



Business Value for Adopting a Single Document Format

More isn't always better

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Open standards vs. Open source

- Many people who have not done software development are confused between “open standards” and “open source”: they don’t know what code looks like and what you do with it.
- A standard is like a blueprint: it tells you what you must do if you actually get around to building something.
- An **open** standard is one that is developed and maintained in a particularly **transparent** way with **community** involvement, and is “freely” **available** and **implementable**.
- **Open** source is code, actual concrete software, and it may **implement** open standards.
- Open source is developed and maintained in a particularly **transparent** way with **community** involvement, and is “freely” **available**.
- ODF is an open standard, OpenOffice is an open source application

The effect of open standards

- Standardization drives software interoperability and breaks the old-style dependence on proprietary methods and trade secrets.
- This builds a strong foundation on which others can quickly build and innovate.
- When the playing field gets leveled in this way, we get increased competition with new people and ideas entering the marketplace.
- Standardization is scary to those who are afraid of losing marketshare or cannot execute well in such an open world.

Open standards accelerate economic growth

Roadmap for
Open ICT Ecosystems

Berkman
Berkman Center for Internet & Society
at Harvard Law School

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Plan by 13 Nations Urges Open Technology Standards

By **STEVE LOHR**
Published: September 9, 2005

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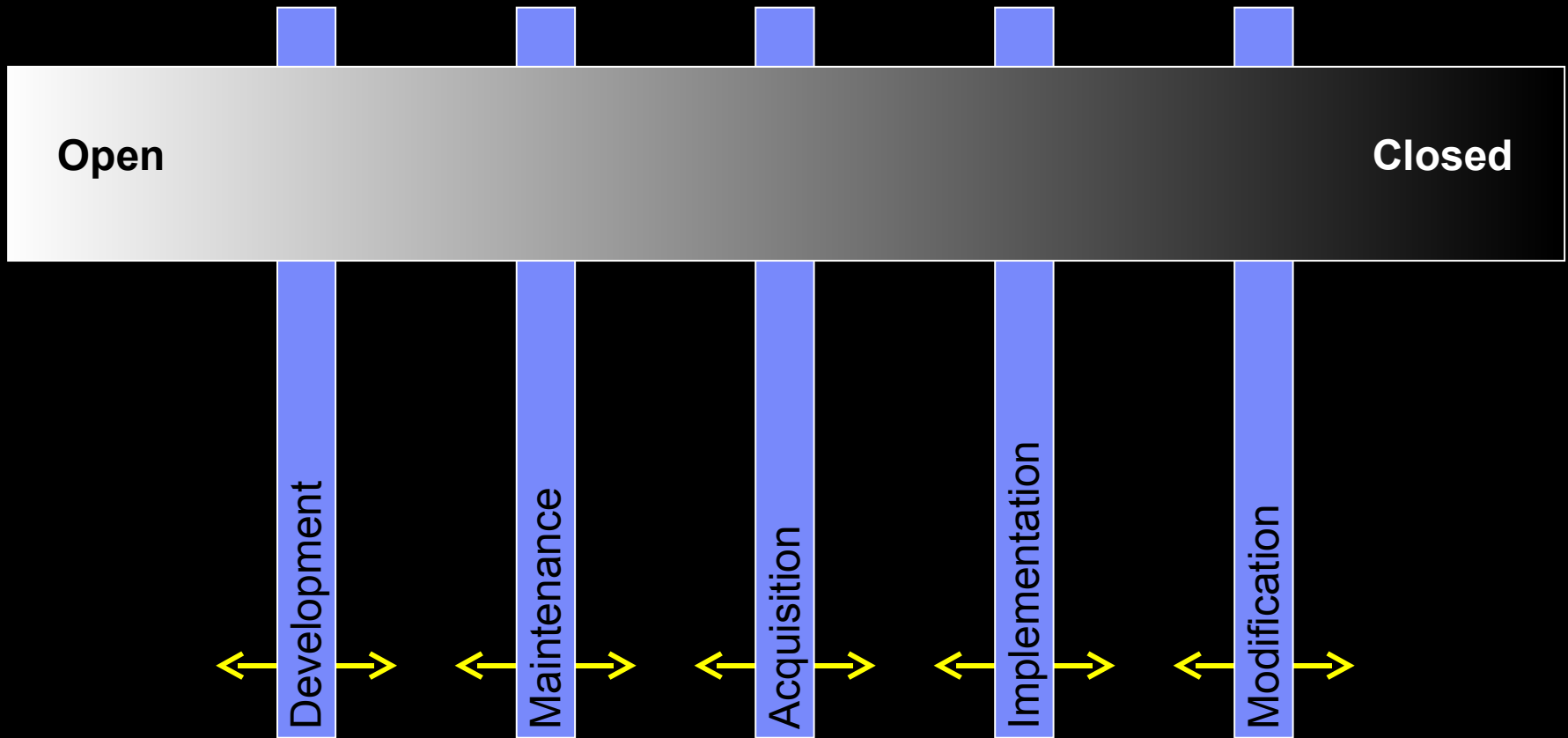
In a report to be presented at the World Bank today, a group that includes senior government officials from 13 countries will urge nations to adopt open-information technology standards as a vital step to accelerate economic growth, efficiency and innovation.

