

**Photographic Alliance of Great Britain
Technical Standards Committee
February 2007**

**Consultation on Fifth Interim Report
Comments, Observations and Actions**

Introduction

The Fifth Interim Report of the Technical Standards Committee contained a draft set of standards for projected digital images. The standards were addressed to event organisers, and the Report also contained guidance to event organisers on how the standards might be achieved. In practice, the standards drew heavily on the achievements already made by many UK open and federation events, while the guidance also included wider experience, as collated in the Committee's Third Interim Report of April 2006.

The Fifth Interim Report (at v1.2) was received by the Executive at its meeting of February 2007. It was agreed that comments on the Fifth Interim Report should lead to an updated version expected to be the Committee's Final Report.

Consultation Process

The Report was circulated to the Executive members, and also to the Committee's panel of corresponding experts. Comments were invited.

Correspondents were offered a set of questions so as to structure the comments, and correspondents were also able to submit unstructured comments. The tabulation in this paper sets out the questions; the comments received; observations on the comments; and the actions taken.

There was some confusion in the comments. The standards are only one page, and almost no comments were received on these. The guidance covers a wide range of experience and suggestions with some level of recommendation, but some correspondents replied as if the guidance was the standards. However, the comments as a whole were a very useful check on the content, its relevance, and how it was understood. Comments ranged from single words, to pointing out mistakes, through suggesting extra features, to discussions about the concept and layout. Many changes (hopefully improvements) have been made as a result.

The actions now advance the standards and guidance to become the Final Report of the Committee. The Final Report is for consideration by the Executive at its meeting in April 2007.

Questions; Comments; Observations; Actions

1.	Question: The Executive approved the format of the standards document ie, a short checklist of standards; supporting guidance for event organisers; and supporting guidance for authors. That format is not open for discussion. We don't have guidance for authors yet, although I know of useful published materials.
	Comments: No adverse comments
	Observations: n/a
	Actions: None

2.	Question: The Introduction shows the scope and applicability. Is the separation into levels of event reasonable?
	Comments: a) Uncertain as to whether so many levels are required. b) How would Patronage Committee police (sic) standards for patronage events?
	Observations: a) The set of levels should allow all event organisers to identify their level. b) Patronage applications should have a tick box to confirm self-assessed compliance. The Patronage Committee monitors all aspects of its standards by reputational feedback, and projected digital standards would be the same.
	Actions: None

3.	Question: Is the terminology section understandable, and is the terminology used consistently throughout?
	Comments: Standards to use 'shall' to mean mandatory, keeping 'should' to mean strongly recommended.
	Observations: Use of 'must' to mean mandatory follows OJEC procurement terminology, and is more clearly distinguished from 'should' when reading.
	Actions: 'must' and 'should' retained, and to be underline text for clarity.

4.	Question: Is the division into A and B standards reasonable?
	Comments: No adverse comments.
	Observations: n/a
	Actions: None.

5.	Question: Standard A.02 was drafted first as an example of something difficult. But, in the final document should A.02 disappear, with its guidance subsumed into A.01.
	Comments: Comments favour merge
	Observations: Agreed
	Actions: Delete standard A.02. Merge A.02 guidance into A.01

6.	Question: The B standards were really developed by taking the event requirements published by a range of events, and performing a thorough text analysis on them. Therefore, the B standards are what people are doing already. Of all the event requirements reviewed, the most common omission was that of standard B.02. Overall, are the B standards a complete set?
	Comments: Section B01 (now B02) – This should read, “ The organiser must state the <u>Max</u> pixel dimensions (width & height) permitted for image data files.
	Observations: This was a flaw in the standard, which was probably drafted to ask organisers to quote the projected space. The comment is correct that the standard concerns image files, and it is the maximum which is required, as smaller files would be permitted. Otherwise, no comments suggesting that the standards are not a complete set.
	Actions: Change standard, and check corresponding guidance.

