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DIS29500

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The Trinidad and Tobago Computer Society (TTCS) has submitted its recommendation regarding OOXML to the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) on March 6th, 2008. You can view the PDF at <http://www.tcsweb.org/articles/computer-laws/TTCS-recommendation-on-DIS29500.pdf> (PDF ; 201K)

About DIS29500

DIS 29500 refers to Draft International Standard #29500 which is currently the subject of the fast-track standardisation process at the ISO/IEC JTC1.

This draft seeks to make the Office Open XML also known as OOXML or OpenXML format (created by Microsoft) an international standard for electronic document formats.

The DIS29500 specification that was submitted to ISO for a vote on September 2007 can be downloaded from: <http://www.ecma-international.org/publications/standards/Ecma-376.htm>

it has several parts :

Office_Open_XML_overview.pdf
 Office_Open_XML_Part1_Fundamentals.pdf
 Office_Open_XML_Part2_OpenPackagingConventions.pdf
 Office_Open_XML_Part3_Primer.pdf
 Office_Open_XML_Part4_MarkupLanguageReference.pdf
 Office_Open_XML_Part5_MarkupCompatibilityExtensibility.pdf

The DIS29500 specification is around 6,000 pages.

In a September 2007 ballot, ISO/IEC national body members were called upon to vote. The draft version failed to obtain the number of votes required for it to be accepted as a standard. The Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), which became a P-status voting member before the vote, cast an "abstain" vote.

After the September 2007 vote at ISO, there were over 3,000-3,500 comments from National Bodies ; you can view those on sites like <http://www.dis29500.org/>

On January 15th, 2008, ECMA has submitted its disposition of comments/changes to DIS29500 to ISO after ECMA's review of the 3,522 National Body comments raised on the DIS 29500 ballot in September 2007. That document is 2,293 pages, you can see a summary of what was changed at : http://www.ecma-international.org/news/TC45_current_work/Proposed+dispositions+for+National+Body+comments+on+DIS+29500+complete.htm

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Articles

Here are several miscellaneous computer related articles, opinions and essays by fellow TTCS members.

MeetingNotes

Summary of past TTCS meetings.

About the TTCS

About the Trinidad and Tobago Computer Society, what we do and how to join!

TTCS website

TTCS blog

SoftwareLinks

Collection of software links. Now kept at del.icio.us

Recent Activity

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Note this document can be found at: <http://www.itscj.ipsj.or.jp/sc34/def/0980c.htm> for ISO member bodies ; the name of the document is DIS29500-2008-002.pdf
A Google Search turned up an un-official copy via : <http://www.nooboxml.org/> and <http://www.glove.org.ve/extras/DIS29500-2008-002.pdf> (PDF ; 19.1MB)
Some of the concerns posted to the [TTCSDiscussionlist](#) appears to be addressed.

ECMA's disposition of comments/changes to DIS29500 will be considered at the BRM (Ballot Resolution Meeting) to be held in Geneva at the end of February 2008. See the BRM FAQ at : <http://www.jtc1sc34.org/repository/0932.htm>. Also see the [ISO's press release about the BRM](#) (20-02-2008)

A Draft Agenda of the Ballot Resolution Meeting (released 2008-01-24) has been posted by SC34 : <http://www.itscj.ipsj.or.jp/sc34/open/0933draft-rev1.htm>

After this BRM, National Bodies which voted in September 2007 (and thus the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards) will have an opportunity to change their September 2007 vote within 30 days to either approve, disapprove or abstain.

Background/related links about DIS29500

[Wikipedia entry on DIS 29500](#) - gives some background of the controversy behind DIS29500.

[ODF vs. OOXML and the Future of the Great Powers of IT](#) - An **EXCELLENT**, informative article on the background behind document standards, the battle between Microsoft and its rivals, the history of ODF and OOXML at ISO and possible outcomes of the standards battle. A [PDF version of this article](#) (PDF ; 258K) is available.

[Groklaw's collection of resources regarding OOXML and ODF](#) - lots of information here

[ECMA Press release on the completion of dispositions of National Body comments on DIS29500](#) (2008-01-14) : "The ISO/IEC DIS 29500 Project Editor, with the help of [Ecma TC45](#), is publishing the Project Editor's Report of Proposed Dispositions. This completes TC45's review of the 3,522 National Body comments raised on the DIS 29500 ballot in September, and its preparation of proposed dispositions in support of the Editor."

[Brian Jones: Open XML Formats](#) - Brian Jones is a program manager of MS Office at Microsoft. His blog 's primarily deals with OpenXML and mentions some of the changes being made to DIS29500 that will be submitted to ISO before the BRM. Some of the blog posts :

- [Mapping documents in the binary format \(.doc; .xls; .ppt\) to the Open XML format](#) . (2008-01-16)
- [500+ national body comments posting today](#) (2007-12-21) - post describes some of the changes to DIS29500 due to ECMA's consideration of ISO comments from Sept 2nd, 2007

[Alex Brown blog](#) - the SC34 convener of the DIS29500 BRM

[LWN.net : Gnome and OOXML](#) : article about GNOME's involvement with OOXML

[YouTube OpenXML channel](#) - videos from Microsoft which has various videos regarding OpenXML including demos and interviews.

TTBS activities in preparation for voting on DIS29500

The Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) has setup a IT committee comprising of organisations/groups outside of the TTBS which will advise/recommend on IT related ballots that the TTBS has to vote on due to its Participatory status. The Trinidad and Tobago Computer Society (TTCS) was invited to join the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards IT committee to work on ISO/IEC JTC 1 matters in November 2007 : <http://ttcs.wordpress.com/2007/11/14/ttcs-invited-to-trinidad-and-tobago->

[bureau-of-standards-it-committee-to-work-on-isoiec-jtc-1-matters/](#)

The TTBS will be having a forum on DIS29500 on February 19th, 2008 to provide a wider source of information about OpenXML and guide TTBS in finalizing a formal position on DIS29500.

