



OPEN DOCUMENT FORMAT

ODF ALLIANCE

## 2<sup>nd</sup> International ODF User Workshop

9-10 October 2008

Department of Home Affairs

Pretoria, South Africa

# Summary & Conclusions\*

*\*The views expressed herein should not be regarded as stating an official position of the governments participating in the workshop.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>0 Executive Summary and Conclusions.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 Welcoming Remarks.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Hon NN Mapisa-Nqakula, Minister of Home Affairs, Republic of South Africa</i>	
<b>2 ODF: Government IT Leadership in Action.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 How We Got Here and Where We Can Go	
<i>Robert Sutor, Vice President, Open Source and Standards, IBM.....</i>	<i>7</i>
2.2 Be the Change You Want to See in the World	
<i>Justice Yatindra Singh, High Court, Allahabad, India.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>3 ODF Implementation: Early Adopters Share Strategies for Success.....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Implementing ODF in Belgium: No Country for Old Men	
<i>Peter Strickx, Fedict, Belgium.....</i>	<i>9</i>
3.2 The Brasília Protocol: A Model for Transitioning from Policy to Use of ODF	
<i>Carlos Machado, Federal Enterprise for Data Processing (SERPRO), and Paulo Maia, Caixa Econômica Federal, Brazil .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>4 Getting Started: Lessons Learned from the Early Stages.....</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1 Malaysian Public Sector OpenOffice.org Migration	
<i>Tan King Ing, Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), Malaysia.....</i>	<i>11</i>
4.2 Venezuela's Road to Open Document Formats	
<i>Carlos González, National Center on Information Technologies, Venezuela.....</i>	<i>13</i>
4.3 Germany: Open document exchange formats, security and lessons learned	
<i>Martin Bierwirth, Federal Office for Information Security (BSI), Ministry of Interior, Germany.....</i>	<i>14</i>
4.4 ODF Implementation in the Government of South Africa: Challenges and Opportunities	
<i>Aslam Raffee, Dept. of Science &amp; Technology, South Africa.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>5 ODF and Interoperability.....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 The European Interoperability Framework v2 & Open Standards – A European Perspective	
<i>Graham Taylor, Chief Executive, OpenForum Europe.....</i>	<i>16</i>
5.2 From Standardization to Interoperability - A Closer Look at ODF Applications Support	
<i>Andrew Rist, Interoperability Analyst, Oracle.....</i>	<i>17</i>

<b>6 The Future of ODF.....</b>	<b>18</b>
6.1 ODF and the Adoption-Led Market	
<i>Simon Phipps, Chief Open Source Officer, Sun Microsystems.....</i>	<i>18</i>
6.2 ODF 1.2 - Metadata, Spreadsheet Formula, Digital Signatures, and More: What's New with ODF?	
<i>Jomar Silva, Executive Director, ODF Alliance Brazil.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>7 Perspectives from Regional Governments.....</b>	<b>21</b>
7.1 Kerala's Open Migration	
<i>Arun Madhavan Pillai, Kerala State Information Technology Mission (KSITM), Kerala, India.....</i>	<i>21</i>

## *0 Executive Summary & Conclusions*

The South African government, in collaboration with the OpenDocument Format Alliance (ODF Alliance), hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> *International OpenDocument Format (ODF) User Workshop* on October 9-10 Pretoria. The workshop brought together more than 60 government IT officials from 11 countries – Belgium, Germany, Turkey, India, Malaysia, Brazil, Chile, Venezuela, Angola, Ghana, and the host, South Africa.

The theme for the workshop was *"The Promise of ODF to the Practical Realities of Implementation."* Since the first ODF workshop hosted by Germany's Foreign Ministry in October 2007 in Berlin, many governments had moved from policy adoption and were now down the road to ODF implementation.<sup>1</sup> Following are key conclusions and recommendations:

- **Open standards, open formats essential for interoperable eGovernment.** Poor interoperability between communication systems following the tragic tsunami in December 2004 in Thailand and in the U.S. Gulf Coast (Hurricane Katrina) seriously frustrated relief efforts. As a result, many governments were making open standards a priority. Among the reasons cited for adopting ODF ("Why ODF?") was that public administrations should not depend on commercial companies to have access to their own information – public administrations should "own" their documents – nor should they impose on their citizens a particular brand of software when they interact with government electronically. For others, the decision to migrate to an ODF-supporting application simply boiled down to cost savings.

- **Dissatisfaction with competing, "dueling" formats for achieving same task.** Several governments stated that multiple formats for the same task added to costs and confusion, and it was noted that proprietary document formats were altered frequently, imposing additional burdens on governments. While governments have chosen ODF, other standards for document formats were possible, but they should, among other requirements, be ISO-approved, have multiple implementations (to avoid vendor lock-in), and be compatible with ODF.

