

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, March 27, 2007

Press Inquiries:

Marino Marcich

202-789-4450 – mmarcich@odfalliance.org

ODF Alliance Celebrates One-Year Anniversary

Anniversary Highlights Growing Ranks of Governments Moving to Preserve Access and Prevent Information Loss to Society

Washington, DC, March 27, 2007 – The OpenDocument Format Alliance (ODF Alliance) – governments, academic institutions, non-government organizations and industry dedicated to educating policymakers, IT administrators and the public on the benefits and opportunities of ODF – touts major advances in ODF since the launch of the Alliance in March 2006.

“A year ago, governments were looking for ways to ensure access to their documents for use today and into the future,” said Marino Marcich, Managing Director. “Today, many have enacted policies to preserve public access to information and increase choice, while saving money. By choosing ODF, these governments have rejected proprietary file formats that inhibit access and choice by creating lock-in.”

Highlights of the past year include:

Growing Global Support for ODF. The Alliance, which consisted of 36 member organizations at its launch, now includes more than 370 members from 51 countries. The Alliance applauds the dozens of governments that have enacted ODF policies, implemented solutions that support ODF and/or joined the Alliance, particularly the following:

- 7 national governments have recommended ODF or open standards for document formats in legislation, policy statements or interoperability frameworks including Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway.
- 4 regional governments have made, or are in the process of implementing, pro-ODF policy commitments, including Extremadura (Spain), Hong Kong (China), Massachusetts (USA), and Misiones (Argentina).
- More than 50 federal, state, and local bodies across the globe are using office applications that support ODF, including the India Election Commission, Finland's Ministry of Justice, and the City of Vienna.

Cost Savings Documented. Studies from six governments on moving to open standard supported applications for document formats have shown savings of 60-90 percent over 5 years.

ISO Approved. ODF was adopted unanimously as an International Standard (ISO/IEC 26300:2006) in May 2006, and has been officially published. ISO/IEC adoption served as a springboard for ODF adoption and use by governments around the world. In addition, the report noted several important advances in the specification itself, a testament to its openness.

Accessibility Improvements. Ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed, OpenDocument v1.1, which incorporates accessibility-related enhancements, was approved unanimously by OASIS in January 2007.

Growing Applications Support. Most major office productivity suites have announced support for ODF, as have the growing list of Web-based applications. Several plug-ins, while no substitute for native support for ODF, are under development, in a sign of increasing ODF support.

“The growing government support for ODF worldwide reflects the desire to control one's own documents, and to have a choice of applications that are cost effective, innovative, compatible and accessible. The passion and energy of our 370 plus member organizations is a testament to a global commitment to change the status quo,” concluded Marcich. “The second year has begun as auspiciously as the first, with bills introduced in the Minnesota, Texas and California state legislatures. I expect many more governments to feature ODF in their interoperability frameworks and enterprise architectures.”

For more information about the ODF Alliance, please visit our Web site at: <http://www.odfalliance.org> The policy developments, cost saving studies and other achievements referenced above are documented more fully on our resource page.

What Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations Are Saying About ODF:

“OpenDocument 1.1 is a practical XML format that is readily transformable to the DAISY digital talking book standard for people with print impairments. The clear specification of OpenDocument v1.1 will remain usable long after commercial and proprietary formats have been condemned to the dustbin.”

- Dave Pawson, U.K.'s Royal National Institute of the Blind

“We are thrilled with the progress to date. Our views have changed over time. OpenDocument is no longer a thing to be feared, as we once thought. The OASIS process exemplifies what should be done if true accessibility to both a document format and the tools to manipulate it are to be achieved.”

- Curtis Chong, President, National Federation of the Blind in Computer Science

“The government agencies of Extremadura are using ODF for document exchange because it is a necessary component of our strategy to grant universal access to the new information and communication technologies to the citizens of the region in order to improve their quality of life.”

- Carlos Castro, Director General, Consejeria de Infraestructuras y Desarrollo Tecnológico, Junta de Extremadura, Spain

“Bristol values open standards and architectures because they increase our flexibility, enable effective collaboration and promote competition, which reduces our costs. As a result, we can direct more money into improved service to our public. The increased take up of ODF over the past 12 months, and the growing range of systems that use it, will support our continued drive to build openness into Bristol's technology infrastructure.”

-Stewart Long, Head of Information and Communication Technologies, Bristol City Council, United Kingdom

“The native support of OpenOffice.org to the OpenDocument ISO standard ISO/IEC 26300 for office documents is an important factor in order to achieve interoperability between organizations and citizens...No information security problems related to the OpenOffice.org software or the OpenDocument format appeared during the piloting.”

-Ministry of Justice, Finland (from Migrating a Ministry to OpenOffice.org, February 2007)