



## **Members Approve Election Markup Language 5.0 as OASIS Standard**

*EDS, IBM, Oracle, and Others Collaborate on Secure, Global Standard for Exchanging Information Between Voting Systems, Software, and Services*

*Boston, MA, USA; 25 January 2008* – OASIS, the international open standards consortium, today announced that its members have approved the Election Markup Language (EML) version 5.0 as an OASIS Standard, a status that signifies the highest level of ratification. Developed through an open process by the OASIS Election and Voter Services Technical Committee, EML supports information exchange through the complete election process, including candidate nomination, voter registration and authentication, ballot information, vote casting and confirmation, tabulation, auditing, and more.

“In the election industry today, there are many different election systems and a wide variety of components used for many different functions, so the need for easier integration of different system components has never been greater,” said Dr. Ron Rivest, professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). “EML is an example of the kind of consensus-based, publicly available common format that enables the exchange of electronic records between different components in election systems.”

EML is flexible enough to be used for elections and referendums that are fully e-enabled as well as ones that are primarily paper-based. Designed to accommodate many languages, dialects, and vocabularies, the standard also supports various voting regimes. It can be used in both the private and public sectors.

“The beauty of EML is that it supports the election process without requiring any changes to traditional methods of conducting elections,” said John Borrás, chair of the OASIS Election and Voter Services Technical Committee. “EML lets election officials around the world build on existing infrastructure investments to evolve their systems as new technologies and voting practices emerge.”

The value of EML is recognized by many public sector agencies. The Council of Europe has issued a recommendation that its 46 member states use open standards such as EML for e-election and e-referendum applications. All U.K. electoral modernisation pilots have used EML, as a means to evaluate the standard's effectiveness in real elections; feedback from these pilots was incorporated into version 5.0. The U.S. State of California intends to use EML to provide election results in its upcoming presidential primary.

“By providing a uniform, secure, and verifiable way for voting systems to interact, EML safeguards voter confidence in the election process,” said Patrick Gannon, president and CEO of OASIS. Gannon also serves on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's Technical Guidelines Development Committee. “We applaud the government officials and vendors who collaborated on this mature, secure standard.”

EML was developed under the Royalty-Free on Limited Terms Mode of the OASIS Intellectual Property Rights Policy. EDS, IBM, and OPT2VOTE all verified successful use of EML 5.0, in accordance with eligibility requirements for all OASIS Standards.

The OASIS Election and Voter Services Technical Committee continues work on developing profiles and implementation guidelines for use of EML 5.0. Participation in the Committee remains open to all government agencies, companies, non-profit groups, academic institutions, and individuals. Archives of the work are accessible to both members and non-members, and OASIS offers a mechanism for public comment.

Additional information:

OASIS Election and Voter Services Technical Committee  
<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/election>

About OASIS:

OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards), drives the development, convergence, and adoption of open standards for the global information society. A not-for-profit consortium, OASIS advances standards for SOA, security, Web services, documents, e-commerce, government and law, localisation, supply chains, XML processing, and other areas of

need identified by its members. OASIS open standards offer the potential to lower cost, stimulate innovation, grow global markets, and protect the right of free choice of technology. The consortium has more than 5,000 participants representing over 600 organizations and individual members in 100 countries. <http://www.oasis-open.org>

Press contact:

Carol Geyer

OASIS Director of Communications

[carol.geyer@oasis-open.org](mailto:carol.geyer@oasis-open.org)

+1.978.667.5115 x209 (office)

+1.941.284.0403 (mobile)