



The Norwegian organizations IKT-Norge, Abelia and Norwegian Computer Society agree on an industry standard for professional skills

Soon it will be easier for purchasers of IT services to assess the expertise of employees or hired consultants. Three Norwegian IT organizations, Dataforeningen (Norwegian Computer Society), IKT-Norge and Abelia, have agreed to support EUCIP as a general industry standard for professional skills.

The majority of professions set standards which, when met, provide an indication of the skills and level of competence a worker possesses. You would probably be reluctant to let a person without a builder's certificate be the building contractor for your house. Even so, Norwegian businesses purchase IT services worth billions of kroner without requiring formal documentation of the competencies of the persons hired in to do the work.

The industry clearly wishes to address this problem. The Norwegian Computer Society, IKT-Norge and Abelia have therefore agreed to promote the European EUCIP standard as a general industry standard for IT skills.

"This is a big step forward, for both the industry and the industry's customers," says IKT-Norge's Per-Morten Hoff. "Certainly there are a number of certification programmes which document competence within specific products, but a general competency standard has been sorely missed."

Paul Chaffey, managing director of Abelia, also welcomes the new standard. "EUCIP is a common language for describing skills, and we will strongly recommend that our members start speaking this language," says Chaffey.

Geir Horn, president of the Norwegian Computer Society, is pleased for the support from the other organizations. "The Norwegian Computer Society aims to be the leading certification body for IT professionals in Norway, and this co-operation is a breakthrough in achieving this heady goal," says Horn.

Adoption of EUCIP implies significant cost reductions for the IT industry. Many companies have found it necessary to develop their own internal standards, and have found that they are of little value outside their own four walls.

"In Software Innovation we used millions of kroner on internal systems for describing the competence of each of our co-workers, without this being worth anything to the co-worker on the day he or she left the company," says Per Kveim, former chief executive of Software Innovation and now president of EUCIP Norge AS.

For those that employ IT workers or purchase IT services, EUCIP provides a more general view of competence than today's confusion of certifications for skills within specific products. A certification from EUCIP says much about a candidate's abilities, providing they fall in under one of the 21 job descriptions where EUCIP defines formal and practical competency requirements.

EUCIP (European Certification of Informatics Professionals) is developed by CEPIS, which is the umbrella organization for European computer societies. The EU Commission has given significant support to the development of this standard for categorization of IT professionals. The objective is to raise the level of competence, define the level of entry for IT professionals and aid recruitment to the IT profession.



The Norwegian Computer Society has an exclusive licence agreement for the programme in Norway and has established EUCIP Norge AS to administer the standard. IKT-Norge and Abelia acknowledge EUCIP as an industry standard and, through co-operation with the Norwegian Computer Society, are aiming to achieve the following goals:

- Recognize, document and protect industry standards for IT professionals
- Further develop a process for mapping and measurement of IT professionals' competencies
- Develop goal-oriented training plans and stimulate professional development
- Promote knowledge of the EUCIP standard within the media and public authorities
- Create enthusiasm for EUCIP as a general competency standard within the membership of the co-operating organizations
- Assist recognized educational institutions in developing EUCIP training programmes by identifying the industry's needs for skills development