

First Test Labs for Next-Generation Internet Protocol (IPv6) Are Accredited

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The first two laboratories have recently completed accreditation to provide testing services for the USGv6 Program. The USGv6 Program, developed at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, provides the basis for expressing U.S. government requirements for Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) technologies and for testing that commercial products meet those requirements. The availability of commercial testing services is an important step towards the U.S. government's use of USGv6 acquisition tools, beginning in July 2010.

The current [Internet Protocol](#) (IPv4) provides the basic communication service that inter-connects the global set of networks that comprise the Internet. Designed in the early 1970s, IPv4 is rapidly running out of unassigned, globally unique network addresses. IPv6 was designed by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) as a next-generation replacement for IPv4. With a vastly larger address space, IPv6 will enable the Internet to grow unbounded for the foreseeable future.

The USGv6 Program is intended to assist federal government IT users and acquisition authorities by providing a framework to express and test IPv6 requirements for U.S. government procurements.

ICSA Labs of Mechanicsburg, Pa., and the University of New Hampshire Interoperability Laboratory in Durham, N.H., were accredited by private accreditation bodies operating under the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). To become accredited under the USGv6 program, a test laboratory must

demonstrate the quality control processes that insure the accuracy, transparency and reproducibility of their testing results and must demonstrate their use of USGv6-approved test methods and test suites. The end goal is to assure vendors and USGv6 users that the conformance, interoperability and capability tests performed at one commercial lab are equivalent to those of any other accredited lab.

“The accreditation of two open test laboratories is a significant achievement for the USGv6 effort,” noted NIST’s Stephen Nightingale, who leads the testing program. “The existence of two accredited labs demonstrates that our test methods and means of inter-laboratory comparisons and quality control are viable; and in fact, we expect that additional commercial labs will come on-line in the future.”

For more information on the USGv6 Program see the "Frequently Asked Questions" page at www.antd.nist.gov/usgv6/usgv6-v1-faq.htm

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