Panel Operating Procedures

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Revision History

VERSION	PUBLISH DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	12/10/2021	First release
2.0	05/25/2022	Updated for new organization name and change from membership to participation in panels.
2.1	08/16/2022	Changed name of Panel from Safety Standard Panel (SSP) to Software Safety Standards Panel (SSSP)
3.0	09/25/2023	Add support for Subcommittees

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1   Document Overview

These Operating Procedures define the organization, governance, and operating rules for the Internet Safety Labs Panels. They are used by Panel Chairs, Panel Project Managers, Technical Editors, Participants, Panel Oversight Committee, Board of Directors and Internet Safety Labs Panels Staff to provide governance for participation and ensure successful development of respectful tech specifications and supporting documentation.

2   Overview of Internet Safety Labs

The Internet Safety Labs (ISL) welcomes all makers and users of technology to participate in a bidirectional dialogue to co-create definitive software safety standards for connected technologies.

3   Definitions

This section defines the terms used throughout this document.

- **Bylaws:** guiding documents of the Board of Directors.
- **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct:** the code of conduct agreed to by all members.
- **IPR Policy:** Intellectual Property Rights Policy agreed to by all members.
- **Meeting:** every session for which a unique agenda is published, either for a face-to-face meeting or teleconference.
- **Minimum Participation Requirement for Voting:** In order to vote in an SSSP, participants must attend 2 of the previous 4 meetings just prior to a vote.
- **Operating Procedures:** Framework for participation governance, operations, procedures, and guidelines for activities, as set forth in this document.
- **Panels:** Panels are volunteer, collaborative initiatives to measurably improve the safety of the digital world. Currently, two types of panels are supported:
    - **Software Safety Standards Panel:** a group of people representing different stakeholder points of view to develop and maintain formal safety specifications.
    - **Advisory Panel:** a group of people who provide guidance and support for specific initiatives that don't result in formal specifications/standards.
- **Panel Chair:** staff person from Internet Safety Labs appointed to lead a Panel.
- **Panel Oversight Committee**: Currently, the Panel Oversight Committee is fulfilled by the ISL Executive Team comprised of ISL directors and department leads.
- **Panel Project Manager:** optional staff person from Internet Safety Labs appointed to provide administrative support for the Panel.
- **Panel Workspace:** the workspace used for the storage of Panel documents.

- **Panel Deliverables or Projects**: Panel Deliverables/Projects may be any sort of thing the Panel identifies, including but not limited to Documents, source code, prototypes, letters, draft policies, etc.
  - Referenced Documents
- **Participant:** any approved Panel Participant. In Software Safety Standards Panels, there are two types of Participants, which are self-selected at the time of application: Voting and Non-voting.
- **Participation Agreement:** Terms of participation agreed upon by all participants.
- **Quorum:** simple majority of voting members.
- **Simple Majority:** at least one more than one-half (1/2) the number of voting members.
- **Software Safety Standards Stakeholder Categories:**
  - **Tech Provider ("B-s")**
  - **Consumer ("Me-s")**
  - **SDO or Testing Organization Representative**
  - **Government – either local or federal**
  - **General Interest Experts:**
    - **Legal or Policy Expert**
    - **UX/Interaction Design Expert**
    - **Other Social Science Expert (Psychology, Sociology, Linguistics, Communications)**
    - **Philosophy/Ethics Expert**

Specification: A specification is comprised of a set of detailed, specific requirements; in ISL, specifications define safety requirements and criteria for internet-connected technologies and devices.

- **Staff:** individuals or entities formally engaged by the Internet Safety Labs.
- **Standard:** The definitive measure; in ISL, *standard* and *specification* are used synonymously, and refer to *safety specifications/safety standards* for internet-connected Technology.
  - **Technical Editor:** optional staff person from Internet Safety Labs appointed to provide technical support for the Panel.
- **Subcommittee:** a committee formed for a specific project or deliverable composed of panel participants.
- **Supermajority**: at least sixty percent (60%) of voting members.
- **Teleconference:** meeting by phone call or virtual meetings via a video platform.
- **Voting:** the act of approving/rejecting an action brought forth within a Panel.
  - **Electronic Ballot:** a method to allow for voting that takes place via email or other third-party voting platform.
  - **Electronic Vote:** a vote cast with the use of Electronic Ballot, cast by electronic mail or other electronic transmission; vote is deemed delivered when sent.

