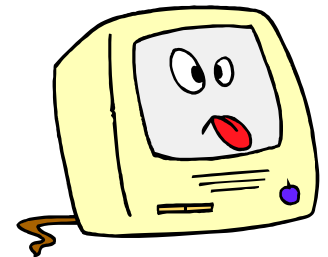
The Future

- Is it worth updating?

- Does it need to be no-cost downloadable?

- Is its scope right?

Common Criteria

Is It Worth Updating?

- Other sources of information now exist
  - *Books explaining CC*
  - *Consistency Instruction Manuals*
  - *"Supporting Documents"*

- Are best methods proprietary?

"No Cost" Availability

- Very hard to get no-cost availability for current document

- The rules have been changed to stop it happening again!

- Really needs CCDB endorsement and joint publication to remain Free of Charge
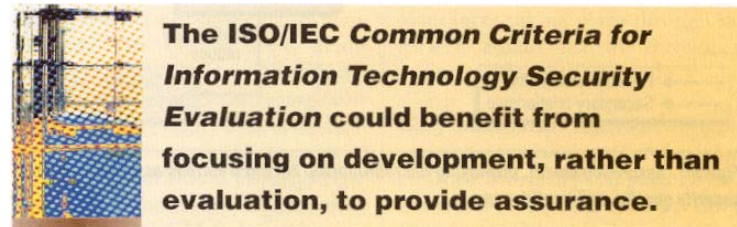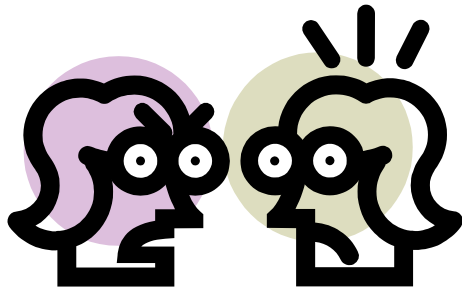
Best Practice

- Proprietary Knowledge and Techniques

- Will experts in writing PPs and STs be allowed to contribute?

- Can published PPs/STs be recommended as examples?

- Can experts be bothered to contribute?

What Should the Scope be?

- Should it include examples?

- How should it deal with contentious areas?

- Should it cover threat and policy identification?

The ISO/IEC *Common Criteria for Information Technology Security Evaluation* could benefit from focusing on development, rather than evaluation, to provide assurance.

What About "Why" and "How"

- More subjective, often contentious

- Are reasons and techniques important or not?
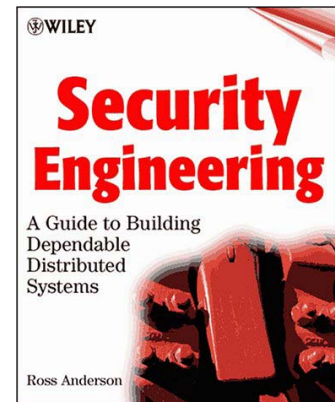
What Does the Audience Think?

Over to you

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