What Are Open Standards?

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Agenda

- **Introduction and Preliminaries**
- What is an Open Standard?
- Implementations and Costs
- Solutions for Open Standards
- Summary
- Questions
- References

Introduction

- Who am I?
  - Consulting enterprise architect
  - Elected to OASIS Technical Advisory Board
  - Skilled at building standards and products from ideas to adoption
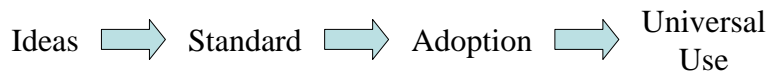 - Business, marketing, and technical background

Preliminaries

- What is a Standard?
- Reality Intrudes
- What's in a Word
- Marketing Language

What is a Standard?

- Software/networking standards
- Simplistic definition:
  - A standard is a consensus specification used to achieve broad interoperation
- Ideal
  - The strength of the ideas/technical merit drives standards

Ideas ⟹ Standard ⟹ Adoption ⟹ Universal Use

Reality Intrudes

- Reality is much messier
  - Even the words vary in meaning
- Many inputs, much work hidden in the simplified ideal
- Standards may be *technical* but standards projects are both *technical and social*
- Success takes planning and understanding

What's in a Word?

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone,' it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.' - Lewis Carroll

"A standard is a consensus specification, broadly used to achieve interoperation"

- Standard
- Consensus
- Specification
- Broadly used
- Interoperation

Marketing Language (1)

- When a vendor talks about a specification, they often say "…the standard does this…" or "…the standard says…"
- Antidote: Politely ask
  - "What standards body has completed work on this?"
  - "When was it standardized?"
  - "Who has implemented this standard?"

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What is an Open Standard?

- Attributes
- Intellectual Property Rights and Open Standards
- Royalty Free?
- Open is not Free

Attributes of Open Standards

- Freely readable
- Concepts are freely usable and reusable
- Standard may be implemented freely
- Implementations are freely distributable
- Implementations are freely usable
- Interoperation and testing unencumbered
- Open and inclusive process to define & revise

Open Standards and IPR

- Intellectual Property issues need to be considered
  - At the beginning of a project
  - During a project
  - After deployment
  - During revisions
- Protections include
  - Comment licenses—grant IPR in your comments
  - RF terms (but lots of variations)
  - Proactive licensing from sympathetic IPR owners

When is Royalty Free not Free?

- One scenario
  - Company X writes a specification that they make publicly available
  - To use the specification you must accept a license that prohibits or restricts implementation
  - If you can get a license to implement your users must go to Company X and obtain a license
  - Company X says this is royalty free
  - But there are substantial costs and barriers to adoption
  - You are promoting Company X
- "Royalty Free" is not enough

Marketing Language (2)

- "Free to use" is very different from "unencumbered"
- Antidote: Ask
  - "What must I do to use this technology?"
  - "What alternatives are available?"
  - Understand the implications of licenses

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Open != Free

- You are investing when you
  - Use a standard
  - Implement a standard
  - Test for conformance and interoperability
- Cost of organization membership is much less than cost to participate effectively
- High cost standards documents usually means less use
  - Consider ISO documents

Implementing Open Standards

- Shared open source project may give early and significant insight
  - Participants and non-participants
  - IPR preemption issues
- Timing may be everything
  - "Open" but you'll see what I did in a year…
    - A one year passback is centuries in internet time!
  - Passbacks may not be required

Open Implementation Issues

- IPR claims from non-participants
  - IPR claims against Linux, etc
  - Legal shakedowns
- Broad software patents stifle innovation
  - A whole separate talk!
  - Significant tax on innovation, development, productization

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Solutions for Open Standards

- Represent open source interests
  - Even if you don't produce open source products, you benefit from less burdensome licensing
- Work with and contribute to open test frameworks
- Encourage freely usable and reusable test assertions
- Be vigilant in defending and supporting openness!

Summary

- Open Standards cost money, resources, and time
- Open is more an issue of control and indirect costs than of mere visibility
- Understand & ask about IPR and "Open"
- Open source helps
- Be vigilant in defending openness

Questions

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References

- Information, free newsletter signup at
  www.CoxSoftwareArchitects.com

- Licensing and open software issues entry points
  - Linux-foundation.org
  - http://apache.org/licenses/
  - Wikipedia articles on licensing
    - Search "list of software licenses" and follow references