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Heroes

of standards and codes

EXCLUSIVE

Interview with the Senior Director, Next-Generation Standards with the Global Electronics Association

MEET

Chris Jorgensen

The Human Side of Standards

Meet Chris Jorgensen

Chris Jorgensen is Senior Director, Next-Generation Standards with the Global Electronics Association, the voice of the worldwide electronics industry. The Association advocates for smart policy, investment in research, technological innovation, workforce education and the integrity of the global electronics supply chain.

Chris leads and represents multiple standards initiatives within the IPC standards framework, with a focus on e-textiles, printed electronics, sustainability and digital manufacturing. His portfolio includes leadership of working groups and strategic initiatives related to digital manufacturing, supplier declarations, sustainability reporting, printed electronics and e-textiles, helping drive the Association's next-generation technologies and digital manufacturing programs.

With more than 20 years of experience in standards development, nonprofit leadership and strategic communications, Chris brings a collaborative and forward-looking approach to advancing the electronics industry. He holds a degree in Communications from Columbia College Chicago.

The Professional Journey: Describe Your Path

Design or Divine Intervention

When you look back at your entry into the standards world, was this a path you meticulously designed, or was it a "divine intervention" moment where you stumbled into a field you grew to love?

I came into electronics and standards development completely by accident. My original path out of college was software technical writing. When I answered an ad for a Technical Writer with IPC, now the Global Electronics Association, I quickly realized the job was not technical writing at all. It was serving as a staff liaison to standards development committees—a world I never knew existed.

That role shaped both my career and my adulthood.

Since taking that first position with IPC in 1997, I have spent all but two years of my career in nonprofit management and marketing across construction, medical, and foundations. Eleven years ago, I had the opportunity to return to the Association, and even after 14 years away, the role fit me like a glove. Standards were in my blood.

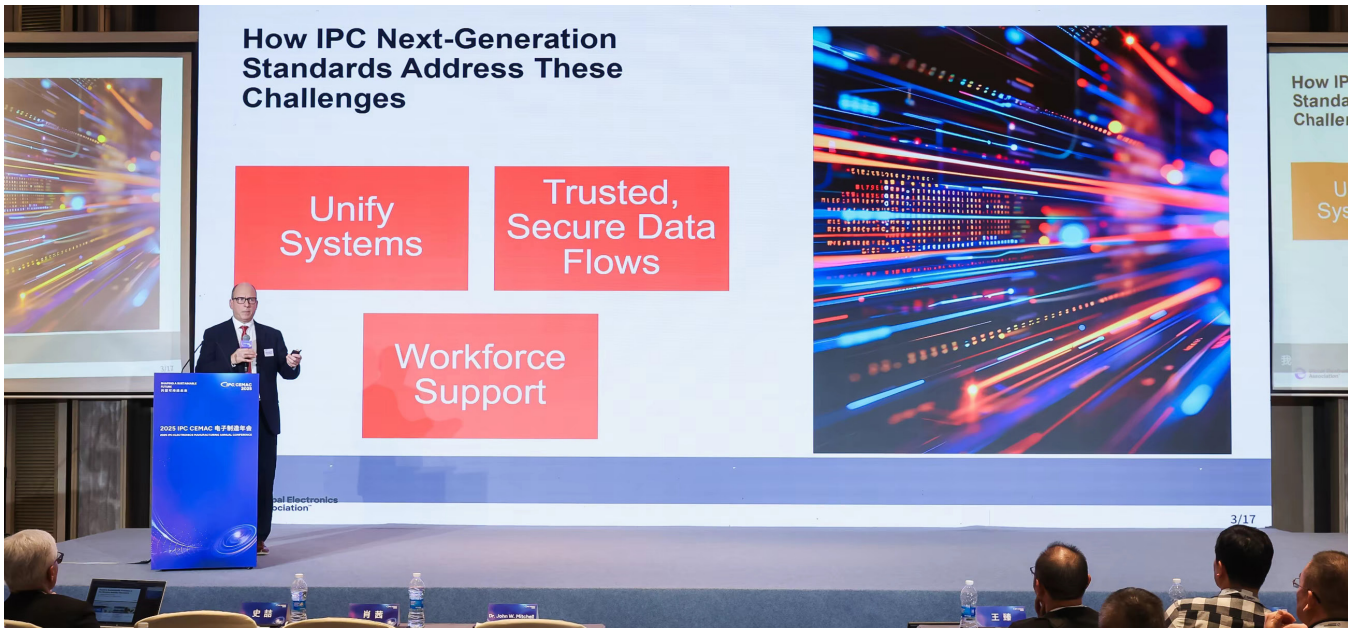
The Day-to-Day

For those who see the "Director" title but don't know the mechanics of your role, how would you describe your typical day-to-day work?

No two days are the same. It is a constant flow of ideas at different stages—some just forming, others moving through consensus, and others turning into guidelines, education, or events.