- **Governments should take a leadership role in demanding open standards, including ODF.** Governments have led the charges and have been the agents of the change they seek in the world, forcing the issue of ODF and open technologies onto the global stage through their ODF policy adoptions and procurement practices. Governments emphasized that "you can't stop what's coming" and that "when it comes to Open Document Exchange Formats, it's not a question of if, it's a question of how!" The *Brasilia ODF Protocol* was offered as a model to advance the migration process, obligating signatories to have in place the necessary plans to

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.odfworkshop.com/2007\\_berlin/index.html](http://www.odfworkshop.com/2007_berlin/index.html)

receive, edit, and exchange documents internally in ODF, make documents available to third parties (e.g., customers, public) in ODF, and exchange documents in ODF with the other government entities signing the protocol.

- **Need for bottom-up, broad-based consensus.** Governments on the ODF migration path stressed the need for bottom-up consensus with a relaxed ODF implementation timetable. Advanced preparation was crucial for the transition, including a strong migration team, support (champions, Help Desk), communication, coordinated planning for training and deployment, and support from top management.
- **ODF migration challenges do exist, mostly associated with getting out from under lock-in to the current vendor.** Principal challenges included: legacy productivity suites that are still predominantly MS Office, with resulting lack of inter-agency document compatibility; applications built using MS Excel and legacy third-party applications with dependencies on MS Office formats; government tenders identifying proprietary software; and getting buy-in and support for migration/training.
- **Consolidating the various stories heard from government adopters on the first day, a five-step ODF migration plan was proposed.** The five steps included: 1) installation survey; 2) planning power-users migration; 3) transforming templates and macros; 4) addressing archives and workflows; and 5) training core users. Power users could kill any project and it was recommended that their migration be planned first. Transforming templates and macros was deemed essential, and a roadmap for long-term archiving of documents was offered.
- **The business case for ODF was expected to expand with new features and improved interoperability.** The value proposition of ODF has been improved for governments with the expected arrival of ODF 1.2, which includes support for spreadsheet formula, metadata, and digital signatures, among other enhancements, and improved interoperability among the growing ranks and range of ODF-supporting applications.

At the conclusion of the workshop, several ideas were discussed on how to build on the momentum behind ODF and address the challenges moving forward.

- **Participation:** Greater government participation in OASIS (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards), which maintains ODF specification, and other fora to ensure that the needs of government are addressed.
- **ODF Repository:** The need for the ODF Alliance to develop a repository for the cumulative migration experiences of governments.

- **ODF Protocol**: Internationalizing the Brasilia ODF Protocol – perhaps a Document Freedom Charter – that could be signed by organizations in both the public and private sector as a means to advance ODF adoption.
- **ODF Community Development**: Mapping the ODF community worldwide so that ODF adopters can share and learn from the migration experiences and challenges of others.

## *1 Welcoming Remarks*

### **Hon NN Mapisa-Nqakula, Minister of Home Affairs, Republic of South Africa**

Speaking on behalf of the minister, Director General Mavuso Msimang pointed out the danger of poor interoperability between systems following the tragic tsunami on December 26, 2004, in Thailand, where rescue efforts were frustrated by the lack of integration between government agencies. As a result, many governments were now forging ahead to make open standards a priority. The emergence of open standards for document formats, he added, has further resulted in the ability to process and share documents using formats which have significant impact on the efficiency, interoperability and accessibility of public services. He said this will have important implications for how we understand our democracy. Inclusivity in the context of the emerging South African Information Society requires us to address issues of multilingualism, accessibility, and access to services by under-served communities, Msimang stressed. The choice of format used for the representation of documents in government is therefore absolutely critical.

Msimang said it was critical that the South African government standardize on a single document format for exchange of information within government; that the choice is aligned with its free software/open source policy; that the document format guarantee unfettered access to citizen information that is held in trust; and that the control of the document format is not dominated by any single vendor or group of vendors. It was on this basis, he noted, that the South African government made the best rational and pragmatic choice available and specified that ODF be used.

Director General Msimang noted a standard is not a naturally occurring resource but rather a socially-constructed artifact – an agreement, a product of human consensus. He said that how this consensus is reached is important. Who gets to say what and when? Who gets to listen? He noted that his government participates actively in the development of the ODF through the direct participation of the Department of Science and Technology in the OASIS OpenDocument Technical Committee, which maintains the ODF specification, and in the

International Standards Organisation Joint Technical Committee subcommittee (JTC1 SC34). South Africa was particularly frustrated by the acceptance by ISO of an overlapping document specification earlier this year. He cited the ability and willingness of corporate private interests to dominate the multilateral, democratic process of consensus-building within ISO, which he said had raised significant concerns, both in South Africa and abroad. He concluded that, far from being deterred, his government's enthusiasm and commitment to open standards in general and ODF in particular was stronger than ever.

