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Template for Ballot Comments

Doug and Bruce,

Among the SC32 resolutions arising at the Xi'an meeting was Resolution 21, "Comment form for ballots". The content of that Resolution reads:

WG 1 requests the SC 32 secretariat to publish a comment form that should be used for giving comments in ballots in a standardized format. This form should be common for all WGs of SC 32. WG 1 has found it difficult to manage the ballot comments because of strong variations in the structure of comments and document referencing.

I have attached to this email message three (3) files associated with WG3 Standing Document WD-006. These files provide a mechanism that WG3 has used and refined for several years in its ballot submission and resolution process, and have proven to be extremely valuable when managing large numbers of comments on many concurrent ballots. I wholeheartedly recommend the adoption of this mechanism across SC32 in response to Resolution 21.

While this procedure makes use of proprietary technology (Microsoft Word), that technology is already in very wide use within SC32 and thus seems to be at least reasonably appropriate. More open technology (such as XML) is both somewhat less user-friendly and less likely to have wide tool support amongst all SC32 participants.

The files that I have attached are:

* A Word document containing instructions for the use of the "form" (in fact, a Word table) with which comments should be submitted.

* A PDF file generated directly from the Word document.

* A Word template that can be used directly for ballot comment submission.

Please note that WG3 not only uses the table for comment submission and merging into a collected comments document, but for managing the ballot resolution process, developing and driving the agendas of Ballot Resolution Meetings, and even recording of new comments that inevitably arise as reported comments are being resolved. I can readily supply examples of the use of this form/table during the SQL:1999 and SQL:2003 ballot processes.

Among other highly desirable capabilities, WG3's use of this form/table makes it extremely easy at every stage of the process to determine precisely which comments have not yet been fully resolved and what their urgency is. It is also easy to determine exactly how each comment was resolved (fully or partially). There is some workload, of course, placed on the individual chosen to prepare and then manage the comments during Ballot Resolution Meetings. Since Ballot Resolution Meetings formally belong to the document editor(s), I have taken on that responsibility for the SQL Ballot Resolution Meetings and Stephen Cannan has done so for Technical Corrigendum Ballot Resolution Meetings.

I believe that WG4 has used the same form/table for at least some ballots in the past. Shibano-san can clarify WG4's usage and process, naturally.

I am happy to answer any questions that you might have about the use of this mechanism in WG3's activities.

Hope this helps,

  Jim