

Free (as Freedom) Open Source Software adoption in Venezuela and the role of ODF

*Centro Nacional de Tecnologías de Información
(National Center of Information Technologies)*

Venezuela

History

- Academic use of FOSS since the 70's
- Active FOSS' community since mid 90's
- Stoppage of the National Oil Industry (PDVSA) from December 2002 to February 2003
 - Proprietary IT was deliberately used as a medium to stop operations.
 - Vendors of the Proprietary IT failed to reestablish operations.

First stage – 2004 to 2007

- 3.390 Act (Dec. 2004): It decrees the use of FOSS based on Open Standards on the Government Institutions (National Executive Power)
- FOSS' educational programs targeted to officials working on the IT departments on Government.
- First stage of the FOSS' adoption process.

First obstacles

- Human nature to resist the changes.
- Lack of FOSS' Industry.
- Misunderstandings and lack of articulation.
- Lack of IT's governance.

Second Stage – 2007 to present

- Creation of the Ministry of Telecommunication and Informatics
- New strategic lines for the CNTI:
 - Articulate the FOSS' adoption in the Government Institutions
 - Promote the development of the FOSS' National Industry
 - Promote the FOSS' adoption in the society
 - Standardization and Certification of the Government's IT



ODF: enabler of the FOSS adoption

- Decrease the resistance based on lack of interoperability.
- Effectively implemented in FOSS suites.
- Avoid the vendor's lock-in of the information.
- New possibilities of systematization, and new ways to get things done.
- Functional format for the non-tech officials.

Reflections

- IT's governance is needed
- FOSS' education must be implemented in the regular educational system, from schools to colleges.
- Legal system must be adjusted.
- You may use open standards without FOSS, or use FOSS without standards, but you benefit the most using both.

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