

It's OK to use an out-of-date/cancelled Military Standard...isn't it?



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By specialization I am a Chartered Aerosystems Engineer. Having started out in my working life as an indentured apprentice, I went through training and had the importance of maintaining engineering standards drilled into me. One of the major teaching points was ensuring that the publications I used to maintain the variety of platforms that I worked on were in line with the latest released amendment state; the practice of adhering to the latest up to date documents has served me well as I have progressed through my career. Towards the end of my Service career, I entered the world of Integrated Logistic Support (now also called Integrated Product Support or Integrated Lifecycle Support). Now we come to the controversial piece - apparently, in government commercial and the world of ILS/IPS, it is acceptable to contract against out-of-date and cancelled standards and specifications to develop and deliver support solutions for modern military equipment.

A BIT OF HISTORY

The first "real" ILS Standard was MIL STD 1388-1 which was published in 1973; the updated 1388-1A was published in 1983. UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) templated 1388 with Defence Standard (Def Stan) 00-60 in 1993 to mirror the US publication. Unlike other Def Stans at the time, 00-60 was a complex contracting document, effectively providing instruction to commercial officers on how to contract for ILS packages or services. The period 2001 to 2010 saw the Def Stan 00-60 Working Group attempt to improve usability of the document **and in 2010 Issue 1 of Def Stan 00-600 was published and Def Stan 00-60 was cancelled**. Def Stan 00-600 realigned with other Def Stans, but the resultant document had removed much of the useful commercial information. Recognising the information gap, UK MOD released Joint Services Publication (JSP) 886 Defence Supply Chain Manual of which Volume 7 was dedicated to ILS. JSP886 is widely recognised by UK ILS practitioners as an excellent source of ILS information. **In 2016, against a UK MOD background of JSP rationalization, JSP886 was withdrawn**. The Defence Logistic Framework (DLF) became the primary UK MOD reference document in 2016. The document sits in the Knowledge in Defence area of the DE&S intranet and can only be seen by UK MOD, unless industry is granted access. There are continuing discussions about the efficacy of DLF in terms of the ILS/IPS discipline.

In US MIL STD 1388-1a/2b were cancelled on 29th November 1996 and replaced with Mil-Hdbk-502 (Acquisition Logistics) and Mil-PRF-49506 (Logistics Management Information). Simultaneously, SAE issued GEIA-Std-0007 and TA-Std-0017 which were close approximations of MIL STD 1388 but brought us into the digital age.

To summarise the history, there have been a plethora of different standards and specifications trying to achieve the same thing.



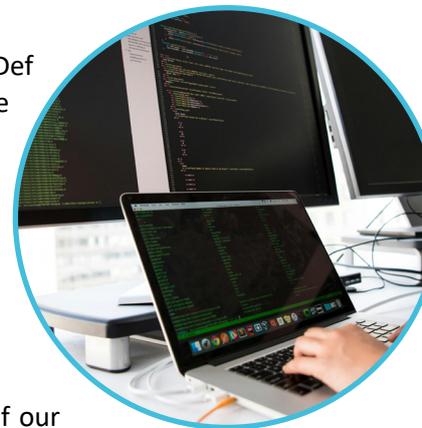
THE CHALLENGE

As an ILS specialist, I am asked to review ILS/IPS artifacts (contracted deliverables) against the contract at various stages in product lifecycles. Clearly, part of the review is looking at the contract to ascertain which international ILS/IPS standards and specifications have been invoked; imagine my consternation when faced with deliverables which have been contracted against cancelled standards. Why did the prime contractor or Contracting Authority (CA) request deliverables against a cancelled standard? How did the prime contractor or CA specify the deliverables associated with the contract without a valid standard or specification to draw on? How did the supplier fully understand the contracted deliverable requirements when they did not (should not) still have access to the cancelled standard? How is the prime contractor or CA going to assess the quality of the supplier's delivery against a cancelled standard? The foregoing questions in isolation should cause concern to commercial officers. From an ILS/IPS specialist standpoint, I ponder whether the use of out-of-date standards is acceptable good practice for developing support solutions in the digital age.



THE SOLUTION

As previously stated, MIL STD 1388-1a/2b were cancelled nearly 30 years ago. Equally, Def Stan 00-60 was cancelled 16 years ago. So, what, if any, information is contained in these documents which makes them so indispensable? If there is information in the cancelled documents which does make them indispensable, why has that information not found its way into modern standards and specifications...or has it? In my opinion there is nothing significant in 1388 or 00-60 which cannot be found in the modern standards and specifications...if you are prepared to look.



PROFESSIONALISM

As a profession, ILS/IPS practitioners are having a difficult time. The younger members of our discipline seek professional recognition, we seek a structured career path, and we want the programs people to take us and our discipline seriously. So, what sort of picture do we paint when we use out of date and/or cancelled standards and specifications – discuss.

Looking around the globe, there are perfectly serviceable up-to-date standards and specifications which can be used:

- NATO – ALP-10 and STANAG 4876
- USA – SAE Standards, Mil Hdbks and Mil PRF
- UK/Europe/Worldwide – S series specifications

Please don't use out of date or cancelled standards or specifications – it's unprofessional and promotes delivery of ambiguous and subjective – perhaps substandard – deliverables upon which our defence contracts rely?