4 Scope

These Operating Procedures pertain to the operations of the Internet Safety Labs Panels. They stipulate voting procedures, panel operations, and the criteria for seeking balance of participants.

These Operating Procedures are not intended to describe the business operations of the Internet Safety Labs or its Board of Directors.

5 Operating Principles

5.1 Openness and Transparency

The work of the Internet Safety Labs Panels shall facilitate broad participation and specifications shall be freely and publicly accessible. Balance In Software Safety Standards Panels

Internet Safety Labs shall endeavor to achieve balanced stakeholder representation among Software Safety Standards Panel (SSSP) participants, where balance is when no single stakeholder category constitutes more than one third (1/3) of the participants of the Panel. The only rule is that Tech Providers may not exceed 33% of the participants on the Panel. In this case, ISL will cap the number of Tech Providers to allow for only 33% of participation.

Note that not all stakeholder categories must be represented.

SSSP composition percentages shall be published on the ISL website.

Stakeholder Categories:

a. Tech Provider or "B" – a representative of an organization that is engaged in the manufacturing or sub-contracting of products covered by the panel, or a consultant who represents a tech provider. Also described as GDPR roles: Data Controller, Data Processor, or Co-Data Controller.[1] And CPRA roles: Business, Service Provider, or Contractor.[2]

b. Consumer or "Me" – individuals, consumer organizations, consumer privacy, communications, or ethics departments at universities.

c. Standards Developing Organizations and Testing Organizations – organizations that provide certification or testing services or develop standards or codes.

d. Government – Representatives from national, state and local government agencies.

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[1] GDPR, Art. 4 (7); GDPR, Art. 4(8)

[2] California Privacy Rights Act, CAL. CIV. CODE §1798.145(d); California Privacy Rights Act, CAL. CIV. CODE §1798.145(ag)(1); California Privacy Rights Act, CAL. CIV. CODE §1798.145(j)(1)

e. General Interest Experts: members of academia, special experts, representatives of NGOs not covered by other participation categories. In particular:
    a. **Legal or Policy Expert**
    b. **UX/Interaction Design Expert**
    c. **Other Social Science Expert (Psychology, Sociology, Linguistics, Communications)**
    d. **Philosophy/Ethics Expert**
    e. **Safe Technology Expert**

If the Panel Chair believes the participant's stated category is incorrect, the Panel Chair will determine the appropriate category based on the Participant's application and resume and notify the participant of the change.

6 Panels

Each Panel is created to achieve specific outcomes towards the propagation of safe and respectful technology. Upon creation, or annual review, each Panel defines the deliverables required to achieve the desired outcomes and shall have at least one deliverable, which can be a report, safety specification, recommendation, prototype, draft policy, or other type of deliverable.

All Panel participants must adhere to Internet Safety Labs Policies, with particular focus on the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and adherence to the IPR Policy.

6.1 Creation and Dissolution of Panels

ISL is responsible for the creation and dissolution of panels, whether they are Software Safety Standards Panels or Advisory panels.

6.2 Structure

Each Panel shall have an ISL-appointed Chair and one support staff member, either a Project Manager or a Technical Editor. Technical Editors are required for Software Safety Standards Panels and shall be appointed by ISL.

6.3 Roles

6.3.1 Panel Chair

Each Panel shall have one Chair. The Chair shall be appointed upon the creation of the Panel by the ISL Panel Oversight Committee and is a non-voting participant of the panel. The Chair responsibilities are:

a. Provide leadership for the panel and ensure projects are conducted in a timely and effective manner.

b. Develop and manage Panel's annual project plan, with support from the Panel Project Manager or Technical Editor.

c. Schedule and facilitate Panel meetings.

d. Ensure meeting minutes and recordings are captured.

e. Provide updates for the ISL Panel Oversight Committee.

f. Ensure that Project Owners complete a Project Template for each major Panel project.

g. If a Panel participant is acting in bad faith, Panel Chair shall raise the issue with the Panel Oversight Committee

6.3.2 Panel Project Manager

A Panel Project Manager may be appointed by the ISL Panel Oversight Committee and is a non-voting participant of the panel. The Panel Project Manager supports the Panel Chair by performing tasks related to the Panel activities such as:

a. Act as a central point of contact for incoming questions.

b. Prepare and edit project plans.

c. Maintain participation roster.

d. Maintain voting and other relevant documents or records.

e. Assist with Panel meeting agendas and take notes.

f. Maintain Panel records in the designated storage systems.

