



Open Standards Definition

There are various definitions of Open Standards, such as the definitions in the European Commission European Interoperability Framework¹ or the motion B 103 of the Danish Parliament². As also the forming of the Dynamic Coalition on Open Standards (DCOS) at the 2006 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has demonstrated, a global understanding of Open Standards is still lacking. Orienting itself along the lines set of the above initiatives, the SELF project understands Open Standards as follows.

An Open Standard refers to a format or protocol that is

- 1. subject to full public assessment and use without constraints in a manner equally available to all parties;**
- 2. without any components or extensions that have dependencies on formats or protocols that do not meet the definition of an Open Standard themselves;**
- 3. free from legal or technical clauses that limit its utilisation by any party or in any business model;**
- 4. managed and further developed independently of any single vendor in a process open to the equal participation of competitors and third parties;**
- 5. available in multiple complete implementations by competing vendors, or as a complete implementation equally available to all parties.**

Standards that sufficiently meet all the above criteria will be classified as "Open Standard" in the SELF consortium.

Emerging Standards Exception

When a new format or protocol is emerging, clause 5 cannot possibly be met. So in these special cases the SELF Legal Experts Group can decide to give a format or protocol recognition as "Emerging Standard" for a limited amount of time. Such Emerging Standards can be included in the SELF materials, but not be used by SELF for its own technology.

Preference for single standard

If more than one Open Standard exists for any one application, SELF will use the above criteria to set a preference for one of them, as multiple standards for the same purpose are contrary to the goals of standardisation and contrary to public benefit. Choice of the preferred Open Standard will be made on the grounds of meeting the above definition, and, if that does not allow to differentiation, factors such as the number of implementations and finally the number of installations of the Open Standard.

Formats and protocols that are outside the scope defined above are considered proprietary and outside the scope of SELF.

[1] <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/3473#finalEIF>

[2] <http://www.ft.dk/Samling/20051/beslutningsforslag/B103/index.htm>