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***Governor's Task Force on  
Information Resource Management***

***Technology Policy 96-7***

**Subject:** Electronic Data Interchange

**Date:** April 12, 1996

**Adoption of Standards**

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To facilitate the exchange of information between agencies, and from State agencies to other entities such as businesses, other governments, not-for-profit organizations, etc., the State is establishing a policy regarding Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). The first component of this policy is the State adoption of the ANSI ASC X 12 Standards and the UN/EDIFACT International Standards.

**Electronic Data Interchange**

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Electronic data interchange is commonly defined as the computer-to-computer interchange of strictly formatted messages. EDI may be used as a quick, inexpensive, and safe method to transmit data among public agencies or between public, private or other firms which use unlike computer equipment.

EDI is significantly different from electronic mail or the sharing of files within a network, where both the sender and receiver (the "trading partners") must agree, in advance, upon the format of the document. With EDI, the trading partners agree on a set of standards; after which, when a trading partner *sends or receives* a document, EDI translation software automatically converts the document into the agreed-upon standard.

To use EDI, the State must adopt a set of standards which define message formats and the data elements within the messages. It is that standardization that makes possible the assembling, disassembling, and processing of the messages by computer.

**ANSI and UN/EDIFACT**

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The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a national organization which, through its Accredited Standards Committee X 12 (ASC X 12), has developed a set of standards for information exchange. These ASC X 12 standards are widely used by major corporations in the United States, and are currently the most important set of standards for EDI. In addition to ANSI, the United Nations/Electronic Document Interchange for Administration, Commerce and

Transportation (UN/EDIFACT) have established international standards for electronic data interchange. These are currently in use by thirty-seven countries. In 1997, the ASC X 12 standards and the UN/EDIFACT standards will be aligned.

## **Benefits**

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By adopting and integrating these standards, New York State will be positioned to share information within the State and with private firms consistent with conventional rules for standards development. These standards build on the success of private industry in implementing EDI, and thereby ensure the State's EDI investment is in accordance with a mature and tested methodology.

## **Preferred Policy**

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These standards represent a **preferred policy** for the State. In other words, they are not imposed on State agencies. Rather, agencies are encouraged to migrate to them over time. If an agency is about to develop a new system where the exchange of information is governed by these standards, we strongly suggest that these standards are implemented.

Agencies with any questions regarding this policy are asked to contact the Governor's Task Force on Information Resource Management at 518-473-5622.