

27 February 2009

DCOS: Reporting back on 2008

The Dynamic Coalition on Open Standards (DCOS) was created at the Athens Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in November 2006. Our mission is to provide government policy makers and other stakeholders with useful tools to make informed decisions to preserve the current open architecture of the Internet and the World Wide Web, which together provide a knowledge ecosystems that has profoundly shaped the multiplier effect of global public goods and improved economic and social welfare.

Membership in the IGF DCOS is open to anyone who supports our Mission (<http://www.dcos-igf.org/mission>) and our Principles (<http://www.dcos-igf.org/files/dcos-open-standard-principles.pdf>).

At the 3rd session of the Hyderabad IGF, DCOS held two workshops and one open workshop. A tangible outcome of the Hyderabad meeting was the production of the “DCOS Hyderabad Statement on Procurement in Support of Interoperability and Open Standards” which can be found here: <http://www.dcos-igf.org/documents/45-documents/54-hyderabad-statement-3rd-igf-2008>

On December 3, 2009 DCOS hosted a workshop entitled “ “Knowledge as a Global Public Good: How Fair Use, Open Source and ICT Standards Can Expand Digital Inclusion”.

Moderator: Malini Aisola, Knowledge Ecology International

Speakers:

- Richard Owens, Director of the Copyright E-Commerce, Technology and Management Division, WIPO

- Laura Denardis, Associate Research Scholar in Law, Lecturer in Law, and Executive Director, Information Society Project, Yale University
- Rishab Ghosh, Senior Researcher, UNU-MERIT, Maastricht, the Netherlands
- Thiru Balasubramaniam, Geneva Representative, Knowledge Ecology International
- Aslam Raffee, Chairperson of the Open Source and Open Standards Standing Committee, Government IT offices counsel, South Africa.

Panelists at this session on Knowledge as a Public Good broached topics including a Proposal on a WTO Agreement for the Supply of Public Goods with a focus on knowledge goods, a detailing of the political dimensions of ICT standards, the economic benefits of open standards and the treatment of standards and patents in the WIPO Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) and South Africa's policy regarding the use of open software.

Workshop 24 : "Reforming the International ICT Standardization System"

2:00-3:30pm, December 6, Room 2

Moderator, Aslam Raffee, Open Source and Open Standards Standing Committee, South Africa

- Sunil Abraham, Centre for Internet and Society
- Bob Joliffe, Shuttleworth Foundation
- Ashish Gautam, IBM India

During this panel, there was discussion of some problems with respect to intellectual property and standards such as the lack of full disclosure, role of SDO's in addressing patent licensing, and international standards that are overlaid on a diversity of national/regional IPR regimes.

Recommendations:

- financial transparency at all levels
- modernizing of processes- including enabling remote participation
- regulation of proportional influence of private interests- one company one vote- worldwide
- learn and adopt best practices of diverse practices of national bodies and other SDOs
- patent searches - eg WIPO ISR, peer=patent CPR, national examiners manuals should include standard database search
- return to full disclosure requirement
- adoption and clear display of IPR policies of committees (e.g., OASIS) allowing easy distinction of degree of 'openness' of standards
- process transparency

Suggestions improving ICT standardization that emerged through audience participation at the workshop included:

- Lower barriers to entry
- Remote participation
- One vote per organization
- Consistent IPR policy
- Royalty free
- Open process

Open meeting of the Dynamic Coalition on Open Standards

11:30-1:00pm, December 4, Room 7

Speakers:

- Thiru Balasubramaniam, Knowledge Ecology International

- Aslam Raffee, Open Source and Open Standards Standing Committee, South Africa
- Denis Direito, National Institute of Information Technology, Brazil: Historic context and the current situation of FLOSS and open standards in the government of Brazil
- Rishab Ghosh, UNU-MERIT, Maastricht, the Netherlands
- Laura Denardis, Information Society Project, Yale University
- Eddan Katz, Electronic Frontier Foundation

At DCOS' open meeting held on December 4, 2008, panelists presented a proposal on a procurement agreement on interoperability and open standards, detailed national experiences from South Africa and Brazil on promoting interoperability and open standards, and a document on a public protocol for the exchange of public documents (based on the Brasilia Protocol of 2008). The draft procurement agreement presented at Hyderabad was intended to serve as a basis for governments, businesses, non-profits and individuals to sign as contracting parties; this multi-stakeholder draft agreement echoed the founding principles of the Athens IGF which called for active, multi-stakeholder participation in dynamic coalitions. The Brasilia Protocol is a national agreement between a wide range of state and private entities to use the Open Document Format for interoperable communication within the country.

Deliberations on the draft procurement agreement, the public protocol for exchange of public documents, and the Brasilia Protocol along with the rich discussions that followed at the 3rd IGF in Hyderabad culminated in the “Dynamic Coalition on Open Standards (DCOS) Statement on Procurement in Support of Interoperability and Open Standards.”