

The IEE/BCS Independent Safety Assurance Working Group

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide an introduction to the work of the IEE/BCS Independent Safety Assurance Working Group, including what has been achieved to date and looking at what needs to be addressed in the future.

1 Introduction

This paper describes the role of the Working Group, and provides an overview of the issues that can affect the ISA role and how the Working Group is trying to address them.

2 The Role of the ISA Working Group¹

The Independent Safety Assurance Working Group was set up by the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) and the British Computer Society (BCS) in September 2000 to promote and assist the role of the independent safety assessor (ISA). The Working Group is made up of representatives from a variety of industries representing the supply chain, namely: the regulator, the purchaser, the supplier and the independent safety organisations.

The Mission Statement of the Working Group is:

"To enhance awareness and knowledge of the concept of Independent Safety Assurance in the interests of the engineering profession"

where Independent Safety Assurance is provided by safety professionals fulfilling the role of an Independent Safety Advisor, Auditor or Assessor.

¹ Some of this text is based upon information held at the ISA WG website.

2.1 Aims

The aims of the Working Group are to:

- Provide a contact point for ISA professionals.
- Promote the ISA role of a safety professional as a means of providing independent safety assurance to the supplier, purchaser and user.
- Promote the ISA role of a safety professional in standards.
- Support the development of safety professionals.
- Provide support for professional ISA's by developing guidance and providing information that effects their role.
- Explore the concept of expanding the ISA role to include independent environmental assurance.

Although the Working Group is independent, it is subject to the direction of the IEE Inter-Institutional Group on Health and Safety and is affiliated to the IEE and the BCS.

2.2 Membership

Membership of the Working Group is open to safety professionals with extensive experience of working on safety critical projects / programmes. Since September 2000 there have been 14 meetings of the Working Group. Current members are from many different industry sectors, including:

- Standards makers – such as the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the MoD.
- Defence Equipment Manufacturers.
- Nuclear Power.
- Rail.
- Independent Safety Consultants.
- Professional Institutions.

The Working Group is endeavoring to widen involvement with other institutions and related safety groups as it is recognized that the ISA role applies to many systems not just those based on complex electronics.

From the very beginning the Working Group has recognised the importance of working together with those bodies involved in the development of safety standards, as well as those interest groups that have been set up by safety practitioners. This has led to the Working Group either inviting representatives from those parties to join the Working Group or to encourage Working Group members to participate and liaise with those other safety organisations.