7.	Question: The order of the B standards tends to follow the order shown in many published sets of requirements. Is this correct? An alternative would be to order the standards as an author would encounter them in preparing an image file. Perhaps B.02, B.01, B.05, B.03, B.04, B.06 thru B.10 should be considered.
	Comments: Comments favour reordering
	Observations: Agreed.
	Actions: Reorder B standards as in Question. Note that reordering the standards is intended to help authors, and may be used when drafting any guidance to authors. It does not require event organisers to reorder their published requirements, although they might consider doing so.

8.	Question: As a whole, the standards checklist states what is to be achieved. The guidance indicates a variety of ways which have been used to meet each standard. There is no intention to prescribe exact methods. If something works to meet the standard, then it is acceptable. Is that concept apparent?
	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I feel that it would not be unreasonable not to allow tif files at all. b) LZW compression for tif files should be permitted. (This is lossless and can make a big difference to file sizes) c) You really need to specify a file naming convention. I'd support any naming standard that includes author name, and optionally, club, class, and title or description. I prefer (formats) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> name#description.typ name'title.typ name#club#description/'title.typ name#class#description/'title.typ name#club#class#description/'title.typ but anything that contains these elements with club and class optional would be fine.

	<p>d) The standard should require clubs to use PAGB-defined abbreviations for clubs in sponsored interclub competitions.</p> <p>e) The use of IPTC and EXIF data is theoretically possible but in my experience, it is beyond most amateurs. It gives no benefit over non-embedded ways of passing the data, so I suggest you drop these references from the standard.</p> <p>f) Comment disagreeing with (e), and that IPTC is proven usable.</p>
	<p>Observations: It is agreed PAGB policy that the standards can only be enforceable on PAGB events, and by extension to events with PAGB patronage. The guidance is not itself a set of standards. The guidance has been written to help a wider scope of events come to their own decisions, using experience of demonstrable viability. Non-PAGB events may use or ignore the standards and guidance as they wish. Specific observations:</p> <p>a) The tif file type gives good quality images, and should be usable if the organiser wishes. Opinion is that highest quality jpg (JPEG-12) images are nearly indistinguishable from tif.</p> <p>b) Although tif is a very interchangeable format, it does come in many versions. The exclusion of any compression for tif files in these standards is for two reasons. (1) in a wide universe of organisers and authors, we cannot ensure exactly the same available tif options for all, so the lowest common standard should prevail, and (2) since tif is restricted in these standards to hard media, there is no reason to need any compression of the file.</p> <p>c) The standards and guidance deliberately avoid prescribing a file name convention. As stated, file naming will depend very much on the competitions software being used, and on the nature and sorting requirements of the event. The examples given in the comment either include a prohibited character (/), or this is an example of a format description not matching the requirement exactly (correspondent could be meaning 'description or title').</p> <p>d) PAGB has codes for Federations, but not for Clubs. Federations may have codes for Clubs.</p> <p>e) The limitations of IPTC metadata use, both in author knowledge and software availability, are noted in the guidance. But, as IPTC is being successfully used, it is included as a way of meeting the standard. The correspondent is referring to XML as a way of passing data in addition to a structured file name on the image file. That also meets the standard.</p> <p>f) See (e)</p>
	<p>Actions: None, but see also Question 10.</p>

9.	<p>Question: The standards do not include the many activities which go into every photographic event. That is deliberate, and the standards only apply to activities specifically added by projected digital. Although some examples extend into general activities eg, cataloguing, the guidance still limits itself to aspects which are added by going digital. Is that concept apparent?</p>
	<p>Comments: No adverse comments</p>
	<p>Observations: n/a</p>
	<p>Actions: Scope confirmed</p>

10.	Question: During drafting, the question arose about how understandable the guidance should be. One argument is that the guidance should be understandable by anyone at all. That would be difficult, and the guidance is really written to stretch those who already have some knowledge. Is this reasonable?
	Comments: Some guidance is so extensive that it is difficult to read and understand.
	Observations: Review content.
	Actions: Divide long guidance into sections with clearer headings Move parts of A.03 (now A.02) guidance to B.08

