OPEN DOCUMENT FORMAT

ODF ALLIANCE

ODF Alliance Newsletter
October 2010

The past several months have seen many very positive developments for ODF and open standards. Following is a summary of key ODF-related policy developments, events and resources. As always, the ODF Alliance thanks its members for their continued support in advancing ODF!

You can sign up to receive the free newsletter or download a PDF version:
http://www.odfalliance.org/mail_list.php

European Parliament Calls for Open Document Exchange Format

On September 21. 2010, the European Parliament plenary adopted a report on completing the internal market for e-commerce, highlighting the importance of an open document exchange format for electronic business interoperation. It also calls on the Commission to take concrete steps to support its emergence and spread.

The ODF Alliance applauds the vote in support of an Open Document Exchange Format as a key step towards bringing the European Union to the goal of removing dependency on products and technologies by using standardised formats that promise interoperability of document processing. Information exchange and document interoperability are critical elements of the internal market for e-commerce and therefore are a central issue in eGovernment strategy. Open standards-based interoperability through ODF offers real value to governments in terms of choice of IT solutions, savings, and long-term access to data.

View the Report: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?
type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A7-2010-0226&language=EN#title1

Alliance Paper Highlights What Governments Need to Know Re: Implementation of OOXML

Governments around the world increasingly recognize the importance of open ICT standards to encourage choice and interoperability, lower costs and spur innovation. To that end, it has now become commonly-accepted wisdom in the public sector that an open format should be used for government documents, and open standards-based solutions have become an essential feature of eGovernment strategies.

While this trend has resulted in the Open Document Format (ODF) becoming widely recognized and increasingly accepted by public sector authorities, there continues to be confusion and challenges with implementation of purported alternatives, such as Microsoft's Office Open XML (OOXML). In order to help inform public officials on this topic, the ODF Alliance has produced a paper that explains the current status of OOXML implementation, including the history that led to the standards development and standardization, and ultimately multiple different OOXML formats today.

Download the Paper: http://www.odfalliance.org/resources/OOXML_GovsNeedKnow_Oct2010.pdf

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British IT Leader Calls for Central Government to Embrace Open Standards and Open Source

On September 7, 2010, Liam Maxwell, a town councillor in the Royal Burough of Windsor & Maidenhead, released a report calling for the British Government to begin using open source and open standards to realize substantial savings and improved efficiency and citizen communication. The report, entitled "Better for Less," identifies the Government as having been "a hapless victim of vendor lock-in," and cautions against locking in its citizens. In determining how to reduce costs and improve services, the report identifies five principles, including a call for Opennness, citing that "Open Standards will drive interoperability, save money and prevent vendor lock-in." With respect to ODF, the report calls for the "the introduction of Open Document Format in all third party applications (which would produce savings of c £51m pa within 2 years in local government, £200m pa in central government)."

Argentina Becomes Latest Country to Consider Legislation on Open Standards and Document Sharing

In August, Eduardo Macaluse proposed legislation in the Chamber of Deputies in Argentina to require the implementation of open standards by the national public administration. The purpose of this legislation is to i.) ensure interoperability amongst all national Government agencies and offices, and between these and citizens, ii.) ensure the continuity of public information stored in digital formats and iii.) guarantee freedom of access to public information. Specifically the legislation calls for government to:

1 - store all digital information using formats that comply with open standards
2- use formats and protocols that comply with open standards when delivering information in digital formats
3 - accept information required from citizens in at least one format and that complies with an open standard and via, at least one, communication protocol that complies with open standards
4 - define "open standards" as any codification or information transfer specification that satisfies all of the following conditions:
(a) be universally available for access and implementation;
(b) does not force users to use products from specific vendors or groups ;

(c) allows freedom of implementation and use by any person without paying royalties, charges or obligations, except those that the certification bodies would require to certify compliance;
(d) does not favor any implementation above others, for any reason other than the compliance of technical standards of a implementation
5- submit the complementary regulations needed to gradually establish a harmonization of file formats that allows interoperability between National Government agencies and offices.

View the bill: http://www1.hcdn.gov.ar/proyxml/expediente.asp?fundamentos=si&numexp=5914-D-2010

ODF Implementors Gather in Brussels for 4th ODF Plugfest

On October 14th and 15th, vendors and open source projects supporting ODF met in Brussels for the 4th ODF Plugfest. Participating companies and organizations included IBM, Google, Microsoft, Oracle, AbiWord, the OpenDoc Society and the Document Foundation. This event was organized by the Federal State, the Regions and Communities of Belgium and hosted by the Flemish government.

Plugfests are an opportunity for engineers from ODF-supporting applications to come together and test interoperability scenarios and discuss ways of improving interoperability. Specific areas worked on in this plugfest including financial spreadsheet functions, digital signatures, document validation, change tracking and accessibility.

Interop Demo Illustrates Breadth and Power of ODF to Handle Enterprise, Academic and Gov. Needs

On September 2nd, OASIS held the ODF 1.2 Interoperability Demonstration to showcase support for ODF 1.2 and the interoperability across eight implementations. The Demo showcased both open source and commercial software applications processing ODF documents on the desktop, in the cloud and on mobile devices, including IBM Lotus Symphony, KOffice, OpenOffice.org Novell Edition, Oracle Open Office, the Python programming library IpOD, Nokia Maemo FreOffice, and Open Framework Systems (OFS).

The ODF 1.2 Interoperability Demonstration was held in conjunction with the OpenOffice.org Conference in Budapest, Hungary, at Central European University. Real-world documents, provided by scenario partner Louvre Labs, many containing images of artwork in various states of restoration, were programmatically extracted and stored as a new ODF presentation file. This new presentation file was reformatted with the lpOD Python programming library, applying templates provided by KOffice and OpenOffice.org for automated styling. The resulting ODF file was read and edited by a number of desktop ODF applications including Oracle Open Office and KOffice. The edited document were then reviewed by a colleague using a Nokia N900 smart phone. By accessing the embedded RDF metadata, including the author's vCard data, the N900 automatically connected to the author where a discussion completed the review and approval process.

The Interoperability Demo provided a great opportunity to demonstrate how open standards are implemented and supported throughout a wide range of products. The demonstrations illustrated the breadth and power of the format to handle enterprise, academic, and government needs. With the range of supporting software, the Demo clearly highlighted the modern productivity application support for ODF users of all needs and abilities. Additionally, the Demo illustrated that ODF 1.2 provides a solid foundation for expanding the ODF application ecosystem to serve a broader range of business users and consumers.

See the OASIS press release here: http://opendocument.xml.org/news/oasis-interop-at-ooocon-features-eight-odf-12-implementations