



# New Digital Publications Standard Paves Way for Integrated Future

**A**LEXANDRIA, Va. (ARNEWS, May 23, 1997) – “A feeling of victory is in the air at the U.S. Army Publishing Agency,” said John Czekner, chief of Publishing Management Division, U.S. Army Publishing Agency (USAPA), Alexandria, Va. Their innovative and far-reaching Digital Publications Development (DPD) Military Standard was recently approved for the Army, with optional use available for the Department of Defense.

“We developed the highly visible DPD Program and published MIL-STD-2361(SC) to streamline the development, acquisition, and management of publishing information and to reduce costs and errors,” said Hope Robinson, the DPD Program Manager. The Army’s vision of an integrated environment for electronic, digital publications required different tools and some standardization. This recently published product gives new insights and methods for automatic storage, retrieval, processing, reuse, and sharing of publications information from different sources. MIL-STD-2361 also implements the Army Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) Registry and Library, which transforms the sharing and reusing of information from vision to reality.

MIL-STD-2361 resulted from several years of hard work, persistence, and testing and validation at government and industry sites in the United States. This recently distributed standard establishes the SGML requirements for Army digital publications and offers tailored, custom-made work packages. The separation of SGML requirements by publication types means that developers, trainers, and users will find specified sections for administrative, training and doctrinal, and technical and equipment publications. “USAPA is trying to ride the wave of the future, but we must accept progress in ripples and phases,” said Czekner, a 24-year veteran in publishing. This initial publication of the standard has SGML requirements for Army technical manuals (TMs) developed under MIL-STD-40051 (TM Preparation); it includes electronic technical manuals (ETMs), which are paper-based, and interactive electronic technical manuals (IETMs).

“The Army and USAPA are already working on future versions of the standard that will include SGML requirements for Army administrative, and training and doctrinal publications,” Robinson added.

The DPD Program has supported the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and has been the basis of the publications management part of the Combat Mobility System and the Abrams (M1A2/3) Main Battle Tank. Without the DPD Program and standard, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle Project Manager would have to publish over 44,000 pages of TM data over the next five years using conventional, camera-ready copy at significantly higher costs.

This standard is based on application of SGML and its tools: Document Type Definitions (DTDs) and Formatting Output Specification Instances (FOSIs). DTDs prescribe the publications content

and structure according to this standard. Developers and users can identify specific portions of the TM such as operating instructions, maintenance, or troubleshooting procedures. Since DTDs will be modular, the developer can select the maintenance module and develop that information separate from troubleshooting. "Time and accuracy are vital for soldiers in the field and save lives. He or she can isolate and access specific information or instructions for maintenance, repairs, or other work," Robinson said. The FOSI – with the DTD – establishes the style and format of the publication. FOSIs can adapt the same data to a paper presentation or to a computer screen display. Specific DTDs will be available later by request through the World Wide Web (<http://www-usappc.hoffman.army.mil>) and the USAPA Bulletin Board or by mail.

USAPA's MIL-STD-2361 is the first major step by any DoD publications organization to comply with the Joint Computer-Aided Acquisition and Logistics Support (JCALS) system. JCALS is the standard-based DoD information management initiative that supports development, management, and exchange of technical information using digital technology. Developers of USAPA's standard focused on compliance with DoD, Army, and international policy requirements.

Col. Michael Mayer-Kielmann, USAPA commander, said, "We are mobilized to digitize. We are one step closer to a soldier anywhere in the world by being able to use some type of computer system to instantly access specific, accurate, current, and trusted information." However, he cautioned, "A paperless military – if it is possible – is still a long way into the future."

Editor's Note: This information, originally published as a U.S. Army Publishing Agency News Release, is in the public domain at <http://www.dtic.mil/armylink/news> on the Internet.