

# Memorandum

**To:** ACS Committee on Nomenclature, Terminology and Symbols

**C:** Peter Hartwell

**From:** Peter F. Rusch

**Date:** 20 August 2007

**Subject:** Project Status – Wiki for Nanotechnology Terminology

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One of the continuing interests of this Committee is the development of terminology for nanotechnology. As this field of the chemical and physical sciences burgeons, it is increasingly important to develop a robust, encompassing terminology to satisfy a variety of needs.

Presently, there are two approaches to this problem:

- The patent community is coining terms as required for patent filings in English as the U.S. patent laws permit the inventor to be his own lexicographer; and
- The traditional, consensus-driven standards organizations are approaching the problem with a few opening steps toward building a terminology.

Both of these approaches speak to the overwhelming need to develop some standardized terminology that serves the diverse needs of the nanotechnology community.

Efforts by this Committee have met with mixed success in spite of a nearly unanimous expression of interest in getting something accomplished. Unfortunately, the response of those invited to participate has been enthusiastic but ephemeral.

What is needed is a method that will expeditiously harness the enthusiasm of the larger community and allow a means for wide participation of the diverse constituencies with a stake in the outcome. Such needs are excellent examples of the compelling advantages of the social software known as “wiki.” Wiki<sup>1</sup> technology has been widely developed and deployed to bring together, using the Internet, geographically dispersed groups of people interested in the same topic. These groups are known as communities and are limited only in their ability to access the particular wiki established for a given purpose.

It is a happy coincidence that even though the nanotechnology community is far-flung it is extremely well-connected to the Internet and oriented to interaction with colleagues using Internet technologies. Therefore, the opportunity for this Committee is to sponsor, in the fullest manner possible, establishment of a wiki for nanotechnology terminology. The following is required at a minimum:

- Commitment of the Committee through some formal resolution;
- Securing of the appropriate social software (possibly Wiki Media);
- Securing the necessary computer resources for the software and Internet communication including maintenance;
- Installation of the software;
- Selection and appointment of an Editor to lead the project;
- Sufficient advertising to engage the nanotechnology community.

The balance of this report will describe efforts in these project tasks.

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<sup>1</sup> The word “wiki” derives from the Hawaiian language in which it means “quick.” It does not mean “what I know is..”

### ***Commitment of the Committee through some formal resolution***

This is a critical component of the overall project plan and it is expected that such formal approval and commitment will be in order upon receipt and discussion of this report. Part of this commitment will be a budget for certain expenses to be outlined later.

### ***Securing of the appropriate social software (possibly Wiki Media)***

There are many versions of wiki software. Selection criteria will depend upon the hardware resources secured for hosting both the software and the Internet connection. “Wiki Media” is a widely-used and supported software that may be the preferred choice.

### ***Securing the necessary computer resources for the software and Internet communication including maintenance***

At the recent ACS National Meeting in Chicago I had a brief but substantive conversation with Melody M. Voith, Director Web Strategy, at ACS Headquarters, to describe this project. As part of the “web initiative” of ACS this project is an example of the future connectivity needs of ACS members. She agreed that this was a possible experiment for the web initiative and agreed to meet with this Committee in Boston to learn more and plan future steps.

### ***Installation of the software***

No action on this task.

### ***Selection and appointment of an Editor to lead the project***

A project of this scope needs an appointed editor who is knowledgeable about both aspects: nanotechnology terminology and Internet social software. I have contacted Dr. Peter Hartwell, Master Scientist, Quantum Science Research, Hewlett-Packard Laboratories about accepting the post of Editor. Dr Hartwell is uniquely qualified for this responsibility as he is actively engaged in the commercial developments of nanotechnology. Furthermore, as an avocation, using his own computer resources he manages a wiki for a small community of game enthusiasts. Our conversations have demonstrated that the project is not only feasible but that it is likely to gain all-important support from the diverse groups of the nanotechnology community many of who are known personally to Dr. Hartwell.

### ***Sufficient advertising to engage the nanotechnology community***

No action on this task.

### ***Budget considerations***

The exact amounts are unknown at this time but can be estimated with some confidence. No income is planned. The expense items include but are not limited to:

Acquisition of wiki software and maintenance	\$
Advertising to the community	\$
Some travel monies for meetings	\$
Editor’s stipend	None