## ***2 ODF: Government IT Leadership in Action***

### **2.1 How We Got Here and Where We Can Go**

***Robert Sutor, Vice President, Open Source and Standards, IBM***

Dr. Sutor gave a brief history of how ODF, spoke about current implementation status, and showed a world map illustrating the rapid growth in ODF adoption.

In the second half of his talk he discussed the IBM Standards Principles that IBM announced a few weeks ago. The principles were inspired by the results of an online discussion that brought together 70 independent, forward-thinking experts across the globe from academia, standards-setting, law, government, and public policy who debated the question of whether standard-setting bodies have kept pace with today's commercial, social, legal and political realities. He said the principles themselves were meant to be taken as a whole and were written in a positive, constructive way, and noted that they had raised some issues and started some intense debates. The IBM Principles include:

- **Process Quality:** *Begin or end participation in standards bodies based on the quality and openness of their processes, membership rules, and intellectual property policies.*
- **Global Application:** *Encourage emerging and developed economies to both adopt open global standards and to participate in the creation of those standards.*
- **Participant Independence:** *Advance governance rules within standards bodies that ensure technology decisions, votes, and dispute resolutions are made fairly by independent participants, protected from undue influence.*
- **Implementability:** *Collaborate with standards bodies and developer communities to ensure that open software interoperability standards are freely available and implementable.*
- **Better IPR Principles:** *Help drive the creation of clear, simple and consistent intellectual property policies for standards organizations, thereby enabling standards developers and implementers to make informed technical and business decisions.*

Sutor cited ODF as a wonderful example of how open standards can work, and that we are where we are today only because of the brave and passionate work of thousands of

individuals and leaders globally. He called on participants to extend the ODF success story more generally to the creation and adoption of additional and better open standards and encouraged vigilance against vendor-dictated and proprietary software interoperability “standards.”

## **2.2 Be the Change You Want to See in the World**

*Justice Yatindra Singh, High Court, Allahabad, India*

Justice Singh explained why it is better to adopt a format based on open standards, and also provided guidelines for implementing ODF. Singh began by noting Gandhi's philosophy that “means are more important than the end: it is only with the right means that the desired end will follow.” In the context of IT, Singh stated that the end is dissemination of information. The means are how to achieve it; how to implement it; what kinds of software to use; and what format to adopt. He stressed that access to information is better with open standards and open formats in particular. These are means that will lead to the desired end, Singh said emphatically. The other advantage in using open source and an open format is “becoming operating-system free.” This, Singh said, is the reason that the Allahabad High Court has adopted open source and open standards.

In implementing ODF, the Allahabad High Court came to several important realizations, according to Singh. People are loathe to change the format that they are already using, and must be brought around into accepting that an open format is better than a closed, proprietary one, or else there will be no successful implementation. He recommended switching to office suites that support an open format natively. In the case of the High Court, he said the choice was OpenOffice.org, which had become the *de facto* office suite for the Indian judiciary. He underscored the need to provide training to ease the transition. He recommended that all communications be conducted in an open format, and in case information in any other format is required, provide it, but the original must always be in ODF, he stressed. He recommended making ODF the default-save option, even though Microsoft word may still be in use.

He concluded his remarks with a story from “*Panchtantra*” which has a common thread in all cultures. It is a story of a hare and a tortoise. The moral is, “It is best to consolidate everyone's strong point.” This is what the open source and open formats are about, said Singh. They:

- Consolidate strong points;
- Use IPR to prevent the hoarding of technology;
- Invite others to participate in development.

It is “Make love, not war” in an atypical way. To Singh, this was the key to the future success of ODF.

### *3 ODF Implementation: Early Adopters Share Strategies for Success*

#### **3.1 Implementing ODF in Belgium: No Country for Old Men**

*Peter Strickx, Fedict, Belgium*

Strickx stressed that “you can't stop what's coming.” He traced the history of Fedict, which was formed in 2001 and is the youngest service in the Belgian federal government and also one of the smallest with a staff of 80 and budget of €35 million. He added that Belgium is a highly federated country with all governments at the same level (federal government has no authority over the regional). In this context, he emphasized, interoperability is critical for document exchange between and among government agencies.

Strickx provided an overview of the ODF adoption process that began in Belgium in June 2004 with the Belgian Interoperability Framework (BELGIF), which required the use of open standards. There followed the June 2006 Belgian Ministerial Council decision in which ODF was chosen as the standard for the exchange of editable, revisable documents (scope), with reading functionality introduced by September 2007 and document exchange by September 2008. Though ODF was chosen, it is not necessarily exclusive. Other standards for document formats are possible, but they must be ISO-approved, have multiple implementations (to avoid vendor lock-in), and be compatible with ODF.

