

**Open Workshop proposal for IGF 2007
submitted June 30, 2007**

Open ICT Standards

Question 1:

Provide a concise formulation for the proposed workshop theme.

This workshop will present an update on recent global Internet governance discussions at the intersection of open ICT standards, development, and public policy. Last year's multistakeholder IGF workshop on open standards unveiled the inherent tension between the public interest and intellectual property rights (IPR) holders in ICT standards. This year's workshop will continue the discussion and focus on tangible policy efforts, such as the EC's Task Force on ICT Sector Competitiveness and ICT Uptake and their report "IPR for Competitiveness and Innovation" and continuing discussions in the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade committee on the proper role of IPR in standards. One point of tension underlying current developments is the prevalence of competing views on openness in ICT standards. This workshop will enable various interests to present and debate their views in a multi-stakeholder format.

Question 2:

Provide the Name of the Organizer(s) of the workshop and their Affiliation to various stakeholder groups. Describe how you will take steps to adhere to the multi-stakeholder principle, including geographical diversity.

- Knowledge Ecology International (KEI), a civil society organization
- IP Justice, a civil society organization
- World Wide Web Consortium, a standards organization
- Sun Microsystems, a business entity
- Free Software Foundation Europe (FSFE), a civil society organization
- Yale Information Society Project, an academic institution.

This small group is appropriate for organizing the workshop and will embrace the IGF's multi-stakeholder approach in inviting workshop participants.

Question 3:

Why do you think the proposed theme is important?

Historically, open technical standards have facilitated the advancements in Internet innovation and global access to knowledge. ICT standards, although not created by legislatures, states or courts, create regulatory structures and economic frameworks that transcend international boundaries, affect numerous public policy issues and impact developing countries and many stakeholders who don't have an equal voice in their creation, management, or adoption. There are significant problems in our global IT standardization ecosystem. ICT standards are being privatized, and there has been little global public debate on this development. Ultimately, this hurts consumer choice, equitable access, competition, and innovation. One point of evidence to the growing tensions are the requests by the People's Republic of China to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Technical Barriers to

Trade committee and the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation for these groups to review the issue of intellectual property licensing in international IT standards. Another point of evidence has been the series of international policy-oriented conferences on the subject, such as a recent Standards Edge conference at Georgetown University (U.S.) that explored the economic role of IT standards and government policy responses.

Question 4:

Describe the workshop's conformity with the Tunis Agenda in terms of substance and the mandate of the IGF.

This workshop directly supports Paragraph 90 (j) of the Tunis Agenda and will help to reaffirm the commitment of WSIS/IGF stakeholders to “developing and implementing e-government applications based on open standards in order to enhance the growth and interoperability of e-government systems ... thereby furthering access to government information and services...”

This workshop is also built upon Paragraph 90 (k) (open and affordable access to information), Paragraph 49 (development of software that enables user choice), Paragraph 27 (c) (affordable access to ICTs) and the points around Internet Governance, particularly Paragraph 72 (g) and 72 (i).

This workshop also directly addresses points from the World Summit on the Information Society's Declaration of Principles: “Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society... The development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven standards that take into account needs of users and consumers is a basic element for the development and greater diffusion of ICTs and more affordable access to them, particularly in developing countries.”

Question 5:

Provide the Name and Affiliation of the panelists you are planning to invite.

- OpenDocument Format Alliance member from Brazil
- Huang Rengang, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the WTO
- Representatives from industry stakeholders
- A representative from ISO
- A representative from the Brazilian government
- A representative from the Sri Lankan government
- A representative from an international consumer organization

Question 6:

Describe the main actors in the field. Have you approached them and asked whether they would be willing to participate in proposed workshop?

The main actors are the governments who act as procurers and regulators of ICT standards and who benefit from providing standards-based services; business entities that typically create the ICT specifications; standard organizations; the business entities, individuals and open source communities that create products that support these specifications; and the

people who use the products and are affected by the economic and political implications of openness in ICT standards.

We have approached potential speakers from these categories; a potential list is included in the previous question.

Question 7:

List similar events you have organized in the past.

- IGF 2006 Workshop on “Open Standards, Interoperability, and Government Procurement” (Athens, Greece)
- Yale Information Society Project Open Standards International Symposium (OSIS); held at Yale Law School, February, 2007 (U.S)
- Stimulating v. Stifling: Standardization’s Role in Innovation; hosted by Georgetown University, Sun Microsystems, JEDEC, and The Bolin Group, March, 2007 (U.S)
- Building Economic Strength and Social Benefit: Openness as a Collaborative Advantage; hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, the State Intellectual Property Office, The Bolin Group, and Sun Microsystems, April 2007 (People’s Republic of China)