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TO: Cabinet Office / Standards Hub

From the page:

<http://standards.data.gov.uk/proposal/sharing-collaborating-government-documents>

CHALLENGE: SHARING OR COLLABORATING WITH GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

First of all, a lot of thanks to the Cabinet Office for organising this important consultation / challenge.

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This opinion does not contain:

- any business secrets
- any trade secrets
- any confidential information.

This opinion is public.

The text of the opinion can added to a relevant web page.

Annex 1 holds information about disclaimers and copyright.

Best Regards,

Jukka S. Rannila
citizen of Finland

signed electronically

[Continues on the next page]

40

41 **1. Some background**

42

43 This opinion is about following standards:

44

45 1) ODF 1.1 - ISO/IEC 26300: 2006/Amd 1: 2012 Open Document Format for Office
46 Applications (OpenDocument) v1.1

47 2) ODF 1.2 - Open Document Format for Office Applications (OpenDocument) Version 1.2

48

49 I will EXCLUDE discussion about the following standards

50

51 3) HTML 4.01 - ISO/IEC 15445:2000 Information technology - Document description and
52 processing languages - HyperText Markup Language (HTML)

53 4) HTML5

54

55 However, we can not discuss about ODF without some considerations about the following:

56

57 5) Standard ECMA-376: Office Open XML File Formats (OOXML)

58 6) ISO/IEC 29500 – standards series, based on ECMA-376

59

60 Following web pages should be consulted, when discussing ODF / OOXML

61

62 1-2)

63 Technical Committee

64 OASIS Open Document Format for Office Applications (OpenDocument) TC

65 https://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=office

66 5-6)

67 Standard ECMA-376: Office Open XML File Formats

68 <http://www.ecma-international.org/publications/standards/Ecma-376.htm>

69 7)

70 Freely Available Standards – ISO – ISO - International Organization for Standardization

71 <http://standards.iso.org/ittf/PubliclyAvailableStandards/index.html>

72

73 All relevant standards are listed (7) on the ISO web page.

74

75 **2. Amount of the documents and quality of the documents (ODF and OOXML)**

76

77 From the ISO web page (7) we can a download following documents related to 26300 series:

78 ISO/IEC 26300:2006

79 ISO/IEC 26300:2006/Amd 1:2012

80 ISO/IEC 26300:2006/Cor.1:2010

81 ISO/IEC 26300:2006/Cor.2:2011

82

83 In short: there is the base standard, one amendment and two corrigenda. Now we can add the
84 number of pages in these documents:

85
86 728 pages: ISO/IEC 26300:2006
87 108 pages: ISO/IEC 26300:2006/Amd 1:2012
88 10 pages: ISO/IEC 26300:2006/Cor.1:2010
89 13 pages: ISO/IEC 26300:2006/Cor.2:2011

90
91 All together **859** pages – the **26300** series

92
93 From the ISO web page (7) we can a download following documents related to 29500 series:

94
95 5030 pages: ISO/IEC 29500-1:2012
96 138 pages: ISO/IEC 29500-2:2012
97 46 pages: ISO/IEC 29500-3:2012
98 1550 pages: ISO/IEC 29500-4:2012

99
100 All together **6764** pages – the **29500** series

101
102 However, ISO web page (7) contains also Electronic inserts for the 29500 series, and those
103 inserts contain hundreds of different documents; Altogether those electronic inserts are 6,64
104 Mb.

105
106 **3. Amount of the documents and quality of the documents should be manageable!!**

107
108 As we can see, the quantity and quality of the documents vary in those two standards (ODF and
109 OOXML).

110
111 Those two standards (ODF and OOXML) are meant fot the same functionality: Sharing or
112 collaborating with (government) documents.

113
114 IF Cabinet Office decides something for OOXML, the quality and quantity for OOXML
115 conformance is a serious issue; Is there enough market support for OOXML?

116
117 **4. Conformance with OOXML (Office Open XML JTC 1/SC 34/WG4)**

118
119 First we should consult the following web page:
120 <http://www.jtc1sc34.org/wg4/> (Office Open XML JTC 1/SC 34/WG4)

121
122 This working group 4 is dedicated for OOXML maintainance.

123
124 From web page of the WG 4 there is a link for the following web page:

125 <http://www.29500sc34comments.org/>
126 However, this link is **not working**. This missing web page should be about defect reports related to
127 the 29500 standard series.