Strickx speculated that a great deal of attention was focused on Belgium because Brussels was the capital of Europe and a successful implementation there could have implications throughout Europe. He recommended that governments focus on the format, not the application. He stressed the need for bottom-up consensus with a relaxed timetable. As quality interaction with existing Microsoft Office users was required, Sun Microsystems' plug-in was found to provide a good solution after significant improvements were made. Fedict was actually able to introduce both reading and writing (edit) functionality by December 2007, nine months ahead of schedule! He added that every PC now comes installed with OpenOffice (so-called “dual-head” installation).

All federal agencies and departments are now ODF ready, but what about actual use, he asked? He noted that ODF is for exchange of editable, revisable documents between federal departments, and that there is not a lot of document exchange at this level. Strickx highlighted the fact that a lot of inter-departmental communication was not desktop-based, but part of back-office exchange, and, as such, an ODF tie to back-office systems may be needed. He speculated that the desktop model of installed software could be coming to a close (“Do we have power generators in our homes?”).

### 3.2 The Brasília Protocol: A Model for Transitioning from Policy to Use of ODF

*Carlos Machado, Federal Enterprise for Data Processing (SERPRO), and Paulo Maia, Caixa Econômica Federal, Brazil*

Machado introduced SERPRO, a public enterprise that is linked to the Ministry of Finance and is the biggest IT company in Latin America. SERPRO adopts free software for itself and provides technology to its customers. Free software use in government is actively promoted and is spreading rapidly, he added. These efforts are not limited to government.

Machado traced the history of ODF in Brazil. Under Brazil's "e-PING" interoperability framework which identifies standards for e-government, ODF was selected as the preferred, recommended format. He stressed that strong and reliable standards organizations are requirements for a standards-based IT policy. He cited the recent case Office OpenXML (OOXML) which was ultimately approved as an international standard notwithstanding the appeals of several National Bodies, including Brazil's, whose treatment he described as "disrespectful." He noted the recent CONSEGI Declaration signed by South Africa, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Cuba and Paraguay which states that "whereas in the past it has been assumed that an ISO/IEC standard should automatically be considered for use within government, this position no longer stands." He cited JTC1's inability to follow its own rules as the principal reason why.

Describing Brazil's transition from ODF adoption to implementation, Machado highlighted several recent developments, including adoption of ODF as a Brazilian national standard (ISO/IEC NBR 26300), BROffice (OOo) adoption, which is a priority for Free Software Implementation Committee(CISL), software procurement policy (Instrucao Normativa #4 – 2009+), the Brasilia Protocol and the "Adoption Maturity Model" which was described later in greater detail by his colleague, Paulo Maia. Machado concluded his remarks with an offer to hold the next workshop in Brazil.

The Brazilian governments transition from ODF policy adoption to implementation moved one step closer to reality with the signing of the so-called *Brasilia ODF Protocol*. Within 60 days of voluntarily signing the protocol, said Paulo Maia of the Caixa Econômica Federal, signatories pledge to have in place the necessary plans to receive, edit, and exchange office documents internally in ODF, make documents available to third parties (e.g., customers, public) in ODF, and exchange documents in ODF with the other entities signing the protocol. The Brazilian entities involved have a combined 500,000 desktops.

Maia went on to describe the maturity model that was developed to trace the ODF adoption process to help organizations internally and share their experience with others. He listed six

levels of maturity beginning with Level 0 (Non Existent – ODF not used; need not recognized) to Level 5 (Optimized Process Shared – all the strategic managers have knowledge of the ODF implementation project; documents generated are compatible with the ODF standard; collaboration with ODF; adherence to e-PING).

Key milestones in the ODF maturity were:

- Existence of organizational strategy for ODF adoption
- % of equipment with ODF solution installed
- % of business employees trained
- % of IT employees trained for ODF solution support
- % of organization departments using ODF solution
- % of documents available for society in ODF standards

#### *4 Getting Started: Lessons Learned from the Early Stages*

##### **4.1 Malaysian Public Sector OpenOffice.org Migration**

*Tan King Ing, Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), Malaysia*

Tan King Ing briefly introduced MAMPU, which is the central agency in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of the administrative modernisation and management planning for the public sector. Its mission is to continuously modernise the Malaysian public service to achieve a high level of quality. It is also the lead agency for the Open Source Software Master Plan implementation and manages the Open Source Competency Centre, she added.

The decision to migrate to OpenOffice was introduced in March 2008. Tan King noted that the decision boiled down to cost savings. With 4.9 million PCs in Malaysia, the total cost of deploying Microsoft Office in Malaysia would have been RM4.4 billion in licensing fees alone, with similar or worse migration and training requirements (new user interface). Moreover, the new document format (DOCX, XLSX, PPTX) was not completely compatible with older versions of Microsoft Office. For MAMPU, the cost of licensing Microsoft Office 2007 would be RM 332,500. In some state agencies, the percentage of PC ownership is still low, Tan King added, so licensing savings would allow more equipment to be purchased.

