

## **Open Source Foundation of India hails the defeat of Microsoft OOXML at ISO OSFI also strongly condemns Microsoft's attempts to influence the voting process**

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The Open Source Foundation of India today hailed the defeat of Microsoft's OOXML proposal at the International Standards Organization. "This is a great day for open standards. Open standards for data interchange are extremely important to humanity because it helps us to share knowledge freely with each other. For example, the Internet is what it is because of open standards. Proprietary software vendors have

a strong incentive to keep their formats closed because it locks in users to their applications and platforms. The Microsoft OOXML format, submitted through ECMA has been unanimously rejected by the LITD15 committee of the Bureau of Indian Standards that was constituted to review OOXML. BIS conducted a thorough review process lasting over six months and after spending many man days, the conclusion of this committee was that OOXML is a flawed proposal and therefore India should vote "No, with comments" at ISO," said Venkatesh Hariharan, co-founder, Open Source Foundation of India.

This victory for open standards comes amidst allegations of unprecedented attempts to subvert the standards process. The OOXML proposal needed two-thirds majority for the proposal to be accepted by ISO or have a minimum of 25 percent vote, "No with comments" on the OOXML proposal. As the September 2 deadline approached, several new members joined the voting process. These countries include Cote d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Ecuador, Jamaica, Lebanon, Malta, Pakistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uruguay, and Venezuela. With the exception of Ecuador which voted, "No with comments" and Trinidad and Tobago which abstained, all other new joiners have voted "Yes" or "Yes with comments." Some of these countries have reported that there was no discussion on OOXML before these countries submitted their votes.

In Sweden, 23 new companies, all of which were Microsoft partners, joined the Swedish Standards Institute at the group's closing meeting on the subject and were allowed to vote in favor of making Microsoft's Open XML a standard. This vote was later invalidated.

"This is a blatant attempt to subvert the voting process and we strongly condemn it. Open standards should be arrived at through collaboration and consensus, not by stuffing the ballot boxes or through booth capturing. The Department of IT and Indian policy makers should question if India's IT infrastructure can be trusted in the hands of a corporation that resorts to such tactics," said Hariharan.

About the Open Source Foundation of India (OSFI): The OSFI is a non-profit foundation formed to encourage open source and open standards in India.