11.	Question: There are a few places in the guidance which address mistakes which exist in some of the requirements already published for events. The arguments on these have run their course, and the outcome is settled. For example: Requiring a particular ppi/dpi is prohibited. Stating a maximum file size for submissions on hard media, such as CD, is prohibited. Any filename format definition must agree exactly (character for character) with any example.
	Comments: None
	Observations: The examples in the question include the commonest errors in published rules/requirements for events. The ppi (anyway not dpi) of a source image file is not relevant either for projection or when compositing a catalogue. Filename is very important for the smooth automation of an event. There are too many examples of discrepancies within published requirements. Eg, "Filename must be Club code , Title Example ABCLandscape" would be an error because the example does not include the space-comma-space shown in the file name specification.
	Actions: Add example to guidance.

Other.	Question: n/a
	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ? maximum cable length of connection between computer and projector b) ? problems with wireless connection between computer and projector c) For optimum results the projector computer combination needs to be set up for the particular screen and room lighting. We find it useful to check for contrast and tonal compression using a graduated grey scale. d) My own club's (AV Group) digital projector now has a calibration chart direct from the desktop. At two recent competitions, it was shown to the audience that the projector had been calibrated and was showing a correct picture. I'm sure that this was appreciated by the entrants. e) It is not necessary to own calibration equipment for projectors, but it is feasible to have the system calibrated as a purchased service. f) Many judges will wish to preview and even prejudge digital competition images, in the same way they have always done for conventional prints

and slides. The obvious problem here is that the organisers lose direct control over the equipment used for the judging. Some software can help, but perhaps some 'guidelines for Judges' could be most useful.

- g) If an image is saved as a tif file with an alpha channel this may cause problems with some software.
- h) We are already seeing XGA and SXGA+ being used. I can see this as a problem for interclub battles within a Federation - there will be a need for agreement on how this is managed.
- i) XGA was a commonly used standard. It is harder to find a laptop able to simultaneously drive its own screen and a projector at SXGA+.
- j) Keystone correction is in common use and I have not noticed a problem. The projectors I have seen correct very well.
- k) 'Must' in relation to turning off digital keystoneing would be a problem to enforce and might limit PAGB patronage grants.
- l) One entrant (to our event) submitted images to the full correct size, which included a 1 pixels white border. We subsequently discovered that the projector we were using in fact only displayed 1022 x 768 pixels, and the border left and right was missing from the projected image (it was fine on the monitor screen). I'm not sure how many projectors have this pixel loss, but it may be worth alerting people to this potential problem.
- m) Judges and the audience usually require to know the title of images. This has traditionally just been shouted out by one of the organisers, but some PDI software now gives, what in my opinion are far better (and professional) options. Titles can be overlaid on the image for just a few seconds or even pre-recorded (sound) and attached to the image files, letting the computer do all the work.
- n) The competition organiser should decide, and publish, whether titles are required, optional or not permitted. If titles are permitted, he should state whether they will be shown on the screen by the projection software, read out, or must be added to the image itself by the author.
- o) The B standards do not suggest that entrants should profile, or at least check, their monitors by any practicable means. I think a mention of this topic would be a worthwhile addition.
- p) The Eye-one spectrophotometer is easily recalibrated by the user by using the program 'eye-one diagnostics' and the standard reference tile supplied with the equipment. The literature supplied states that checking the repeatability and calibration by that method is sufficient. Thus, your statement (inability of user to calibrate equipment) is incorrect. [Supported by several other independent sources.]
- q) Although I support your requirement that records of settings be kept, I have to point out that some of the more recent software makes this quite difficult. For example, my monitor is digitally controlled by the profiling software and it would be quite hard to find out what the brightness and contrast settings are.
- r) I thought I would check last year's entry to our competition (at KCPA) to find out what colour space entrants actually used. I took a random sample of 100 images from the entry: 53 were in Adobe RGB 1998, 27 were in sRGB and 20 had no colour profile.
- s) Some modern digital cameras (and scanners, ed.), especially Nikon,