Noting that document formats were changed twice in the previous two releases of Microsoft Office, imposing additional migration requirements, Tan King stressed the importance of standards, including a consistent format and compatibility across software versions. ODF, she added, avoids vendor lock-in and provides choice, including OpenOffice (2.x), StarOffice,

Google Docs, IBM Workplace / Notes, and Koffice, among others, and is in line with MAMPU movement towards open standards and interoperability.

MAMPU's OpenOffice migration plan was launched on March 19, 2008 by the Director General and involves 24 OpenOffice "champions" who were appointed and trained to promote the use of OpenOffice within their workgroup to increase buy-in; to provide first level support within their workgroup or section; and to promote the OSCC OpenOffice.org portal for knowledge sharing. 254 MAMPU staff have been trained in 56 training sessions. A technical support mechanism has been established, in addition to a migration team tasked with leading the overall effort, including preparing a communications plan, providing document conversion assistance and second level support, identifying dependencies for other applications, and providing tools to assist users in implementation of OpenOffice.org (e.g., templates for letters, minutes, reports etc).

The migration will proceed in stages, with the Immediate Action Plan requiring the setup of the OpenOffice.org Portal, which contains FAQs, quick guides, tutorials, downloads, etc (<http://openoffice.oscc.org.my>). The Mid-Term Action Plan calls for the implementation of a standard style guide for common documents (memos, letters, presentations, etc..) and the development of an ODF Migration Guide for public sector agencies, which is one of the deliverables of the ODF tender issued by MAMPU. Post implementation, MAMPU will assess the level of success of the implementation after 4 months, identify, address and strengthen weak areas, and review/modify the migration plan as necessary.

MAMPU's policy is that all new documents are to be created using OpenOffice from April 1, 2008 onwards using the OpenOffice default format (MS Office documents created prior to this date need to be backed up by end-users). Documents to external parties need to be sent in PDF format if no editing is needed and in OpenOffice.org or MS Office if there are to be edited. MS Office is to be removed from all PCs from July 1, 2008 onwards.

Some of the key lessons learned included the fact that existing documents with macro functions (MS Excel) could not be converted easily. Tan King said advanced preparation was crucial for rapid and painless transition, including a strong migration team, support mechanism (champions, Help Desk), a communication mechanism, coordinated planning for training and deployment, and continuous support from top management.

An OpenOffice.org Migration Pack was developed to assist other agencies in migration. The publicity generated locally and internationally, Tan King added, created excitement, motivating other agencies to also migrate and sent a clear signal from the government on open standards and OSS policy, resulting in a marked increase in OpenOffice.org adoption.

137 agencies now reported OpenOffice.org usage, with 10,862 known seats/installations. Two state governments have official policies of using OpenOffice.org (Kedah & Pahang) and two more are expected to introduce such policies from in 2009.

Tan King also identified the principal challenges as inter-agency document compatibility; legacy productivity suites that are still predominantly MS Office, with some agencies upgrading to MS Office 2007; proprietary applications and formats bundled with MS Office such as Publisher and Visio; applications built using MS Excel; legacy third-party applications with dependencies on MS Office formats; and the fact that vendors package MS Office for government procurements of desktop PCs.

#### **4.2 Venezuela's Road to Open Document Formats**

*Carlos González, National Center on Information Technologies, Venezuela*

Carlos Gonzalez of the National Center of Information Technologies announced at the workshop that the Venezuelan government had formally adopted ODF as a standard for the “processing, exchange and storage of documents.”

Gonzalez traced the history of free and open source software in Venezuela, which dates back to its use in academia in the 1970s. There now exists a very active FOSS community since the mid 1990s, said Gonzalez, which took on added significance when a cutoff of proprietary software was used to interrupt the operations of the national oil industry (PDVSA) from December 2002 to February 2003, with vendors of the proprietary information technology failing to reestablish operations.

The first stage of Venezuela's use of FOSS occurred from 2004 to 2007. A decree (3.390 Act of Dec. 2004) required the use of FOSS based on open standards in the government bodies. FOSS educational programs targeted officials working in government IT departments. The first obstacles encountered were the natural human resistance to change. Other issues included a lack of local FOSS industry support and a lack of an IT governance structure.

The second stage is 2007 to present, said Gonzalez. The Ministry of Telecommunication and Informatics was created with the authority to articulate FOSS adoption in government institutions, promote FOSS adoption in society, promote the development of the FOSS national industry and the standardization and certification of the government's IT.

Gonzalez referred to ODF as enabler of the FOSS adoption. He noted that ODF is effectively implemented in existing FOSS suites as the default format. The government can avoid vendor

lock-in. He stressed that IT governance is needed, and that FOSS should be implemented in the public educational system at the early stages. He concluded by stating that "you may use open standards without FOSS, or use FOSS without standards, but you benefit the most by using both."

