

**BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION
COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES (IST/5)**

UK National Activity Report presented to the meeting of
ISO/IEC JTC1/SC22/WG5 (Fortran), Edinburgh, August 8-12, 1994

The BSI Fortran Panel has sixteen members, including a graphics liaison member. There has been one panel meeting during the past year; most of the panel's business is conducted by mail and e-mail. In addition, three of its members are also members of the BSI committee on programming languages, the national counterpart of SC22. The number of UK-based members of X3J3 is two and has not changed in the past year; two members of the panel have become alternate members of X3J3 during the past year.

During the past year the Panel has developed two proposals for the revision of Fortran which were delegated to it by X3J3; these were on language evolution and on parameterized derived types. Members of the panel have also been closely involved with a proposal on exception handling, which is formally the responsibility of IFIP WG2.5. A number of further proposals have been submitted to WG5 for consideration at this meeting.

The panel has spent considerable effort in collecting public opinion, both in these specialized areas and on general requirements, for the development of Fortran. A summary of the conclusions from the latter is in WG5-N1006. It is noticeable (cf WG5-N1003) that users' needs are as much to do with gaining access to operating system and other external facilities available from other languages as to do with extending the Fortran language.

The UK voted "yes with comments" in the ballot on Varying Length Character Strings in Fortran DIS 1539-2. A revised document, edited in the light of comments made in the ballot, is available at this WG5 meeting. The UK voted to approve the Fortran Technical Corrigendum 1 in the SC22 ballot. On Industrial Real Time Fortran (ISO 7846-1985, BS 6831:1987), the Fortran panel recommended that the UK vote be to withdraw these standards since it was not able to detect any use of IRTF in the UK and, further, much of IRTF has been superseded by parts of Fortran 77 and Fortran 90.

The panel has influenced the UK votes on the language-independent standards LIA, LID and LIPC by urging that practical considerations, for example sample bindings to LIPC, be given greater weight. The panel has been unenthusiastic about LIA in particular.

The 1992 and 1993 reports from this panel mentioned the high retail price (£186) of the ISO Fortran Standard and other programming language standards in the UK. Despite efforts by IST/5 there has been no change in the policy of the BSI Sales Department and it appears fruitless to continue to attempt to persuade them. It is assumed that individual, as opposed to institutional, buyers will find alternative, cheaper ways of acquiring copies.

The British Computer Society Fortran Specialist Group continues to be the principal open forum for discussion of Fortran matters in the UK although fewer ordinary meetings have been held during the past year. To raise awareness of Fortran 90 and related current developments, and to provide a means for the general public to comment on future requirements, the Group organized three Fortran Forums, in Edinburgh, London and Oxford during June and July, which attracted a total of 65 participants. The spirit of the audiences was very positive, particularly with regard to HPF.

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IST/5/-/5 (Fortran) Convenor
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