6.3.3 Technical Editor

For Software Safety Standards Panels, a Technical Editor shall be appointed by the ISL Panel Oversight Committee and is a non-voting participant of the panel. The Technical Editor performs the following tasks:

a. Edit the Safety Specification.

b. Responsible for maintaining version control of the specification.

c. Ensure processing and resolution of all incoming contributions and comments.

d. Prepare ballot versions of specifications.

6.4 Participation

6.4.1 Application

Each person must apply for panel participation by completing an application and providing the following information:

a. Whether they are representing a company or organization, or acting as an individual; including identification company or organization representing, if appropriate.

b. A summary of their professional background, such as CV or resume, and identification of the Stakeholder Category they represent,

c. Assurance of the ability to actively participate.

d. If they will be a voting or non-voting member of the panel.

e. For voting members: Indication of whether they will have an instructed vote, and if so, for whom.
f. If their participation is funded by a person or organization, and if so, who that person or individual is.
g. Agreement to notify the Panel Chair of a change in the organization they represent, their employment, or their funding source. ISL will require the participant to complete a new application.

6.4.2 Approval

The Panel Chair will review applications for approval.

6.4.3 Voting Status – Software Safety Standards Panel

Participants in Software Safety Standards Panels may be either Voting or Non-voting, as self-selected by the participant. Note that Participants must maintain Minimum Participation requirements in order to maintain voting status. ISL staff, even when not assigned formal Panel Roles, are ineligible to vote.

6.4.4 Minimum Participation Requirement for Voting

In order to vote, a participant must have attended at least 2 of the previous 4 meetings.

6.4.5 Tenure

Software Safety Standards Panel Participants who consistently neglect to participate during meetings or electronically or exhibit lack of interest or knowledge may be removed at any time. The Panel Chair may send a warning email if participant is absent from two or more consecutive meetings and/or if participant hasn't participated in recent online discussions or decisions.

6.4.6 Subcommittees

Any panel participant may propose a subcommittee using this form ISL Subcommittee Proposal Template

Subcommittees may be proposed at any time by any panel member to work on a deliverable either not currently in the panel's working plan (i.e. opportunistic or urgent project), or requiring a specific subset of expertise.

The subcommittee proposal will be evaluated and approved by the Panel Oversight Committee based on:

- Completeness of Subcommittee Proposal, including sufficient panel support.
- Appropriateness of proposed project to overall panel objectives.
- Ability to support subcommittee and proposed deliverable(s).

Once approved, ISL will provide an "ISL Delegate" who will participate in the subcommittee.

Except as described above, subcommittees will be governed by the same creation, dissolution, decision making and oversight processes as panels.

6.5 Decision Making

In Software Safety Standards Panels, all matters presented for action must be decided by consensus or a vote. Panel decision-making shall operate primarily on a consensus basis through a process that emphasizes due diligence and cooperation.

If a consensus cannot be reached, a formal vote will be held. A vote may take place face-to-face, on a conference call, or via electronic ballot.

Advisory Panels will be exclusively census based.

6.5.1 Consensus Process

The following procedures shall be used in the consensus process:

a. A quorum is required to reach consensus.
b. The Panel Chair shall act as the facilitator of the consensus process.
c. Items that require decisions shall be clearly presented with all available research and information.
d. The proposal shall be discussed and debated by those in attendance and any amendments or modifications to the proposal shall be presented.
e. A call for objections shall be made to all in attendance.
f. The absence of sustained objection shall be considered consensus.
g. Sustained objections which cannot be resolved through continued discussion shall result in the motion being moved to a vote or tabled for modification.
h. All participants shall be allowed to participate in the consensus decision-making process.