#### **4.3 Germany: Open document exchange formats, security and lessons learned**

*Martin Bierwirth, Federal Office for Information Security (BSI), Ministry of Interior, Germany*

Bierwirth stated succinctly that when it comes to Open Document Exchange Formats, "it's not a question of IF, it's a question of HOW!" The Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) in Bonn where he works is the federal public agency within the Federal Ministry for the Interior. It was founded in 1991 and now has a staff of around 460 employees and a budget of €52 million. The focus of its activities is Internet security, secure e-government, IT baseline protection, cryptographic innovation, biometrics, security from eavesdropping, certification and approval, protection of critical infrastructure, awareness, and national/international security co-operation.

Bierwirth defined "open document exchange formats" as independently developed in an open process and sufficiently documented. Among the advantages of open document exchange formats, he noted, were enhanced competition and software diversity, increased interoperability and automation, enhanced adaptability, and archive security ("future proof your documents"). He emphasized the need for public administrations to edit, exchange and archive in an open format to improve interoperability. He stated that people have and need choice in software, but that it is better have "one standard for one purpose."

Bierwirth then described the road map towards open document exchange formats, stating "it's not a question of IF, it's a question of HOW!" He cited the trend towards malicious code in office documents and multimedia files (and the trend of increasing vulnerabilities). For protection, he stressed, you need to find and inspect binary code in documents which can be done with an "open" document, which is defined by a well-structured open standard.

Bierwirth went on to describe BSI's migration. In the past few years, BSI has migrated from Windows to Linux (around 50%), Microsoft Exchange to KOLAB Groupware, and from MS Office to StarOffice (about 500 installations). The exchange documents used by BSI are ODF and PDF. He said that people are willing to accept few setbacks, and that a success rate of over 90% was needed for everyday-use scenarios. Some of the questions encountered in the migration ("Where can I find this feature, where has that button gone? I want to return to Windows! This document looked fine on the other machine!?")

He underscored the importance of document templates when migrating, and that the use of templates is not perfect, at least not yet. In some cases there were issues with migrating spreadsheets with formulas. Overall, he said, there were only a few severe problems that were eventually overcome. He concluded by noting that people care more about (good) applications than document standards. Bierwirth emphasized the need for good implementations of typical workflow scenarios.

#### **4.4 ODF Implementation in the Government of South Africa: Challenges and Opportunities**

*Aslam Raffee, Dept. of Science & Technology, South Africa*

Aslam Raffee, CIO of South Africa's Department of Science and Technology and Chairperson of the GITOC OSS workgroup, described the five key points of his country's open source policy: 1) Choose FOSS; 2) Migrate to FOSS; 3) Develop in FOSS; 4) Use FOSS/Open Content licensing; and 5) Promote FOSS.

Regarding the choice of FOSS, Raffee stated that the South African government will implement FOSS unless proprietary software is demonstrated to be significantly superior. If the advantages of FOSS and proprietary software are comparable, then FOSS will be implemented when choosing a software solution for a new project. Where FOSS doesn't exist, he said, development/enhancement using the FOSS model will be considered. Whenever FOSS is not implemented, then reasons must be provided in order to justify the implementation of proprietary software.

Regarding development in FOSS, all new software developed for or by the South African government will be based on open standards, adherent to FOSS principles, and licensed using a FOSS license where possible. Raffee said that as for the use of FOSS, the South African government will ensure all government content and content developed using government resources is made open content, unless analysis on specific content shows that proprietary licensing or confidentiality is substantially beneficial. Finally, regarding the promotion of FOSS, he said that the South African government will encourage the use of Open Content and Open Standards within South Africa.

Raffee went on to describe his country's Minimum Interoperability Standards Version 4.1, which was approved 22 October 2007 and applies to all spheres of government. He noted that eGov requires the seamless flow of information across all tiers of government. MIOS describes the technical principles and lists the standards for achieving interoperability. Raffee emphasized that for a standard to qualify as "open" under MIOS, it should be maintained by a

non-commercial organization; participation in the ongoing development work is based on decision-making processes that are open to all interested parties; all may access committee documents, drafts and completed standards free of cost or for a negligible fee (open access); it must be possible for everyone to copy, distribute and use the standard free of cost; the intellectual rights required to implement the standard (e.g. essential patent claims) are irrevocably available, without any royalties attached; there are no reservations regarding reuse of the standard; and, finally, there are multiple implementations. Raffee stressed that a standard shall be considered open if it meets all of these criteria. He then highlighted an example regarding access to a government web site that the MIOS was meant to avoid; specifically, the government's Independent Electoral Commission's web site could only be accessed with Internet Explorer v4 and above using Windows.

Raffee noted that ODF was specifically identified as the recommended format under MIOS. Reading functionality was introduced in March 2008 and writing functionality in September 2009. ODF is scheduled to be the default format by January 2009. The principal challenges in implementing the government's policy were identified as procurement (government tenders identifying proprietary software), email scanners, network effects, getting buy-in, and migration and training. Content Management Systems posed a particular challenge in terms of vendor "lock-in."