At the recent committee meeting on Thursday 31st January, 2008, the idea for a forum hosted by the TTBS was scrapped.

Debate within the committee has focused on :

The criteria can/should be used to evaluate OpenXML and other ISO standards and how to quantify/measure whether such standards have met the criteria.

At the 7th IT committee meeting on Thursday 21st February 2008, the following deadlines were established :

March 6th, 2008 is the final day for submission of comments to TTBS by the IT committee members on the OOXML standard.

The

Comments submitted should clearly indicate the final position.

March 13th, 2008 is the date for the next TTBS IT committee meeting to finalize a committee position on this standard.

TTBS will indicate its position by March 20th, 2008.

Proposed criteria to evaluate OpenXML by the TTBS

This list was first circulated on 2008-01-31.

The following is a proposed list of criteria which can be used to evaluate the proposed OOXML Standard to determine if it can be considered an "open standard".

Open Life-Cycle

A format development process having an open life-cycle means the format is evolved in a fashion that is open to public and where all participants, individuals as well as companies, have a voice in consensus decision-making on the standard's technical make-up. An open standard should be platform and vendor-neutral. Multiple implementors working on multiple platforms is essential.

Open Availability

An open format is published in its entirety in a specification document which is freely available and easy to comprehend. Open Availability also means that a format is freely available for implementation in software.

Multiple Implementations

An open document format can and will be *designed in* to many different software applications without practical, technical, legal or other impediments.

From a different perspective it is fair to say that an *open* format has the characteristics that attract multiple implementations. If one had no other way to tell, the format specification with the greater number of complete implementations likely follows open principles more rigorously and will better deliver information free-flow between applications and platforms.

Interoperability Across Different Systems

Perfect interoperability across different systems means a format can be fully implemented in any application, regardless of the platform or system on which that application operates. Every respective system would be able to access a document's content and layout parameters to provide perfect document fidelity to the original.

While neither ODF or OOXML offers perfect interoperability, we can judge each one's performance based on its proximity to perfection as well as its potential to reach a high practical level of interoperability for business processes. It is sufficient that an open document format should be easily read, authored and

edited from within different system environments and across different applications. Content should be transmitted without loss and presentation layout should be rendered with fidelity by alternative applications operating on different platforms.

Background/related links about ISO/IEC JTC1 SC34

The TTBS became P-status voting member in ISO/IEC JTC1 SC34 around July 2007.

ISO/IEC JTC 1 Directives, 5th Edition, Version 2.0 : <http://www.jtc1sc34.org/repository/0725c.htm>

Upcoming standards in SC34 that TTBS has to vote on

Since December 2007, the JTC1 SC34 website is now located at <http://www.itscj.ipsj.or.jp/sc34/>

The list of proposed ISO standards in SC34 which require Trinidad and Tobago to consider and vote on because of its recent Participatory Status is now located at : http://lucia.itscj.ipsj.or.jp/itscj/servlets/ScmBl10a?Com_Id=34

Before December 2007, upcoming ISO standards which require Trinidad and Tobago to consider and vote on because of its recent Participatory Status were located at: http://www.jtc1sc34.org/document/secretariat_temp.html#calballot (**warning** : large page)

The Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) is a P-status member in SC34 and must therefore consider draft IT standards and vote accordingly.

The response from the TTBS to a draft standard can be:

- Approval of the Draft as Presented
- Approval of the Draft with comments as given on the attached
- Disapproval of the Draft for reasons
- Disapproval (appropriate changes in the text will change vote to approval)
- Abstention (with reasons)
- No response

How you can help TTCS with this issue

The TTCS welcomes your questions, thoughts, comments and suggestions regarding DIS29500 and on the proposed criteria to be used to evaluate OOXML. If you can assist with technical understanding and analysis of DIS29500, this is **also needed and appreciated**. You can edit this page or send email to admin a-t ttcsweb d.o.t org.

The TTCS has submitted its recommendation to the TTBS on March 6th, 2008. You can view the PDF at <http://www.ttcsweb.org/articles/computer-laws/TTCS-recommendation-on-DIS29500.pdf> (PDF ; 201K)

We still welcome comments on our recommendation or on DIS29500 itself as there will be a Bureau of Standards meeting on March 13th, 2008 to discuss comments made by other members of the Bureau of Standards IT committee.

Your thoughts/comments/suggestions regarding DIS29500

Have questions/comments/suggestions about DIS29500 and how the TTBS should be handling DIS29500 and other SC34 issues? Edit this wiki page and add them here!

Comments by Richard Bailey - Feb 9, 2008

In addition to the merits of the standard and it's development, consideration should also be made about how the standard applies to Trinidad and Tobago. The criteria listed above are not T&T specific and it is my belief that that if the TTBS is to endorse any standard the TTBS should ensure that the standard is aligned or caters for the ways that Trinidad and Tobago operates. In fact, this should be the focus in *any* standard evaluation process, and should be weighted above and beyond criteria that discuss the openness or interoperability.

One simple example is "Does the standard allow for UK English spelling while allowing US paper sizes?" This may seem trivial but this simple combination of a mixed locale is not yet available in some widely deployed systems such as Ubuntu. There may be other aspects of this particular 6000+ page standard that should cater for Trinidad and Tobago's other chosen standards, and it should be the committee's responsibility to verify this.

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