
This loose-leaf volume is divided into eight sections plus an extensive glossary. Its purpose is "...to facilitate [the] dialogue, not only between those who are actively serving on standards committees, but among the much broader community of individuals who, through their design, purchasing, or teaching decisions, will be the true arbiters of the graphics standards debate."

An overview of graphics standards is followed by separate sections describing seven formal standards, standards under development, and quasi standards—Core, GKS, PHIGS, IGES, CGM, CGI, and NAPLPS.

The overview section is the weakest. Editor Van Deusen does not participate on the standards committee and therefore does not hear firsthand the discussions relating to the development of standards. Consequently, although his coverage of facts (the history portion in particular) is good, his opinions, sometimes presented as fact, are certainly at odds with the views prevailing among people developing the standards.

For example, on page 1-1 he states, "...a single, universally accepted standard for graphics software remains an elusive, perhaps unobtainable goal." The underlying premise is that this "goal" is desirable and is being pursued actively by standards developers. In fact, neither is the case. Similarly, he says on page 1-2 that "only two or three of the seven adopted or proposed standards are truly competitive." In fact, most standards committee experts would hold that none are truly competitive, although superficially a few might appear to be.

The 1985 edition of this handbook was written in late 1984 and consequently is nearly two years out of date. This affects the usefulness of much of the information. For example, GKS was published as an ANSI and an ISO standard in mid-1985, and IGES Version 3.0, not 2.0, is now being reviewed. Readers are not sufficiently advised that Core is a de facto standard and a precursor to GKS and PHIGS but is not itself ever going to become a formal ANSI or ISO standard.

Finally, the overview seems to stress differences rather than similarities. Actually, the commonality among all the graphics standards in the areas of control, output primitives and attributes, input, viewing, the inquiry phi-

Continued on p.8