Raffee concluded his remarks with a quote dating back to 1955 from the Congress of the People which underscored the depth of his government's commitment to public access to knowledge and information: "All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands..".

## *5 ODF and Interoperability*

### **5.1 The European Interoperability Framework v2 & Open Standards – A European Perspective**

*Graham Taylor, Chief Executive, OpenForum Europe*

The European Interoperability Framework v2.0 (EIF v2.0) draft was now out for public comment, said Open Forum Europe's (OFE) Graham Taylor. He noted EIF v1.0 had proven to be a highly influential document, especially considering its official legal status in the EU, inspiring the many national frameworks already in existence or currently under development. Though the consultation period had not yet closed, Taylor expected good things to come out of the next iteration as far as open standards were concerned, noting Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes' recent statement at a June 2008 OFE briefing that "I know a smart

business decision when I see one – choosing open standards is a very smart business decision indeed.”

So what has been happening in Europe, asked Taylor? He highlighted a number of key initiatives:

- National frameworks are being established throughout Europe;
- The European Commission's Directorate General for Informatics (IDABC) has drafted "A Common Assessment Method for Standards and Specifications" (CAMSS) which defines a common set of guidelines for the assessment of standards and specifications based on national best practices;
- The Open Source Observatory and Repository for European public administrations ("OSOR.EU") will be launched October 20 to provide a platform not only for the exchange of information and experiences but also of FLOSS-based code, targeting mainly public administrations;
- The Open Parliament Petition was launched calling on European Parliament to use open standards so that all citizens can participate in the democratic process;
- Interoperability guidance for pan-European eGovernment services (IOP Guidance for PEGS) had been developed.

According to Taylor, the good news regarding EIF v2.0 is that it will inspire national interoperability frameworks. He called EIF v2.0 a pragmatic document which emphasizes an "openness continuum" and defines Open Standards and specifications in a manner that maintains the integrity of the definition (including IPR aspects) while reinforcing the role of open-source software. Weaknesses do however exist, among them weak compliance, the overwhelming detail of the document itself, interoperability in the Internal Market, overlap with other programs, and little sharing of content and best-practice between and among public administrations at the pan-European level.

Still the net effect of EIF v2.0 should be positive, concluded Taylor. The EIF 2.0 battle has just begun, with open standards an important battleground. Momentum was building, said Taylor, and Open Document Exchange Formats were worth fighting for!

## **5.2 From Standardization to Interoperability - A Closer Look at ODF Applications Support** *Andrew Rist, Interoperability Analyst, Oracle*

Rist clarified the difference between Open Source (source code to a software program that is shared and distributed freely, licensed on a non-discriminatory basis to allow use modification) and Open Standards (specifications that define interfaces, protocols, formats). The former was

the equivalent of an open application; the latter enabled interoperability among diverse programs.

For open source software, development costs were distributed, whereas for closed-source, development costs could be recouped. Both closed and open source required support and maintenance. Whereas open standards encouraged multiple, competing applications (choice), closed standards result in vendor lock-in.

Rist went on to describe three general document use cases: static documents (contracts, proposals, reports); synchronized documents (general ledger, inventory, projects); and collaborative documents (specifications, proposals, marketing campaigns). He said one area for improvement was ODF's use as a "dynamic documents," in particular the need to have "data access support."

Rist characterized the ODF market as driven by programmability (extensibility, scripting/macros, data access, commonality across suites); stability/predictability (level playing field, format longevity), and interoperability (versioning; conformance tests).

## ***6 The Future of ODF***

### **6.1 ODF and the Adoption-Led Market**

#### **Simon Phipps, Chief Open Source Officer, Sun Microsystems**

Phipps posited seven words – meshed, adoption, migration, substitutability, freedom, dreams, ODF – that will shape the global ODF adoption community going forward. He traced the history of both ODF and the FOSS community, considered adoption philosophies and practicalities, and sketched an ODF migration plan.

In a procurement-driven market, users are customers and vendors drive the process, said Phipps. In an adoption-led market, users become customers, with vendors entering into the fray only at the point of piloting. The vendor subscription that is ultimately purchased will contain all the licenses used to offer support, defect resolution/warranty, upgradeability, indemnity, production support tools, plus a permanent, inalienable right-to-use.

By consolidating the various stories he heard from government adopters on the first day, Phipps sketched a five-step migration plan: 1) Installation survey; 2) Plan power-users migration; 3) Transform templates and macros; 4) Address archives and workflows; 5) Train core users. He underscored the need to understand your challenge, particularly with regard to

power users who could kill any project and whose migration should be planned first. Phipps also stressed the importance of transforming templates and macros, and finally, addressing archiving. Regarding training of core users, given the limited differences between MS Office 2003 and OpenOffice, he did not think more than a half day was necessary.

