An Application for
Associateship of the Royal Photographic Society
in
Research, Education and Application of Photography
(with particular reference to Education and Image Management)

Developing Standards for Projected Digital Images in
Photographic Events
by
Dr Mark Buckley-Sharp LRPS
(also MBBS, DipBiochem, CEng, FRCPath, FBCS, CITP)

Stage One - Synopsis
November 2007

Action: The Panel is requested to consider this Synopsis, and invite the author to submit a full application.

About the Author

(The following text is that submitted to the Society's Council in 2006 on the appointment of the author as Regional Organiser for Thames Valley.)

Personal & Professional:

Marcus (Mark) David Buckley-Sharp qualified in medicine, and was consultant chemical pathologist at University College London Hospitals, and senior lecturer at University College London until his retirement in March 2006. Roles held during his career included head of department, chair of clinical audit, chair of pathology examiners, visiting examiner (Birmingham), consultant to The Doctors Laboratory plc, and President of the Medical Education section of the Royal Society of Medicine. His special interest is IT, especially the design, coding, installation and support of large scale transactional database systems. IT roles have included Y2K compliance, system management, information governance, consultancy to the UCLH electronic patient record project and, ongoing, President of the London & South East (Health Informatics) Specialist Group of the British Computer Society. Mark is a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists, Fellow of the British Computer Society, and a Chartered Engineer.

Photographic:

Mark has been a member of Harrow Camera Club for nearly 30 years, including 20 years as one of its officers. More recently, he became a member of Aylesbury Camera Club. He has been treasurer of the Chilterns Association for 8 years, and for 3 years has been the CACC representative on the Photographic Alliance Executive. He serves on the PAGB patronage committee and is chair of the technical standards committee. Mark joined the RPS in 2002, becoming LRPS, having previously achieved CPAGB. He immediately joined the committee of the Thames Valley region and has worked to help run events. Mark's photographic interests are in informative pictures, now mostly devoted to lectures on the geography, history and culture of Turkey. Besides lecturing, he is a judge within CACC, is interested in the chemistry of photography and, for the PAGB, is currently reviewing practical experiences of projected digital images.

Project Overview

The project concerns the development of generic standards applicable to the use of projected digital images ("PDI") in photographic events. Unusually for an application of this type (see Society requirements), the project has already been completed. It took place over the two year period from April 2005 to April 2007.

Assuming acceptance of this synopsis, the full application will comprise a commentary on the development of the project, its methods and its outcome, supported by the documentation previously received by the Executive Committee of the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain ("The Alliance Executive") ie, the periodic progress reports, a technical review of April 2006, a discussion paper of August 2006 on the audiences for and the formats of standards, and the standards report of April 2007. To bring the project up to date, the project will include a review of compliance with the standards by a range of open/international photographic events, including one by the Society itself. Comments will be included on the need for author education, although the standards themselves were primarily addressed to event organisers.

The Alliance Executive has granted copyright clearance (October 2007) for the use of their documents in this application.

Project Initiation

The Alliance Executive had received several requests, arising from its member Federations and its affiliated Clubs, for advice on PDI, covering both hardware suitability and procedures. In April 2005, the author offered to coordinate a project to develop advice for PDI, and this offer was accepted by the Alliance Executive. The Alliance Executive established a Technical Standards Committee, with the author as chair, and with Mr Ian Lyons and Mr Roger Force FRPS as members. Mr Mike Wheatley replaced Mr Force in April 2006.

Methodology

The Alliance Executive established the Technical Standards Committee precisely because the Executive did not have sufficient expertise within its own membership to answer the queries being made. What expertise there was in PDI events was developing in many small pockets, comprising individuals and some organisations: these were acting largely independently and without knowledge of each other.

Using Internet facilities, wide scale searches were made for individuals, Federations, Clubs, and up to the level of international organisations, including the Society, who might be demonstrating interest and activity in PDI events. One outcome was a panel of correspondents who already had an interest and some expertise. The panel of correspondents provided details of their own work, and also moderated the project by providing comments on draft papers.

The results of searches, and the interactions with correspondents were logged on a web site set up for the purpose. Correspondents were given access to the web site and could see the comments of others. All reports were put onto the web site, as drafts and then in final form.

This methodology was chosen for two specific reasons.
- When a reasonable number of people can contribute to the content, then it becomes very unlikely that any major topic will be omitted from consideration. By using a panel of correspondents, the project outcome could be expected to be comprehensive.
- When there is highly disparate practice, as there was in PDI by 2005, then merely exposing the practitioners to the experience of others will promote a convergence. This will happen even without the imposition of any standards, as the participants will benchmark themselves against others. Self-imposed convergence was a relevant aim, because the Alliance Executive has no authority to impose its opinions on its member Federations, their member Clubs, or on anyone except itself.

Project Outcome

The outcome by April 2007 was a set of standards addressed to the organisers of photographic events. The standards themselves were generic (see Box for example).

> Box. Example of a generic standard.
> **B.02   Image Size.** The organiser <u>must</u> state the maximum pixel dimensions (width and height) permitted for image data files.

The standards were divided into:

- A-series. Two standards. For the organiser's own use in setting up the event.
- B-series. Ten standards. For the organiser to determine, and then publish as the requirements of the event.

The standards were validated, and thought to be comprehensive, and they were expected to be long-lasting. The standards were supported by extensive guidance notes showing how each standard could be met in various ways using methods drawn from current experience.

What is Different About These Standards

Other large organisations have produced standards for PDI, notably the Photographic Society of South Africa (PSSA). The Photographic Society of America has its Electronic Images Division. And, the organisers of PDI events at the time were already producing documented requirements for their events. What is apparent about all those is that nobody had attempted to create generic standards with a validated comprehensive coverage. The PSSA standards, for example are informative, but largely procedural.

Contribution by the Author

The Secretary of the Alliance Executive has confirmed (May 2007) that the work of the Technical Standards Committee was effectively done solely by the author. A copy of the correspondence will be included in the full application.