



Call for participation on Vaccine Passport international standardization

Request for comments

To: Universities, Research Institutes, Government entities, public transportation companies, hotels, public event and organizations and all interested stakeholders

From: Ecma International Technical Committee TC51 (Access systems and information exchange between systems)

12 March 2021

Ecma TC51 committee is calling for participation and for feedback from interested stakeholders on the development of a vaccine passport international standardization.

Background

The interoperability of the global healthcare system will be significantly improved if the systems are compliant with ECMA-417, which became international standard ISO/IEC 24643 in November 2020. Such standards are essential to the interoperability of 24/7/365 online systems.

COVID-19 has become a pandemic. As its spread, some immunology experts believe that the vaccination against COVID-19 will be a frequent event. During 2020, at least three variants from the original COVID-19 were identified, namely UK variant, South African variant and Brazilian variant. The governments, companies and citizens need to prepare to keep accurate data of which vaccines have been taken at which dates in order to control the spread of new variants even if the original COVID-19 were eliminated. This is not an easy task without international coordination or international standards to ensure the interoperability of the systems.

On 14th February, the UK Royal Society published a report titled 12 challenges for vaccine passports. This document has attracted a lot of attention. Among others, the six technological challenges are identified in this report including the interoperability among systems. On the other hand, various private sector companies and public sector entities have started vaccine passport initiatives without the interoperability consideration. This is the background that Ecma International is calling for participation from various organisations representing all the stakeholders interested in vaccine passports.

Ecma International TC51 (Ecma TC51) was responsible for the development of the ECMA-417 standard which became ISO/IEC 24643. Ecma TC51 is reaching out to your organization to understand the requirements of the different constituents of vaccine passports.

Timeline for expression of participation and comments

Interested Ecma members and stakeholders are kindly invited to express their interest in this topic and submit their ideas and contributions.

Ecma TC51 is hoping to make a rapid response to the 12 challenges for vaccine passports report and other various questions especially in terms of interoperability. We, therefore, would like interested parties to either send comments, questions, suggestions by Sunday 28 May 2021, 23:00 GMT, 24:00 CET (these can be sent to Patrick Luthi, Secretary of Ecma TC51 (helpdesk@ecma-international.org)) or participate in our next (teleconference) meeting which is scheduled for 1st April 2021 at 7am GMT/8am CET.

References

For the Royal Society summary and the full report, see the below link.

<https://royalsociety.org/news/2021/02/12-challenges-for-vaccine-passports/>

In addition to the vaccine passports, there are needs from various governments to balance between the private data and the interoperability of the system. For example, the Minister of Digital Infrastructure has requested comments on the new initiative called Digital Identity and Attributes Trust Framework. In essence, the UK government is seeking to have a platform which can keep the maximum flexibility to the privacy while get the common platform system which can verify the authentication of the users of the services as well as authentication of the data retrieved from the device. This may also be one the use-cases where 24/7/365 online system is able to provide the solution, thus ISO/IEC 24643 may be relevant. See below link for this call for information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-digital-identity-and-attributes-trust-framework/the-uk-digital-identity-and-attributes-trust-framework>

Extract from ISO/IEC 24643 (ECMA-417)

ISO/IEC 24643 was published on 23rd November 2020. Its introduction starts as follows:

Technology for real-time access control is widely used in many situations such as (1) facility entrance systems in a building, (2) payments at a hotel, (3) ATM operations or (4) e-voting in an election, etc. These services benefit from real-time access control systems connected via networks and using database information.

Sophisticated cloud, virtualization, database, networking technology and services and the evolution of authentication technology such as biometrics, NFC, QR codes used in distributed and modular access control systems enable previously underserved users and operators to innovate around new use cases.