Phipps was asked asked by a number of government delegates about the right way to handle archiving of their documents, on which he elaborated in a blog post after the workshop. Noting that while ODF offers a baseline file format that promises long-term readability and editability, the question remains how best to archive files. With the release of [OpenOffice.org 3.0](http://OpenOffice.org/3.0), Phipps said there were now at least two alternatives and possibly a third.

The first he described as “ODF plus PDF.” By this he meant keeping the original document in its original format, with an optional copy filtered to ODF if the original is not in ODF, and then accompanying the file with a PDF image.

The second was “PDF Container.” He noted that OpenOffice.org 3.0 now includes extensive new PDF handling features, including PDF/A support, access to PDF's distribution and use controls, and the ability to include the original ODF in a "container" inside a "hybrid PDF." This last feature offers a fine archiving alternative, noted Phipps, where a single file is created but within it the original ODF is retained for future use.

The third, “Read-Only ODF” was described by Jomar Silva during his presentation on the future of ODF 1.2 which allows the preservation of the document exactly as used. Choosing which to use is obviously a decision for each archiving authority, Phipps concluded, but the richness of the new PDF support in OpenOffice means that the options open to archivists just grew enormously.

Phipps stressed that “substitutability” was not the same thing as “interoperability.” Substitutability, said Phipps, was about the freedom to both enter and leave a product or service, and it is the embrace of open standards that ensures that data is completely portable, users “own” their data and that any product or service can access the data. With substitutability vendors will no longer have the power to use formats as a product in themselves, concluded Phipps.

## 6.2 ODF 1.2 - Metadata, Spreadsheet Formula, Digital Signatures, and More: What's New with ODF?

*Jomar Silva, Executive Director, ODF Alliance Brazil*

Jomar Silva provided an overview of the new features contained in ODF v1.2, including metadata, spreadsheet formula, digital signature support, and the ODF Next initiative.

Balancing expressiveness and ease-of-implementation, enabling extensibility, and ensuring interoperability were the underlying principles behind metadata support in ODF v1.2, according to Silva, who summarized use cases regarding accessibility, bibliographies and citations, content tagging, enhanced search, and workflow.

"OpenFormula" is a specification defining how to exchange formulas, primarily for spreadsheets, to let you *own your own data*, so you can choose which spreadsheet application you want to use, and still exchange data with people who made different choices, said Silva. It will be a part of ODF v1.2. Its many advantages, according to Silva, included the fact that it was developed by many different implementors, with experienced users; its development process was open; and it's a fully open standard with room for innovation by anyone.

Extensible Markup Language Digital Signature, or XMLDSig, is a W3C recommendation that defines an XML syntax for digital signatures and can be used to sign data of any type, typically XML documents. According to Silva, the current proposal extends the basic model with XML Advanced Electronic Signatures, or XADES (ETSI). Sample use cases included Read-only signed documents and Digital signature usage on workflow systems.

Silva noted that while these new features were imminent, OASIS was looking ahead to the "next generation" ODF. In this regard, the ODF-Next Subcommittee was created as a parallel effort to gather requirements and define a vision for the next major revision of the standard. Its goal was to categorize by theme and prioritize requirements to draft a report to the OASIS OpenDocument Technical Committee (TC) with a recommended set of work items for the next major version of ODF. Its scope included collecting requirements from the community; ensuring that all requirements collected have been formally submitted as contributions to the TC, either as TC member contributions or via the Feedback License; categorizing these comments according to theme; prioritizing the themes and the requirements within the themes; and producing and submitting to the TC a report on a recommended set of work items for ODF-Next.

## *7 Perspectives from Regional Governments*

### **7.1 Kerala's Open Migration**

*Arun Madhavan Pillai, Kerala State Information Technology Mission (KSITM), Kerala, India*

Pillai highlighted the vital role of various social movements in bringing important issues, including software freedom, before society. The initial government stance was to promote MS Windows, said Pillai, but the free-software movement worked with teachers and, as a result, the project to bring IT and IT-enabled education to all high schools in Kerala is now based on free software. The project involves 2600 schools, 1,500,000 children, and 50,000 teachers, said Pillai. The state was now moving towards 100% broadband connectivity.

Pillai stressed that the move to free software was not an end in itself. Rather, Kerala sees ICT as a vehicle for transforming Kerala into a knowledge-based, economically vibrant, democratic and inclusive society. The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB), a public sector agency that provides and regulates the electricity supply, was among the first government-owned companies in India to shift to open-source software. The software was developed by an in-house team in KSEB and is being used for electricity billing and accounting. The migration involved 600 centres and has now reached the half-way mark, with estimated total cost savings of \$2 million.

Pillai concluded his remarks by stating that for Kerala it's all about strengthening democracy. Kerala needed all players to participate in order to build an inclusive society. He said it can be done with a hand-full of committed change-makers.