A lot of my job is connecting those dots: shaping new topics with small expert groups, helping teams move faster on early content, and making sure what we develop can scale globally.

"It is strategy, coordination, and problem-solving across multiple technologieas at once. "Spinning plates" is probably the simplest way to describe it."



The Professional Journey: Describe Your Path

The Global Electronics Arc

You've spent over 11 years with the Global Electronics Association across different eras. Can you describe an instance of an emerging technology area in the electronics industry that you've had to help move toward standardization?

One of the clearest examples is e-textiles.

This was an industry with real momentum, but it still felt like the Wild West. There was no shared terminology, no mutual agreement on requirements, and no test methods built for the technology.

As we brought the industry together, we treated it as a full pipeline: quickly developing guidelines to capture best practices, building standards to formalize requirements, and supporting education and networking. That reinforced how important it is to meet a challenge early and carry the work through to scalable solutions.

The SDO Evolution

Having been in the non-profit sector for nearly three decades, what is the biggest change in the "spirit" of the standards community compared to when you started?

One of the biggest changes I have seen is who is in the room—and how often we are "in the room."

When I started, participation was narrower and most committee work happened in person a few times a year. The shift to virtual changed that dramatically. It opened the door to people who otherwise could not have taken part and made the work far more continuous.

"What I find most rewarding is seeing groups of strangers from around the world turn into lasting professional relationships."

The Future of Standards: Technology Solutions & The Incubator

The Incubator Perspective

For those looking in from the outside, how would you describe the role of the Next-Generation Standards within the Association's Technology Solutions department, and what has your experience been like participating in that initiative?

I think of next-generation guidelines and standards as the emerging edge of our ecosystem—where we can move quickly, capture what industry is actually doing, and translate it into something structured and usable.

Instead of asking companies to wait for a fully developed document, we meet them where they are by capturing best practices, implementation approaches, and lessons learned in real time. The strongest concepts can then advance into formal standards, while others remain guidelines or supporting materials. It is not a replacement for traditional standards; it is a way to make them more relevant and better informed.

The Professional Edge

You work across technological solutions and are involved with the incubator. How does seeing the "emerging" side of tech through the incubator influence the way you approach established IPC standards?

Working on the emerging side through Technology Solutions has reinforced that the fundamentals of standardization do not change. Process, structure, and intended outcomes remain consistent. What changes is how early we engage.

Technology Solutions acts as a cross-technology incubator, helping industry develop solutions through standards, next-generation guidelines, education, conferences, and related programs. Its scope includes advanced electronic packaging, next-generation design, digital manufacturing, printed and additive electronics, and e-textiles.

Seeing technologies earlier in their lifecycle lets us anticipate what industry will need rather than reacting after the fact. Whether the topic is digital manufacturing, Digital Twins, or AI, the goal is the same: create trusted, repeatable frameworks.

The Future of Standards: Technology Solutions & The Incubator

The Industry Bridge

You've mentioned that SDOs need to get content to industry in a "tighter fashion." What is the biggest hurdle currently slowing that process down, and how is the Global Electronics Association working to streamline it?

The biggest hurdle is getting from a blank page to a meaningful first draft. That is where momentum is either built or lost.

We address that by working with small, focused expert groups—what we call A-Teams—to develop baseline content quickly. Technology Solutions helps by gathering subject matter experts, aligning terminology, and framing the problem before it enters the formal project process.

That combination—faster front-end development and structured validation through standards—helps us get useful content to industry faster.

The Technical ROI:

How do you describe the value for a company that chooses to engage with the standards development process at such an early stage?

At an early stage, companies are not just contributing to a document; they are helping define the direction of their industry.

Engaging through Technology Solutions or standards work gives them a seat at the table when key decisions are shaped—data structures, interoperability approaches, test methods, and reliability requirements. The return is not only technical; it is strategic. Companies can align their roadmaps with where the industry is headed and position themselves as leaders rather than followers.

The Balancing Act

Between your work in technology transfer and your involvement with next-generation initiatives, how do you personally maintain technical rigor while keeping pace with the rapid electronics industry?

For me, it comes down to separating pace from rigor.

> ***"Speed does not mean lowering the bar; it means adjusting how you get there."***

Technology Solutions enables rapid capture and organization of information, while the standards process ensures that what is published meets principles of openness, fairness, and consensus. It is less about choosing between speed and rigor and more about sequencing them correctly.

The Global Lens

How does the "incubator" mindset help the Global Electronics Association stay competitive on a global scale?

This mindset matters because technology no longer evolves in one geography at a time; it is happening everywhere at once.

By combining Technology Solutions with the Association's global infrastructure, we can capture regional innovation, align it into common frameworks, and scale it internationally. That positions us not just as a standards body, but as a global connector linking ideas, companies, and regions into a more unified ecosystem.

