IEC/ISO 29500 Maintenance

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(GB Delegation)

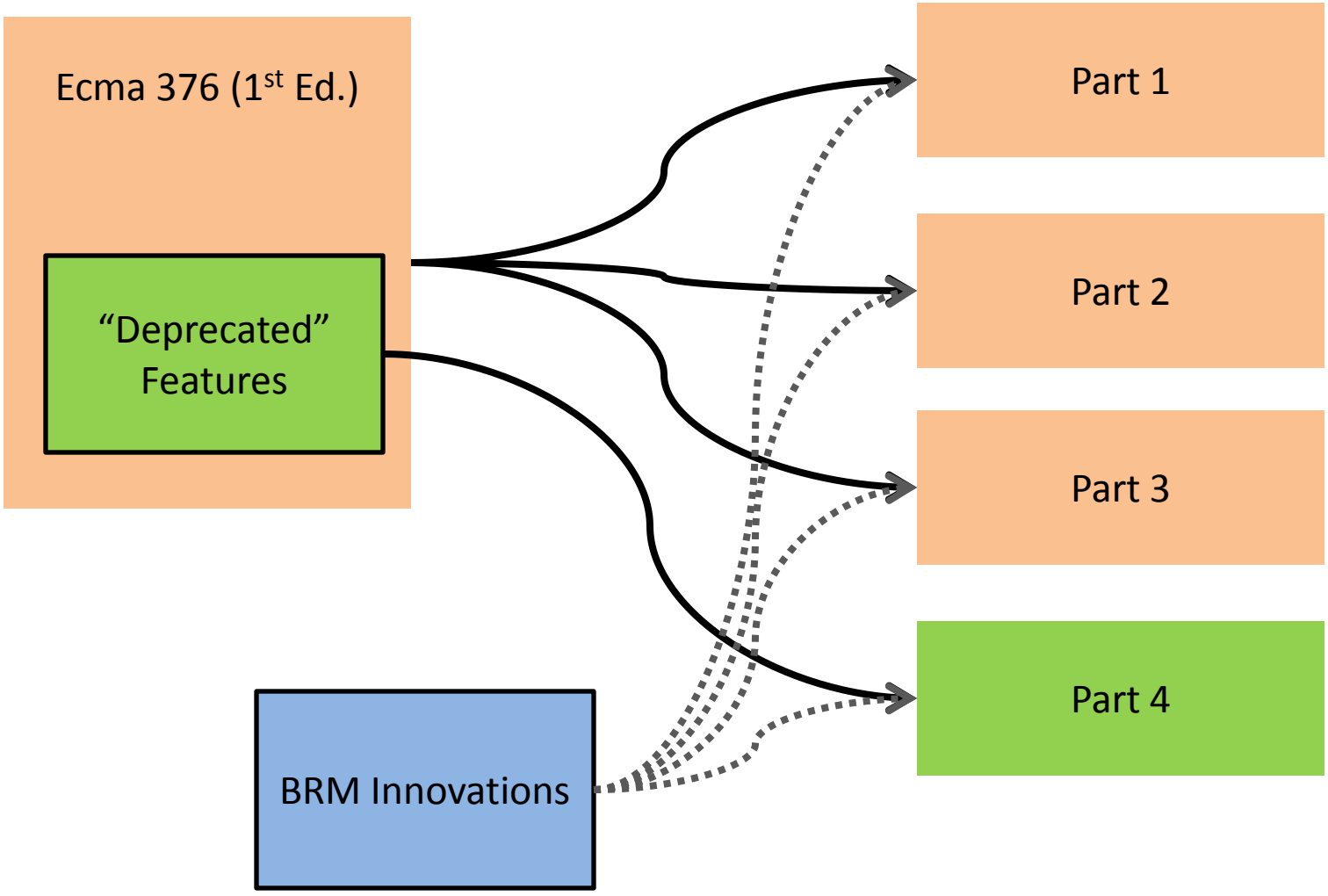
IS 29500: Four Physical Parts

- Part 1. Fundamentals and Markup Language Reference (5560 pages)
- Part 2. Open Packaging Conventions (129 pages)
- Part 3. Markup Compatibility and Extensibility (40 pages)
- Part 4. Transitional Migration Features (1464 pages)

IS 29500: Embodies Two Logical Specifications

- Transitional (aka “T”)
- Strict (aka “S”)
- Each has a distinct set of schemas
- But the schemas of T are a superset of the schemas of S
  - Mainly containing “legacy” phenomena such as compatibility settings, VML, etc.

