

Date: August 18, 1992  
To: X3T9.2  
From: John B. Lohmeyer  
Subj: Proposed SPARC policy on Conformance Testing

SPARC proposes to include the following statement in the X3/SD-9 if approved by SPARC at its September 1992 meeting and subsequently by X3:

### **Conformance Testing (Draft)**

Users of standards have a significant interest in assuring that implementations of standards actually conform to those standards. This is true of virtually all users, e.g., whether they are product implementors, integrators or end users. In order to facilitate the testing of conformance to standards, the following principles apply within X3:

1. Standards should be absolutely clear on what constitutes conformance. X3 subgroups are encouraged to include a section within each standard that describes the meaning of conformance within the context of that standard. This would include, where appropriate, what is meant by levels or subsets, how unusual conditions are handled, whether extensions are permitted, how options relate to conformance, etc. The detailed provisions within the standard should be unambiguously written so that it is clear what constitutes conformance to each technical provision in the standard.
2. If it is deemed appropriate by the X3 subgroup, standards may include test methods such as abstract tests or test assertions, that define precisely what is meant by conformance. Users of the standard could utilize these in the development of actual test suites for product testing.
3. Development activities within X3 shall not be the subject of test suites used in product testing. This is outside the scope of the standardization process. Test suites are more appropriately developed by users of the standard according to the environment(s) in which the standards are utilized.