

ISRP 1999 abstract

Presenter/author	Title	Abstract
Berndtsson, Göran <i>Safety Equipment Australia Pty. Ltd. Private Bag 1001 Warriewood, NSW 2103 Australia</i>	Harmonizing Standards in a Shrinking World	<p>One of the most repeated buzz-words of the nineties must surely be globalization. Trade, commerce, knowledge, opinion and information all flow between the four corners of the world in ever growing amounts and with ever increasing speed. The explosive growth of the Internet and e-commerce is only one aspect of globalization. The lifting of trade barriers, the formation of trade blocs, the synergism of the European Union, the opening up of many economies in Eastern Europe and South-East Asia-all of these factors have lead to a burgeoning flood of people and products never seen in history.</p> <p>The globalization process places much pressure on Standards. National Standards can no longer stay parochial and national. In a changing world, Standards must be able to keep up with the rapid influx of products and new technology. If it cannot keep up, the Standard will be a destructive stumbling block-not a constructive quality mechanism. A global quality mechanism can only be achieved by harmonizing Standards throughout the world, chiefly the American, European and Australian/New Zealand Standards.</p> <p>Failure to reach a harmony between Standards will inevitably lead to stifling of the flow of excellence and suffocation of new technology which could otherwise have benefited entire nations and, in the case of occupational protection, raised the level of health and safety of their work forces. This discussion centers on the nature of such a harmonization process, how far it should reach, and how to strike a balance between national and international Standards.</p>