	<p>utilise their own colour spaces, which may be somewhat different from sRGB and Adobe RGB. I am also concerned that non-colour aware software should be permitted for the display of images.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> t) I am informed (but have no personal knowledge), "Pictures2exe is only copy-safe if the author actively disables the print screen option." u) Filenames cannot start with period, or they are hidden on a PC. v) It will be harder than suggested to reject entries for non-compliance eg with size and colour space requirements. w) If the organiser wants to publish larger prints (A5+ to A3) as part of the catalogue publication scheme, then the entry submitted for projection will not be adequate. x) An unfinalised CD may not read on some computer systems.
	<p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Add to guidance b) Add to guidance c) Add use of both graduated step wedges and standard images as part of subjective approval of the setup d) Several correspondents agree that showing test and standard images to the audience at an event builds confidence in the equipment, and by extension the organisers. e) Agreed. Modify guidance f) Pre-judging at home is fairly common for inter-Club events, and for Club events in some Federations. The event organiser should be responsible for image quality during pre-judging as during the main event. Pre-judging may be more likely on a monitor, where a reputable judge is likely to be using a good setup already. See also (c) and (d) above for use of wedges and standard images. There remains a considerable subjective element in image assessment, and 'calibration' of the judge is still important whatever the setup. g) This problem is confirmed. For example, Windows Picture and Fax Viewer shows the image clipped by the alpha channel in both thumbnail and full screen views. Google-Picasa shows the full image in both views. Guidance will be updated to require tif files to be saved without alpha channels. h) The standards and guidance are written for event organisers as independent entities. In general, the individual event organiser dictates the requirements, and authors must comply with each event separately. The problem is also going to occur with open exhibition 'circuits', and not just with image size, as events often have different filename requirements. i) Agreed. Note in guidance. j) Like the use of digital cables, disabling keystone correction is not mandatory, but is recommended for best quality at top-level events. As the draft guidance has been misread here, it needs to be clearer. k) see (h) l) Not known if this is a general problem, or is caused by analog cable connection with a synchronisation slippage. The latter is already in the guidance. m) Leaving aside the strongly held views on announcing titles, the use of a titles in events above Club level is primarily to ensure that the correct

	<p>image is being viewed. Automated overlay and/or announcement by embedded sound clip does not remove the need to check against manual scoring sheets usually considered mandatory for backup at such events. In any case, PDI software showing titles should not rescale the author's image to make space for the title.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n) (see also (k) above) Whether titles are announced manually, announced by embedded sound clip, or overlaid briefly or continuously on the screen are details of the event which authors do not need to know in order to make an entry. Given the possibilities for automation, asking authors to 'ribbon' their images in advance would be a redundant manual process. Ribboning would require a common format (font, size, position) if it was not to become a mess. o) The guidance is addressed to event organisers. Advice to authors is intended to be separate. p) Modify guidance. q) Settings made by software eg, profiling, are on top of any static settings made in the projector (or monitor). Projectors (and monitors) vary greatly in their menus and accessible settings. However, it is recommended that users should be aware of all manual settings on their equipment, and keep a record, so that deviations can be identified, and the equipment can be returned to a standard state prior to any software adjustment or calibration. r) Research clearly shows author uncertainty and error by authors in the face of a definitive colour space quoted by KCPA in their event requirements. Authors do require guidance and education. s) Information is also available that some cameras (? scanners) and some imaging software records the colour space either erroneously or ambiguously. While use of fully colour aware projection display software would be ideal, the lower standard of requiring consistent submission in sRGB may be preferred for error reduction. t) P2E has several security options, including expiry date, limited use, and prevention of PrintScreen. The options are set as part of the P2E project definition. Disabling PrintScreen would seem a good idea. u) Noted. Modify guidance v) Noted. Modify guidance w) Noted. Modify guidance x) Noted. Use of unfinalised CDs may have to be limited to close groups such as within a Club, with others requiring CDs to be finalised.
	<p>Actions: Modify guidance as at (a), (b), (c+d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j+k), (p), (s), (t), (u), (v), (w), (x). For (m+n), modify guidance to recommend no rescaling to show title on screen.</p>