6.5.2 Voting Process

Each eligible voting participant may cast one and only one ballot. The ballot shall have three voting options: (1) "Yes", (2) "No", and (3) "Abstain". A super majority of affirmative ballots is required for the passage of a vote. Voting results shall be publicly reported in the meeting minutes.

Votes may be conducted either in person, during teleconferences, or electronically.

7 Meetings

7.1.1 Regular Meetings

Panels shall conduct regular meetings. Meetings shall occur at least monthly; meeting frequency should reflect the nature and volume of the current Project(s) being undertaken by the Panel.

7.1.2 Quorum

Quorum only applies to Software Safety Standards Panels and shall be determined by the Panel Chair at the opening of each meeting. If quorum is achieved, the Panel is allowed to produce binding decisions such as:

a. Meeting Agenda approval
b. Meeting Minutes approval
c. New Project approval
d. Panel termination approval (Advisory Panels only).

If quorum is not achieved, but at least 3 members are present, the Panel Chair may proceed with the meeting at their discretion.

7.1.3 Meeting Management

Any motion, act, or decision by consensus may only occur in which there is a Quorum for the meeting.

At the beginning of each meeting the Chair must

a. Present a reminder of IPR Policy, other information as is appropriate, and must encourage the attending participants to review the Internet Safety Labs Agreement Policies in full.
b. Ensure the Recording of the Meeting is active.
c. Appoint a scribe to track attendees and document and record the Panel's activities and actions in the meeting template.
d. Appoint additional members to support an effective meeting and/or to support the requirements for the records of the meeting.
e. Ensure all records are current, maintained, and available on the Member Workspace.

7.1.4 Meeting Notice

Notice of any meetings must be provided by or at the direction of the Chair to all Participants of the respective Panel at least seven (7) days in advance for conference calls or twenty-one (21) days for in person meetings. If a Panel holds regularly scheduled meetings, a single notice of the schedule shall be sufficient.

7.1.5 Meeting Reporting Requirements

Access to agendas, minutes, and meeting recordings shall be available on the Panel Workspace.

8 Panel Oversight

The Panel Oversight Committee provides oversight for all Panel Operations.

The responsibilities include:

a. **Panel Operations Oversight:** Ensure Panels have the necessary resources and that projects are progressing according to plan. Resolve any conflicts within Panels.
b. **Panel Creation and Termination:** Approve or reject the creation or termination of Panels.
c. **Panel Charter Review:** Annually review and approve the charters for each active Panel.
d. **Subcommittee Review, Approval, and Termination:** Review and approve proposals for subcommittees, and ensure appropriate termination of subcommittees.
e. **Operating Procedures Adoption and Amendments:** Maintain these Operating Procedures.

9 Publications

Internet Safety Labs shall publish materials produced by Panels for the benefit of both the makers and users of technology. Publishing may include digital and printed format of documents.

9.1 Publication Types

Panels may develop any number of possible publications including but not limited to:

a. **Specifications or Recommendations**: focusing primarily on safety specifications, and
b. **Reports**
c. Specifications and Recommendations shall be formally approved by the organization as described in Section 9.2.

10 Intellectual Property Rights

This section includes guidance on the Internet Safety Labs Intellectual Property Rights, as set out in the Bylaws, IPR Policy, and Participation Agreement. In case of discrepancy between this section and those governing documents the governing documents are authoritative.

Internet Safety Labs produces publications as the result of Panel joint work efforts which include contributions from participants.

The Internet Safety Labs IPR Policy specifies the license terms that the contributing participant must provide to the Internet Safety Labs and all Internet Safety Labs members.

The IPR Policy specifies that the copyright to outputs of a Panel is owned by Internet Safety Labs and Internet Safety Labs reserves the rights to publish these outputs.

Internet Safety Labs facilitates the development of intellectual property within Panel. Panel participants are accountable for contributions made to the group for use in any group outputs.

The Executive Director, Panel Oversight Committee, and Panels are responsible for taking appropriate action to address a claim or license issue.

