



Published on OASIS (<https://www.oasis-open.org>)

Members Approve OpenDocument Version 1.1 as OASIS Standard

Consortium Enhances Accessibility Features of Open Format for Office Applications

Boston, MA, USA; 13 February 2007 -- OASIS, the international standards consortium, today announced that its members have approved version 1.1 of the Open Document Format for Office Applications (OpenDocument) as an OASIS Standard, a status that signifies the highest level of ratification. The result of a unique collaboration between advocacy groups for the disabled and open source and commercial software vendors, this new version of the standard provides key accessibility enhancements to ensure that the OpenDocument format (ODF) addresses the needs of people with disabilities.

Dave Pawson of the U.K.'s Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) said, "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."

OpenDocument 1.1 supports users who have low or no vision or who suffer from cognitive impairments. The standard not only provides short alternative descriptive text for document elements such as hyperlinks, drawing objects and image map hot spots, it also offers lengthy descriptions for the same objects should additional help be needed.

"We are thrilled with the progress to date," said Curtis Chong, president of the National Federation of the Blind in Computer Science. "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."

In addition to text documents and spreadsheets, OpenDocument defines presentation format. "Navigating through slide presentations poses particular difficulties for blind users. Often, the keyboard navigation order does not match the visual flow of the slides," explained Don Harbison of IBM, co-chair of the OASIS ODF Adoption Committee. "OpenDocument 1.1 adds a provision for the author to define a logical keyboard navigation order."

Other OpenDocument accessibility features include the preservation of structural semantics imported from other file formats, such as headings in tables, and associations between drawings and their captions.

The new version of OpenDocument reflects the work of the OASIS OpenDocument Accessibility Subcommittee, which is made up of accessibility experts from IBM, the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), RNIB, Sun Microsystems, and others. The Subcommittee's recommendations were incorporated into the OpenDocument specification by members of the OASIS OpenDocument Technical Committee, which includes representatives from Adobe Systems, IBM, Intel, Novell, Sun Microsystems, and others.

"On behalf of our Committee, I would like to especially thank the RNIB, the ICI, and the other organizations and individuals who helped us analyze the OpenDocument specification, identify deficiencies, and develop enhancements for improving its accessibility," said Michael Brauer of Sun Microsystems, chair of the OASIS OpenDocument Technical Committee.

"Version 1.1 is an important milestone in the evolution of the OpenDocument OASIS Standard," said Erwin Tenhumberg of Sun Microsystems, co-chair of the OASIS ODF Adoption Committee. "This release clears up several issues that the OASIS Accessibility Subcommittee and the community had identified early on. Version 1.1 addresses the features required by today's document-centric applications while taking document formats to a completely new level."

Participation in the OASIS OpenDocument Technical Committee, Accessibility Subcommittee, and ODF Adoption Committee remains open to all. OASIS hosts OpenDocument XML.org (<http://opendocument.xml.org> [1]), a community-driven web site on the standard.

Support for OpenDocument 1.1

IBM

"We've enjoyed positive feedback from the technical and disabled community about many aspects of ODF 1.1, but one underlying, enabling technology in particular has generated some excitement. I'm referring to IAccessible2, software interfaces that are now an open standard managed by the Linux Foundation, and which dramatically extend Microsoft Active Accessibility. IBM and many others were privileged to participate in the project, which enables assistive technology to work in a more granular way with ODF applications and many other environments."

- Richard Schwerdtfeger, IBM Distinguished Engineer, and co-chair of the OASIS Accessibility Subcommittee

Nokia

"Nokia is pleased to see the further evolution of OpenDocument to support accessibility, providing a schema that can satisfy the needs of both public and private organizations. Nokia is a strong supporter of open standards and sees the standardization of ODF 1.1 as an important milestone in establishing a truly open and useful standard for document formats."

- Frederick Hirsch, Senior Architect, Nokia

Novell

"ODF is the default file format for users of the SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop and the Novell Edition of OpenOffice, and we are a strong supporter of ODF. ODF has unique vendor and community support, Novell encourages its customers to use ODF, and we are proud to participate in the development and evangelism of ODF."

- Nat Friedman, vice president and chief technology officer, Linux and Open Source at Novell

Red Hat

"Red Hat is pleased to be able to see the release of the OpenDocument 1.1 OASIS Standard. OpenDocument is very important to allow people to collaborate in an increasingly heterogeneous and global environment."

- Dr Mark Little, Director of Standards for Red Hat

Sun Microsystems

"Sun is proud to have contributed and worked on OpenDocument 1.1, which was developed in record time and we expect will be adopted also in record time. This shows what happens when whole communities of interest -- in this case commercial enterprises, open source communities and accessibility ones -- collaborate and share their vision towards reaching a common goal."

- Crawford Beveridge, Executive Vice President and Chairman, EMEA, APAC and the Americas, Sun Microsystems, Inc.

Additional information:

OASIS OpenDocument Technical Committee:<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/office/>

OASIS ODF Adoption Committee:<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/odf-adoption/>

OpenDocument Accessibility FAQ:<http://opendocument.xml.org/accessibility-faq>

Cover Pages Technology Report:

<http://xml.coverpages.org/odf.html> [2]

About OASIS:

OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards) is a not-for-profit, international consortium that drives the development, convergence, and adoption of e-business standards. Members themselves set the OASIS technical agenda, using a lightweight, open process expressly designed to promote industry consensus and unite disparate efforts. The consortium produces open standards for Web services, security, e-business, and standardization efforts in the public sector and for application-specific markets. Founded in 1993, OASIS has more than 5,000 participants representing over 600 organizations and individual members in 100 countries. Approved OASIS Standards include AVDL, BCM, CAP, DITA, DocBook, DSML, ebBP, ebXML CPPA, ebXML Messaging, ebXML Registry, EDXL-DE, EML, OpenDocument, SAML, SOA-RM, SPML, UBL, UDDI, WSDM, WS-Notification, WS-Reliability, WSRF, WSRP, WS-Security, XACML, XCBF, and XML Catalogs. <http://www.oasis-open.org> [3]

Press contact:

Carol Geyer

OASIS Director of Communications

carol.geyer@oasis-open.org [4]

+1.978.667.5115 x209 (office)

+1.941.284.0403 (mobile)

Links:

[1] <http://opendocument.xml.org>

[2] <http://xml.coverpages.org/odf.html>

[3] <http://www.oasis-open.org>

[4] <mailto:carol.geyer@oasis-open.org>