128
129 Therefore, we have to look indirectly the defect report from the search page:

130 http://lucia.itscj.ipsj.or.jp/itscj/servlets/ScmDoc10?Com_Id=w4

131 From this web page we can select “Defect reports”. There are fourteen (14) different “Defect
132 reports” for OOXML:

133
134 The latest “Defect Report” is the document with number 0138.
135 <http://kikaku.itscj.ipsj.or.jp/sc34/wg4/archive/sc34-wg4-2010-0138.zip>

136 This latest “Defect Report” contains 1018 pages of 347 defects.

137
138 What I am actually saying? The conformance of OOXML means dealing with a numerous list of
139 different defect reports (hundreds in other words). It is unclear to me, what is the timetable for
140 dealing with ALL current defects and possible NEW defects.

141
142 If the Cabinet Office decides something about the OOXML conformance, the Cabinet Office has to
143 be very clear about the current defect reports with the conformance.

144
145 Since the actual timetable for correcting ALL current defects in OOXML is unclear, this means that
146 the Cabinet Office has to be very specific in requests for proposals, i.e. the actual version of
147 OOXML and the actual defect reports, which affect the conformity of OOXML.

148 149 **5. Standardisation efforts for OOXML and ODF (JTC 1/SC 34)**

150
151 Personally, I attended JTC 1/SC 34 working group meetings (WGs 1, 4 and 5) in Helsinki (14-17
152 June 2010). I have written an opinion about the meeting
153 http://www.jukkarannila.fi/lausunnot.html#nro_24

154
155 Both ODF and OOXML have their own problems: that is my conclusion from the meeting(s).

156
157 Personally, I made the conclusion in June 2010, that ultimate winner of ODF and OOXML
158 standardisation efforts will be PDF (Portable Document Format).

159
160 25 February 2014 I can conclude, that PDF is still the ultimate winner (situation from June 2010 to
161 February 2014).

162
163 The practical reality is, that PDF has gained so much support, that it is a de facto and partly de jure
164 standard for viewing (government) documents.

165
166 PDF can handle situation with non-editable documents, and therefore PDF should be endorsed in
167 the first phase.

168 169 **6. Selecting internal document format for internal usage**

170
171 Based on previously highlighted problems, I have made the conclusion, that ODF has LESS
172 problems than OOXML.

173
174 ODF is NOT a perfect standard, but it has several advantages:

- 175 1) the page amount is manageable (859 vs. 6764 pages)
176 2) the number of defect reports is manageable when using ODF
177 3) It should be easier to conform to ODF – less pages and less defect reports.
178

179 **7. Selecting ODF for internal usage and external usage (Cabinet Office)?**

180

181 The practical reality in this case (standards endorsed by the Cabinet Office) is, that the Cabinet
182 Office has to be in touch with innumerable stakeholders in the near and distant future. Therefore,
183 the Cabinet Office using internal document format means, that some internal documents will
184 ultimately distributed outside.
185

186 Like said before, PDF can handle situation with non-editable documents.
187

188 Based on these two main dimensions, i.e. number of pages and number of defects, I have to
189 conclude, that ODF will have more advantages when compared to OOXML:
190

191 However, I have reiterate, that ODF is not perfect. PDF is still the winner.
192

193 **8. Creating possible test suite for ODF conformance**

194

195 Since ODF is not perfect, the Cabinet Office can use an existing test suite for ODF conformance or
196 develop their own test suite of ODF conformance.
197

198 This proposed test suite of ODF should take care of reported defects in ODF.

199 This proposed test suite should take care of specific needs for the Cabinet Office usage.
200

201 With this test suite for ODF can different stakeholders conform their products to the specific needs
202 for the Cabinet Office usage.
203

204 Creating or selecting a specific test suite for ODF conformance means, that in public procurement
205 there is fair requirements for different vendors, since the test suite is crafted to the Cabinet Office
206 usage.
207

208 **9. Instructing stakeholders to use ODF format**

209

210 The practical reality is, that the Cabinet Office will receive documents in several forms, e.g. RTF,
211 DOC, TXT, ODF and OOXML. Therefore, the Cabinet Office can convert those documents to ODF
212 in several cases. It can be concluded, that it will take years of educating different stakeholders to
213 use ODF as the selected format for sharing or collaborating with government documents.

214 Therefore, the Cabinet Office must have a clear marketing/educating strategy for ODF usage.
215

216 **10. Good luck!!**

217

218 This opinion is quite limited, and hopefully other opinions will result some constructive ideas for
219 selecting standards for sharing or collaborating with government documents.

219

220

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222

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262



1 Based on the Finnish three-party system there is a phenomenon called extreme-centre in Finland. The 2011 parliamentary elections in Finland challenge the three-party system, since three "old" parties were not traditionally as the three largest parties. The is now a "new" party as the third largest party. We all must remain being interested about this new development in Finland.