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Ecma Technical Committee 39 (TC39) coalesces on future direction of Web Programming Language

*Ecma TC39 will focus work on the next
ECMAScript standard, ES3.1 (ECMA-262 Edition
3.1)*

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Today, the Ecma International Technical Committee 39 (TC39), a standards body that influences implementations such as JavaScript, JScript and ActionScript, has announced it will focus work on the next ECMAScript standard, ES3.1 (ECMA-262 Edition 3.1), with full collaboration of all parties involved in the committee. Work on ES3.1 will unite the committee in its work to create the next Ecma JavaScript standard, targeting two interoperable implementations by early 2009 and to develop a roadmap to future editions of the standard (for more technical information, a [white paper](#) is available).

John Neumann, TC39 chair, worked with ES3.1 and ES4 principals including Dan Smith and Lars Hansen (Adobe), Brendan Eich (Mozilla), Mark Miller (Google) and Allen Wirfs-Brock (Microsoft), to unify the committee around shared values and a common roadmap ("Harmony") for the specification. While some members of TC39 favoured the ongoing effort called ES4 (ECMAScript version 4), a major fourth edition to ECMA-262, others advocated ES3.1 based on the existing [ECMA-262 Edition 3](#) (ES3) specification. The two factions have resolved to collaborate on the new ES3.1 as well as pave the way for the successor edition (currently unnamed).

Some previous work items pertaining to what was to be called ES4 will be rephrased to sustain consensus within the committee. For example, "classes" (originally an ES4 concept) will be based on existing ES3 concepts and combined with proposed ES3.1 extensions, to create a future ECMAScript standard containing classes (ES3.1 is not going to contain classes). Harmony was proposed to bring all interested parties into consensus, and thus required that some developments in ES4 be dropped, such as "namespaces". Some of the ideas going back to the first ES4 proposals in 1999 won't make it into the next ES standard. However, the benefit is collaboration on unified successor specifications to follow ES3, starting with ES3.1 and continuing after it with larger changes and improved specification techniques.

Brendan Eich (CTO of Mozilla) said "*Much work remains on 3.1 and beyond, but we are now on a good footing to move forward as a single committee*".

For more technical information about Harmony, please visit: www.ecma-international.org.

About Ecma International

Since its inception in 1961, Ecma International (Ecma) has developed standards for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Consumer Electronics (CE). Ecma is a non-profit industry association of technology developers, vendors and users. Experts from industry and other organizations work together at Ecma to develop standards. Ecma submits its work for approval as ISO, IEC, ISO/IEC JTC 1 and ETSI standards and is a frequent practitioner of "fast-tracking" of specifications through the standardization process in international standards organizations. Ecma publications can be downloaded free of charge from the Ecma International website www.ecma-international.org.

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