10.1 Ownership of Intellectual Property

All contributes are the sole and exclusive property of Internet Safety Labs. All Panel output constitutes a copyrightable work owned by the Internet Safety Labs. Internet Safety Labs reserves the right to publish the Panel copyrightable output. No individual, organization or company may reproduce or redistribute the output except as permitted by the Copyright terms.

10.2 Publication Approval Process

10.2.1 Panel Approval

When the Panel agrees that a Document is stable and ready for approval, the following process shall be followed:

a. The Panel Chair shall post the Draft Document and shall give Notice to all panel participants.
b. In the Notice, the Panel Chair shall ask for return of final comments and any Exclusion Notices within no less than seven (7) days from the date of Notice. Exclusion Notices must be submitted to the Executive Director.
c. Within seven (7) days after the due date for comments, the comments shall be made available to all panel participants.

After the Panel resolves all comments on the Draft Document, the Panel shall decide by consensus to approve the Document. If the Draft Document passes, it is updated to Candidate Document version and proceeds to the Panel Oversight Committee for further processing.

10.2.2 Panel Oversight Committee Approval

After the document is approved by the Panel, it shall be reviewed by the Panel Oversight Committee for advancement to the Board of Directors. The Panel Oversight Committee will review with the Panel Chair as needed and decide by consensus to approve the Draft Document. If the Panel Oversight Committee does not approve the Draft Document, it will return to the Panel for revisions.

10.2.3 Board of Directors Approval

After the document is approved by the Panel Oversight Committee, it shall be advanced to the Board of Directors using the following process:

a. The Panel Chair presents Candidate Document to the Board of Directors
b. The President of the Board of Directors shall determine if the vote shall occur at the next Board Meeting or via an electronic ballot.
c. Each voting member of the Board of Directors may cast one and only one ballot. The ballot shall have three voting options: (1) "Yes", (2) "No", and (3) "Abstain". A super majority of affirmative ballots is required for the passage of a vote. Voting results shall be publicly reported in the meeting minutes.

d. If the board approves Candidate Document version by a supermajority, the document becomes the Final Document version and is published on the Internet Safety Labs website.

10.3 Maintenance

Once approved by the Board of Directors, responsibility for maintenance of a Final Document is assigned as follows:

a. If the Panel that developed the Document is still active, the Panel's Technical Editor shall be responsible for maintaining the Document.
b. If the Panel that developed the Document is no longer active, the Panel Oversight Committee shall be responsible for maintaining the Document.

10.3.1 Errata

Publication of errata may be used to correct known errors in a Final Document without having to fully amend the Final Document. Any potential erratum shall be communicated to the appropriate Panel Chair for processing. The Panel or the Panel Oversight Committee in the absence of an active Panel shall draft a disposition statement regarding the potential erratum. The Panel Chair or the Panel Oversight Committee shall present the statement to the Board of Directors for approval.

Upon Board of Directors approval, an errata statement shall be published in the Final Document describing the erratum and the correction.

10.3.2 Editorial Changes

The Panel may, at its discretion or at the direction of either the Board of Directors or the Panel Oversight Committee, make editorial changes to a Final Document, providing that such changes do not materially change the Document.

10.3.3 Document Revisions

Substantive changes to Final Publications shall be made in an active Panel and must follow the approval process described in these Operating Procedures.

10.3.4 Storage and Access to Documents

All non-final versions of documents as well as other working documents of a Panel shall be stored on the Panel Workspace and may not be distributed.

11 References

1. Andrew Hughes, Ken Dagg, Colin Wallis, ed. Kantara Initiative Operating Procedures version 3.0. 2018.
2. Elika J. Etemad, Florian Rivoal, Natasha Rooney, Charles McCathie Nevile, Ian Jacobs. *W3C Process Document version https://www.w3.org/2020/Process-2020915*. 2020.

3. https://www.nist.gov/system/files/discussion_draft_by-laws_v2.pdf
4. https://legal.ieee.org/compliance/record-management/ieee-metadata-standards-and-file-naming-convention-guidelines
5. Approved Revisions to UL Standards' Accredited Procedures – Approved by ANSI on February 24, 2014