Readers' Opinions
Forum: [Technology and the Internet](#)

The 33-page report is a road map for creating national policies on open technology standards, and comes at a time when several countries - and some state governments - are pursuing plans to reduce their dependence on proprietary software makers, notably **Microsoft**, by using more free, open-source software.

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/epolicy/>

What does 'open' mean?



ODF vs OOXML: Brief comparison

- Open Document Format (ODF)
 - based on open source OpenOffice.org format
 - developed by OASIS with input from several vendors, over several years
 - about 700 pages long
 - leverages many other standards such as MathML and SVG
 - approved and published as an ISO Standard in May 2006: ISO/IEC 26300

- Office Open XML (OOXML)
 - developed by Microsoft for MS Office 2007
 - over 6000 pages long
 - encumbered by proprietary dependencies
 - standardized by ECMA in December 2006 in less than a year with the constraint of producing a standard compatible with Microsoft's product
 - failed ISO vote on September 2nd, 2007 with thousands of comments from countries all over the world

The raison d'etre of OOXML

- A desperate attempt at derailing ODF's adoption and prolonging Microsoft's stronghold
- 3 phases:
 - 1) Microsoft ignored ODF
 - 2) Microsoft tried to discredit ODF
 - 3) Microsoft tried to get OOXML rubber stamped as an ISO standard
- Next phase?
 - Microsoft will keep pushing for OOXML to be labeled as an ISO standard
 - Microsoft will claim that it is a standard no matter what

Two standards: A very bad idea

- Microsoft two standards will give people more choice. This is simply not true!
- How eager are you to go buy an HD-DVD player and a Blu-ray DVD player to be able to play all movies?
- How do you like only being able to IM people using the same IM software (AIM, Yahoo! Messenger, MSN, etc.)?
- Two standards would help no one but Microsoft and would lead to increased expense, complexity, lack of interoperability, and consumer inconvenience.
- We need one standard—ODF—and many, many applications that support it in a first class way.



Tim Berners-Lee on Open Standards

It is the fact that we standardized around one globally relevant standard “HTML” that allowed the web to take off.

“It was not only the fact that it is standard, but the fact that it is open and the fact that it is royalty-free.

So what we saw on top of the web was a huge diversity and different business which are built on top of the web given that it is an open platform.

If HTML had not been free, if it had been proprietary technology, then there would have been the business of actually selling HTML and the competing JHTML, LHTML, MHTML products. Because we wouldn't have had the open platform, we would have had competition for these various different browser platforms, but we wouldn't have had the web. We wouldn't have had everything growing on top of it.

So I think it very important that as we move on to new spaces ... we must keep the same openness that we had before. We must keep an open internet platform, keep the standards for the presentation languages common and royalty free. So that means, yes, we need standards, because the money, the excitement is not competing over the technology at that level. The excitement is in the businesses and the applications that you built on top of the web platform.”

Remarks

- “It's open, it's in XML” is a fallacy
- Office 2007 will not comply with DIS 29500 / OOXML
+ Microsoft already announced that they weren't tied to the standard...
- Many so called OOXML applications are merely using Microsoft's DLL or are very incomplete
- ODF enables competition between office application vendors, OOXML is about promoting Microsoft Office as a hub
- OOXML does nothing for your legacy documents
- Adopting OOXML is effectively moving to a new format
 - Costs involved are similar to those of switching to ODF plus the license fees

Summary

- Not all standards are equally “open”
 - One format = Lower complexity & cost, increased competition & choice of applications
 - Multiple formats = Higher complexity, higher cost, less real choice.
 - Both OOXML and ODF are new formats
 - ODF is an ISO standard
 - OOXML has been discredited
 - Unlike OOXML, ODF is an open standard
 - ODF is the only format that will break Microsoft's lock-in
-
- It's YOUR information, take control over it!
 - **The decision to move to ODF is about citizens and governments winning.**

For more detailed information ...



ODF Business Case Toolkit:

A Guide To Governments On Evaluating the
Cost of Moving to ODF Compliant Applications

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<http://www.odfalliance.org/pubs/BusCaseToolkit.pdf>