

Building Economic Strength and Social Benefit
CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE: MYTH vs.
REALITY

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Andrew Updegrave

Gesmer Updegrave LLP

andrew.updegrave@gesmer.com

www.gesmer.com

www.consortiuminfo.org

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MYTH #1

Over the last 100 years, a (A) single, (B) orderly, (C) hierarchical standard setting infrastructure has evolved to meet the needs of (D) all stakeholders

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REALITY #1(A)

*There is not a **single** ICT standards infrastructure, but (at least) **two**: accredited and unaccredited - and they are at best poorly coordinated*

**The ITC industry largely opted out – and stayed out
- of the accredited system**

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REALITY #1(B)

*The **orderliness** of the process and outcome are often inversely proportional to the **importance** of the standard*

Example: the current aggressive competition between Open Document Format (ODF) and Ecma 376 (Microsoft Office Open XML)

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REALITY #1(C)

*To the extent there is **hierarchy**, it is **erratic**
and only **partially effective***

**Most ITC consortia are – or want to be – global,
and offer few standards to ISO/IEC. And some
accredited organizations (e.g., ASTM and IEEE)
are now as global as consortia**

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REALITY #1(D)

The needs of **all stakeholders** are **rarely satisfied**

Due to differences in:

- **Corporate influence**
- **Historical ownership of patents**
- **Representation (e.g., consumers)**

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SOLUTION #1

*We need to **reimagine** the global standard setting infrastructure*

We need a 21st Century infrastructure to meet 21st century demands - like global warming; fair trade; open source software; convergence; and much more

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Is the situation hopeless?

Let's look at another myth or two

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MYTH #2

Standards provide solutions

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REALITY #2

Convergence has overwhelmed the ability of a single standard – or standard setting organization – to provide a solution

A single mobile device has a Camera, Video, Web Browser, PDA, WiFi, Bluetooth, Linux, USB,...

100s of standards in all, coming from dozens of standard setting organizations

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SOLUTION #2

***Standard setting organizations can no longer provide solutions – but
Metastandard setting organizations can***

- **Web Services Interoperability Organization (WS-I)**
- **Network Centric Operations Industry Consortium**
 - **Mobile Imaging and Printing Consortium**

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SOLUTION #2

- These organizations focus on **solutions**, not **standards**
- They create **profiles**, based on **use cases**, rather than standards
- They live “**downstream**” from the standards development process

MYTH #3

Open Source Software (OSS) and Open Standards don't mix, because every element of open OSS has to be able to change any time, and open standards require some things to stay the same

REALITY #3

*The Free Standards Group (now the **Linux Foundation**) has figured out how to make it work*

By setting standards “**above**” the kernel, by adopting the same collaborative, real-time **approach** that the OSS community uses, and by convincing the kernel developers to collaborate with the standards developers

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SUMMARY

- Standards can still provide solutions, but the current **standard setting infrastructure (SSI)** is no longer the right tool for the job
- What we need is **SSI 2.0**, with:
 - More and better **collaboration** between organizations of all types
 - More and better **leadership by government** (promoting open standards)
 - More and better **commitment by all stakeholders** to work within the process
 - More **creativity and imagination**

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Visit ConsortiumInfo.org**
 - Essential Guide to Standard Setting and Consortia:
<http://www.consortiuminfo.org/essentialguide/>
 - Consortium Standards Bulletin:
<http://www.consortiuminfo.org/bulletins>
 - Standards MetaLibrary:
<http://www.consortiuminfo.org/metallibrary>
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