How Ecma 376 was Split (simplified)



What is S; What is T?

- S is Parts 1,2 & 3
- T is a “virtual text”
  - Parts 1,2 & 3 …
  - … “patched” by Part 4 (N.B. Part 4 currently does not reference these other parts – a defect)
  - “Patching” is addition and alteration
  - T is hard to know

What is T For?

"The intent of this Annex is to enable a transitional period during which existing binary documents being migrated to DIS 29500 can make use of legacy features to preserve their fidelity, while noting that new documents should not use them. [...] This annex is normative for the current edition of the Standard, but not guaranteed to be part of the Standard in future revisions. The intent is to enable the future DIS 29500 maintenance group to choose, at a later date, to remove this set of features from a revised version of DIS 29500."

- Canadian BRM Resolution

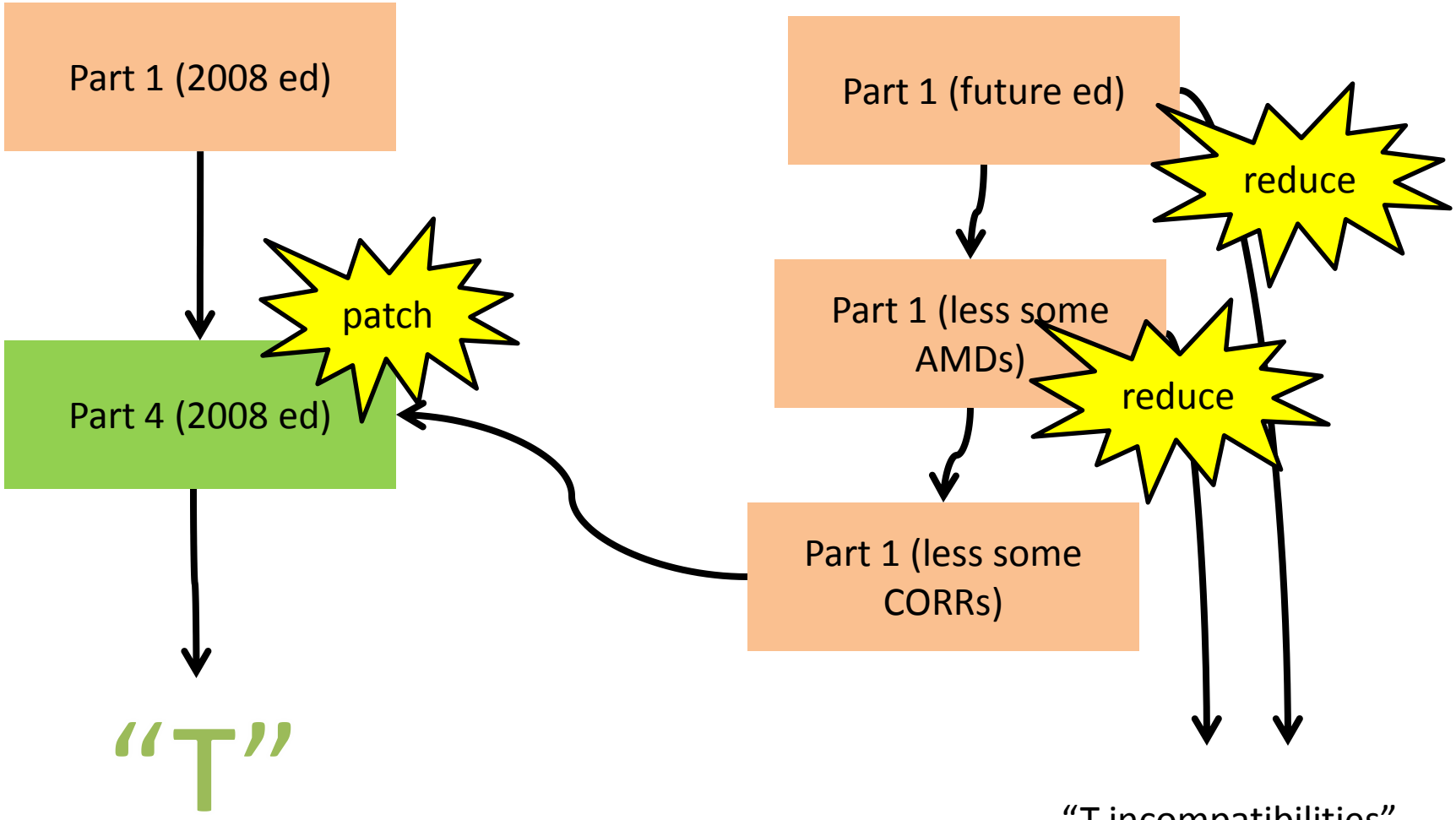
Seepage

- Some of the innovations applied to S also applied to T
- Examples:
  - Breaking change to allowed boolean values
  - Breaking change to date representation
  - Others (measurements? …)
- Was this accidental or intentional?

Scope Statement

ISO/IEC 29500 defines a set of XML vocabularies for representing word-processing documents, spreadsheets and presentations. On the one hand, the goal of ISO/IEC 29500 is to be capable of faithfully representing the preexisting corpus of word-processing documents, spreadsheets and presentations that had been produced by the Microsoft Office applications (from Microsoft Office 97 to Microsoft Office 2008, inclusive) at the date of the creation of ISO/IEC 29500. It also specifies requirements for Office Open XML consumers and producers. On the other hand, the goal is to facilitate extensibility and interoperability by enabling implementations by multiple vendors and on multiple platforms.

Onward Drafting: Finding T



Options

Clarifying T

- Do T & S correspond to the dual aims of the 29500 scope statements?
- The process by which users can arrive at a text of “T” needs to be clear; currently it is confused
- Each Part of 29500 must be an intelligible, stand-alone Standard
- In particular, Part 4 needs to reference Part 1

Reverting T

- At the BRM a number of alterations were made which affected Part 4
- These prevent T from fully realising its stated scope of “faithfully representing the preexisting corpus of word-processing documents”.
- Comments have already been submitted requesting some reversion of these decisions

Consolidating T

