



# Press Release

Berlin  
March 2008

## Translation of Document Formats

“Instead of either/or, we’re  
enabling interoperability  
between various document  
standards”

Gerd Schürmann  
Fraunhofer FOKUS

Fraunhofer FOKUS welcomes the ISO standardization DIS 29500  
for Office Open XML

## Well on the way to harmonization – Office Open XML becomes the second ISO document standard

Experts at the Fraunhofer Institute FOKUS eGovernment Lab welcome the decision of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to approve the document standard Office Open XML (Ecma 376) alongside ODF 1.0 (ISO/IEC 26300) as an accredited International Standard. Once voting had taken place in the national technical committees and the voting process was duly monitored, as the ISO/IEC press release dated 1 April 2008 states, on the international level a majority vote of 75 percent came out in favor of approval of Office Open XML (OOXML). This decision represents a major step towards driving forward the interoperability of the two formats – both of which are based on XML-on the ISO level.

“We keenly welcome the decision of the ISO Committee and see it as a decisive move towards facilitating the storage and exchange of documents, presentations and spreadsheets in different formats,” said Gerd Schürman, head of the eGovernment unit at Fraunhofer FOKUS and convener of the ‘Document Format Translation’ working group in the DIN committee NIA 34, commenting on the latest developments. “From our standpoint as an independent R&D institute we attach great importance to the interoperability of different technologies and products. Now that the ISO has given its seal of approval, both standards can be further developed according to ISO regulations – for the benefit of various sets of users.”

Two standards are currently in use for the storage and exchange of documents, spreadsheets, presentations and so on – Office Open XML supported by the Ecma standardization organization, and ODF 1.0 which was developed by OASIS. Although both formats are XML-based, they differ in terms of their structures and scope and are tailored to meet different objectives and market requirements. The scenarios developed in the Fraunhofer FOKUS eGovernment Lab have clearly shown how essential it is that a variety of open standards exist alongside each other –

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and they also compellingly demonstrate that seamless interoperability between disparate technologies, products and standards is indeed possible in practice.

Like other expert groups in other countries, the DIN Expert Group NIA34 has made a major contribution to improving the quality of the Standard through the excellence of its technical work. More than 85 percent of proposals for improvement from the German side were wholly implemented and a further more than 10 percent partially implemented in the revised and improved version of the Standard.

As Gerd Schürmann comments, "Once again the international collaboration of experts from different countries within the framework of the ISO has proven to be a suitable forum for the development of international standards that can also meet market timeline demands through cooperation with other standardization organizations like Ecma and OASIS.

#### **Information**

ISO – International Organization for Standardization – [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

DIN Deutsches Institut für Normung e.V. (German Institute for Standardization) – [www.din.de](http://www.din.de)

OASIS Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards – [www.oasis-open.org](http://www.oasis-open.org)

Ecma – European Computer Manufacturers Association – [www.ecma-international.org](http://www.ecma-international.org)

Model Project – ODF Translator  
<http://sourceforge.net/projects/odf-converter>

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