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From: Scott Foshee <sfoshee@adobe.com>  
Subject: Resolving the "TIFF Issue"  
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Greetings all,

Since Adobe has not been participating in the IETF's Internet fax working group...and has served primarily as a provider technology to the working group since the spring of 98...I have chosen to let this discussion mostly run its course. However, it seems some important discussion points are drifting out of focus and I feel compelled to re-state them.

1. It is important to distinguish between two issues (per the IAB chair's presentation in London): interoperability and IP. It is my understanding that the primary reason the WG in London chose to scale things back was interoperability. I refer you to his briefing for his rationale, but I understand it to be based on general IETF interoperability principles and specific IETF WG goals for TIFF FX that resulted in the selection of TIFF as the basis for work. Adobe is not the cause of this decision or action, although we support it. Adobe's IP issue was specifically not addressed. The implementation of the London WG decision has the side effect of mostly avoiding the IP issue (deferred until the remaining functionality of TIFF FX is investigated). It is my understanding that the IAB, IESG, and working group chairs want us to evaluate this decision primarily on interoperability grounds. My impression from the London WG meeting is that they support the London decision.
2. If the Internet fax working group implements the recommendations of the London meeting (focusing on the immediate progression of mostly of S/F), this "interoperability choice" would mostly avoid the IP issue. The Adobe IP issue remains significant for all other profiles of TIFF FX, and the working group implicitly considers these issues when it considers progression of those profiles.
3. It has been emphasized to me that the IETF as an organization does not make statements nor take positions regarding the IP claims of companies. However, it is certainly true that the members/companies of the working group are making decisions regarding what technologies to include in TIFF FX and are making decisions regarding implementation of TIFF FX by their companies given (1) our original license, (2) our communication with IETF editors, and (3) our communication with the IESG and IAB. Adobe continues to indicate that TIFF FX is outside the scope of our license grant. The IETF is deferring a position on this to the membership/implementing companies and whatever process they use to evaluate IP and licenses.
4. Finally, a bit of history (in response to an e-mail that asked how we got here). Adobe provided a license to the IETF and ITU in 9/97 for the use of TIFF as the basis for the interchange of FAX data on the Internet. The 3/98 draft of TIFF FX presumed the publication of TIFF 7 with certain content which was never incorporated into TIFF. TIFF FX was progressed despite this disconnect... and despite repeated Adobe/IETF editor (Xerox) discussions that inclusion of these features were not certain...and thus TIFF FX was left outside the scope of the Adobe license. Other than cautioning the editors, Adobe has not participated in the working group since the beginning of 98. When the editors progressed the document despite objections, we elevated objections to IETF management last December and the IAB this Spring. The listed Adobe editor has not reviewed the document since prior to the 3/98 publication and recently asked that his name be removed from the latest version (it has yet to be removed by the continuing editors). Early this year Adobe provided the IETF, at the WG chairs request, a formal process by which any third party can request content in the next version of TIFF. We have yet to receive any requests via this procedure for us to incorporate the presumed/missing content into TIFF.

Note that:

TIFF 6 is available on our web site.

Our license is available on the IETF and ITU web sites.

Our December 2000 e-mail should be available from the IETF.

Our process should be available from the WG chairs.

In close, I think the London proposal is a good way to move things forward fast. While splitting the document has disadvantages, it would allow rapid progression of the parts that are interoperable with existing TIFF (but non-TIFF FX specific) readers. The alternative leaves the IETF and anyone who wishes to implement TIFF FX with a candidate TIFF FX specification that Adobe has identified as being a use of TIFF that is outside the scope of the 9/97 license grant to the IETF.

Adobe is committed to a timely review of any requests for changes to TIFF and is committed to working with the IETF to ensure a TIFF standard that is interoperable.

Regards,

Scott