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The CALENDARING & SCHEDULING CONSORTIUM

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 as passed by the House of Representatives contains an “energy saving” provision regarding daylight savings time. It calls for a change in start and end dates of daylight savings time (DST) observed in the United States, with the new DST period stretching from March to November. This change would take effect in March 2006 if the House language prevails over Senate language, which does not contain the extension.

If this legislation is approved, software and hardware calendaring and scheduling products based on the Internet Engineering Task Force’s iCalendar standard will need to be changed. Users of such products—universities, companies of all sizes, and many other types of organizations—as well as their suppliers will face a major challenge:

How can vendors efficiently issue “patches” to the problem in so short a time?
Additionally, how could their customers—with millions of end users—deploy those fixes in so short a time?

As a corollary, how can organizations in the U.S. that depend on such products make the necessary changes to remain synchronized with colleagues outside of the US?

To complicate matters, this generally affects any calendaring and scheduling product whether or not it’s based on the iCalendar standard. Anything that keeps a calendar, including cell phones, is potentially affected. Many embedded environmental systems such as building management systems, time-lock control, work-shift and time clocks, may also be affected. The problem will also affect any division the U.S. government itself that depends on a software or hardware calendaring solution.

Members of the Calendaring and Scheduling consortium, comprising both product vendors and end-user groups, are concerned about the proposed timing of this change.

It’s not a matter of whether the proposal is right or wrong. It’s a matter of practicality. The Consortium hopes that the bill will not go forward with the current language on daylight savings time. We suggest a simple delay of the effective date to insure that calendar and scheduling vendors and consumers have ample time to prepare for any changes. Without surveying a reasonable number of affected parties, we cannot offer an “ideal” effective date, but would be pleased to offer whatever information and expertise we have available.

The Calendaring and Scheduling Consortium is composed of ten universities, seven corporations, two foundations, and one research facility. More information is available at www.calconnect.org.

For further information or to discuss these issues, contact Dave Thewlis, Executive Director:
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