- Can T be moved from being a virtual text, to a concrete text?
- Patch T manually to create a consolidated text
- Not clear how this would be managed as a Process

Breaking the S Subset Relationship

- The S schema is currently a strict subset of the T schema
- Is this an accident of the process, or design intent?
- Maintaining the relationship means the Part 4 schema will need to be maintained to keep its superset status

Future Directions

- For future extensions
  - Should the same extension be applied to both T and S?
  - Should S should be extended, T be frozen?
- For redesign:
  - Should S changes be limited to better wording, elegance?

Stabilising T

- The 29500 scope statement envisages T being stabilised and withdrawn at some point
- For the standard to be stabilised it must have passed through one review cycle (JTC 1 Directives,[clause 15.6.1).
- In this review cycle the text would have to have been re-written to comply with ISO's formatting and verbal requirements (JTC 1 Directives, clause 13.4).
- Stabilised standards are corrected but not amended; no periodic review

Withdrawal?

- Another aspect of “maintenance” in JTC 1; possible outcome of periodic review
- The procedure for withdrawal of an IS is the same as that for preparation and acceptance; that is, an initial study shall take place in JTC 1. On the recommendation of JTC 1 or of the ITTF, the proposal for withdrawal shall then be submitted to NBs for approval, giving the same voting time limits as for the approval of an IS
- Should S or T be considered for withdrawal?

Conversion Considerations: S → T

- Should convertibility be required with the exception of the conformance attribute?
- String conversions (including namespace names and local names) should be good enough (no structural conversions should be required)
- Or is a need for structural conversions also acceptable?
- N.B. Conversions will not be always possible when S is extended and T is not.

Conversion Considerations: T → S

- Should lossless conversions always be possible?
  - Or will there be “sick cases”?
  - Or is there a special category of non-convertible phenomena resulting from BRM decisions?
- Can anything be stated as guaranteed?

Status of BRM Decisions

- Are BRM decisions in any sense sacrosanct?
- P-members interested in 29500 should participate in SC 34 / WG 4. SC 34 P-members are duty-bound to participate in SC 34 (a significant minority are shirking their obligations)
- Any amendment proposals will need to be considered in full JTC 1 ballots; so in no sense are NBs bypassed by WG decisions