

OPEN DOCUMENT FORMAT

ODF ALLIANCE

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ODF Alliance Statement: ISO's Vote on OOXML

Washington, DC, April 2, 2008. ODF Alliance managing director Marino Marcich issued the following statement regarding the ISO vote on Microsoft's Office Open XML.

"The ISO vote on OOXML has raised awareness at the highest levels of government of the importance of preserving access to public information and records. For too long, this information has been locked into the closed, proprietary format controlled by a single vendor. This is increasingly unacceptable. For this reason, governments around the world have been adopting the already-ISO approved OpenDocument Format (ODF).

ODF will continue to be the document format of choice that best meets the needs of governments interested in ensuring access to their own information, now and in the future. The process itself brought to the fore OOXML's deficiencies that will prevent its use by public administrations, chief among them that OOXML remains a "community of one" -- undocumented features, IPR restrictions, and features and functionality linked to other Microsoft products that will prevent OOXML's use in other software products. Governments will naturally take a "buyer beware" attitude toward OOXML and its lone implementation, Microsoft Office 2007. Nothing about the process will provide governments with any more confidence in OOXML's openness and interoperability than they had before the vote.

The vote shined a spotlight on OOXML that will not dim. Only in response to growing public pressure has Microsoft promised to make changes to OOXML, and, to be sure, similar promises have been made on numerous occasions. To avoid any questions concerning the legitimacy of the vote, which included many documented irregularities, Microsoft needs to ensure that these promises made to national standards bodies are actually delivered.

If anything, this vote has galvanized the ODF community, making us more confident than ever of ODF's emergence as the document format of the future."

The OpenDocument Format Alliance is an organization of governments, academic institutions, non-government organizations and industry dedicated to educating policy makers, IT administrators and the public on the benefits and opportunities of ODF.

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