The Human Side of Collaboration

Committee Involvement

To clarify for our readers, what is the nature of your involvement with technical committees? Do you act as a facilitator, a strategic advisor, or a bridge between different working groups?

"All of the above. Staff liaisons are referee, project steward, and ambassador. We take seriously the time and effort our volunteers and their companies invest in standards work, and we ensure the final documents reflect committee intent and established procedures."

At the end of the day, their names and company names appear on those documents, not the staff liaison's. We take that responsibility seriously.

Navigating Innovation

The incubator environment often involves brilliant minds moving very fast. What are the "soft skills" needed to help navigate high-level technical discussions toward a final result without stifling that innovative energy?

Keep your ears open and your mouth on retainer. If you know the outcomes you need, discussions often surface ideas that get you there in ways you did not anticipate. By letting conversations flow rather than steering everything toward your own agenda, you create space for better ideas.

A good example is our digital manufacturing standards work. Several working groups sat under the same committee, but they were operating in silos. By bringing their leaders together, we discovered overlap that could have caused implementation issues in the field. That allowed us to shift to a more holistic, strategy-driven approach.

The Human Side of Collaboration

The Intangible Leader

Is there a skill you use every day in the standards world—perhaps from your marketing or communications background—that you never learned in a technical manual?

Be ready to pivot.

In a fast-changing and highly complex space like the electronics manufacturing ecosystem, you need to be not only open to change, but a steward of it.

The Power of Mentorship

Who was the mentor that opened the door for you in the SDO sector, and what is the most important lesson they taught you about leadership?

There are too many to name, but I will mention two: David Bergman, who hired me at the Association not once but twice, and Chris Mahaffey, who hired me at the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Their open-door philosophy—combined with the expectation that you first try to solve the problem yourself—and their direct management style shaped how I work and lead.

The Impact Project

Is there one specific project or tech launch you've been involved with where you walked away thinking, "This is exactly why these next-gen programs are so vital?"

There are many, but the clearest example is IPC-2591, Connected Factory Exchange (CFX). Its original purpose was to solve integration issues in the software communication used across electronics manufacturing lines.

Each step in assembling components onto a printed circuit board may involve hundreds of equipment models from dozens of suppliers. Every time a manufacturer set up a new line or swapped out equipment, they could spend enormous amounts of money and downtime getting software connected.

CFX created a standardized format for those equipment messages, allowing vendors to map proprietary software into a common framework and enabling plug-and-play connection in manufacturing environments.

As adoption has grown, CFX has become a baseline for the factory of the future, because whether the conversation is about AI, automation, or Digital Twins, it all depends on real-time data flow. CFX provides that.

More thoughts from Chris

The “Next-Gen” Pitch

How would you explain the importance of global electronics standards to a 7-year-old who just wants to know why their tablet works?

At social occasions, people lean in when I say “electronics,” and then the air comes out of the balloon when I say “standards.” It is a great way to avoid small talk.

“But if someone is genuinely interested, I explain it simply: all the different people and companies behind the scenes have to work together to make sure the electronics inside a tablet, car, or airplane just work. Standards create that baseline for reliability while helping keep costs down.”

The Tech Timeline

If you could go back to 1997 and give your younger self one piece of advice about the future of the electronics industry, what would it be?

“The more things change, the more they stay the same—but faster. You know that downtime you think you get after committee meetings and action items are done? Say goodbye to that.”

Rapid-Fire with Chris Jorgensen: The “Digital Frontier” Edition

1. *What is the most underrated tool in a standards professional’s toolkit?*
   CJ: Respect
2. *Early bird or night owl for your best strategic thinking?*
   CJ: Night for thinking, early for work
3. *Favorite city for an international industry meeting?*
   CJ: Munich
4. *Your “go-to” way to celebrate a major project milestone or successful launch?*
   CJ: On to the next
5. *What is the most common misconception people have about “Standards Development”?*
   CJ: That it stifles innovation
6. *Physical notebooks or digital tablets for your meeting notes?*
   CJ: Stopped taking handwritten notes in 2016
7. *AI in standards: Revolutionary help or something to approach with caution?*
   CJ: I’ll ask Claude and get back to you

Presented by:

ACCURIS

Mission-critical intelligence for modern engineering and supply chain organizations

Accuris is proud to champion the efforts of every individual who dedicates their expertise and time to the standards community. Our SDO Hero Campaign is dedicated to recognizing the profound societal value of consensus-driven standards - the essential foundation for a safer, smarter, and more sustainable world. We believe the true strength of this industry lies not just in the documents themselves, but in the human commitment of the staff and volunteers who create them. By spotlighting their stories, we aim to elevate the dignity of standards work, boost involvement by demystifying the process for future engineers, and reinforce the professional prestige associated with this vital craft. Accuris thanks the heroes of yesterday, today, and tomorrow for their unwavering dedication to integrity and innovation.

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