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**Press Inquiries:**

Ben Farrell

703-286-0828 -- [bfarrell@horngroup.com](mailto:bfarrell@horngroup.com)

**ODF Alliance Applauds Massachusetts' Continued  
Commitment to Implement ODF in January 2007**

*Hails progress on making ODF more accessible to people with disabilities*

Washington, DC, August 24, 2006 – The OpenDocument Format Alliance (ODF Alliance), a broad cross-section of organizations, academia and industry dedicated to improving access to electronic government documents, today applauded Massachusetts for its continued progress with the implementation of the OpenDocument Format (ODF) across its Executive Department agencies.

In a mid-year ODF statement released yesterday, Information Technology Division (ITD) Director & CIO of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Louis Gutierrez affirmed the Commonwealth's policy for moving to ODF beginning January 2007. The Statement indicated that plug-ins are expected to preserve full accessibility for those with disabilities, while also supporting the ITD policy to adopt ODF.

The Alliance also hailed progress that is incorporating accessibility into the ODF standard. An OASIS subcommittee has identified, and is addressing, several aspects of the specification that will make it possible to preserve accessibility information in the document format itself. As more mainstream applications become accessible, a broader range of applications will be available to people with disabilities. The format conversion approach will allow documents to be created, exchanged, and stored in ODF across multiple platforms by multiple applications – including office suites that have been slow to respond to the growing demand for ODF. This has been, and continues to be, the goal of the ODF Alliance in Massachusetts and around the globe.

“This announcement shows continued commitment by the Massachusetts government towards a true open-standard format, and we continue to fully support the Commonwealth's strong leadership on this issue,” said Marino Marcich, Managing Director of the ODF Alliance. “This decision signals the confidence of the Massachusetts ITD to utilize plug-in or converter technology so that all users can retain their existing accessibility tools, while still moving to ODF. This will inevitably lead to more accessibility choices – with other applications and on other platforms – than has been available in the past. We applaud the Commonwealth and the efforts of CIO Gutierrez to achieve full implementation of this open standard.”

The ODF Alliance is a broad cross-section of organizations, academia and industry dedicated to improving access to electronic government documents. As the momentum of global support for ODF continues to build, the Alliance has grown to over 300 members in more than 40 countries since being launched in March of this year.

For more information about the ODF Alliance, please visit our Web site at <http://www.odfalliance.org>.

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