TRENDS

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS: A STANDARDS DIARY

2004 witnessed a wide variety of events, large and small, that added up to a year of transition, progress and accomplishment.   The following is a selection of events that we think best illustrate the major themes of the year in standards now ending.

The news items listed below represent but a small fraction of the many hundreds of news stories that we selected for posting and categorization this year at the ConsortiumInfo.org Standards News portal www.consortiuminfo.org/news (complete with RSS feed). You may find expanded summaries of each item that appears below at that address, as well as links to the primary sources in every case.

January

5: The open source community is not amused when SCO Group CEO Darl McBride claims that the GNU General Public License (used for Linux and many other open source products) violates the U.S. Constitution, copyright and patent laws.

12: The RFID Journal predicts that the retail supply chain market for RFID technology will grow to $1.3 billion in 2008, and then decline, before again picking up speed.

13: A federal judge upholds a $521 million jury verdict in favor of tiny Eolas Technologies over Microsoft Corp. The verdict relates to a patent Eolas claims is infringed by a key Web browser function.

16: The Mozilla Foundation releases a new version of its open-source Web-browser suite. The new browser later gains favorable reviews and rapid adoption.

29: Microsoft, counting on better luck in an upcoming review of the Eolas patent by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, announces that it will not modify Internet Explorer to avoid patent infringement.

February

3: In order to appear more independent, Eclipse, an open source project founded and funded by IBM, announces that it will become an independent not for profit entity to be called the Eclipse Foundation.

3: Microsoft is awarded United States patent 6,687,897 for "XML script automation."

10: The World Wide Web Consortium announces the approval of the first two components of its much heralded "Semantic Web": a revised Resource Description Framework (RDF) and the Web Ontology Language (OWL).

11: Google announces that it will support Atom, and not the older RSS syndication format, for bloggers.

25: 12 of the most prominent IT security companies launch The Cyber Security Industry Alliance (CSIA) in order to lobby Congress and state governments for more effective cyber security legislation.

25: A federal patent examiner agrees that the Eolas patent should be reexamined, following the W3C's request that the patent be declared invalid.

26: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announces adoption of five American National Standards describing personal protective equipment for first responders.

26: OASIS Emergency Management Technical Committee approves the Common Alerting Protocol Version 1.0, "a simple but general format for exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts and public warnings over all kinds of networks."

March

18: Nokia, Phillips, and Sony announce the formation of the Near Field Communication (NFC) Forum. The new consortium will create "touch-based" wireless "interactions" between consumer electronics, mobile devices, PCs and "smart objects."

18: The Wi-Fi Alliance reports that 22 percent of wireless networking cards for computers, access ports and printer servers tested at its four partner laboratories failed to work on a network on the first try.

19: Global standards body IS0 approves a suite of four ebXML OASIS Standards that enable enterprises in any industry anywhere in the world to conduct business over the Internet (OASIS is a consortium, and not an accredited SDO).

31: Microsoft, IBM, BEA Systems Inc. (and SAP AG) announce the publication of the WS-Metadata Exchange specification, one of a seemingly endless series of privately created specifications intended to realize the Web services architecture to which the three companies are committed.

April

1: Deadline for vendors to register for public-key infrastructure encryption certificates to do business with the Defense Department under the Interim External Certification Authority program. The requirement affects approximately 350,000 contractors.

5: In a reversal of its long-standing opposition to open source licensing, Microsoft publishes the code for Windows Installer XML (WiX) on an open source software development Web site.

5: Sun and Microsoft patent infringement settlement announced, with Microsoft agreeing to pay Sun almost $2 billion. Scott McNealy of Sun promises closer cooperation between the two companies on standards matters.

14: A Munich, Germany district court grants a preliminary injunction against a wireless access router vendor for violating the GNU General Public License (GPL).

15: World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee is the first winner of the one million Euro ($1.23 million) Millennium Technology Prize, awarded by the Finnish Technology Award Foundation.

19: Open Source Risk Management LLC, a venture backed start-up company formed to offer insurance against copyright claims involving open source software, declares the Linux kernel free of copyright infringement.

20: More than 20 companies announce the formation of the Enterprise Grid Alliance (EGA) to develop royalty-free enterprise grid computing specifications and grid interoperability solutions.

May

3: The Electronic Frontier Foundation launches a "Patent Busting Project" to contest what it believes are "illegitimate patents that suppress non-commercial and small business innovation or limit free expression online."

5: Rambus files an antitrust lawsuit against Siemans, Micron Technology, Hynix Semiconductor and Infineon Technologies.

13: FTC issues an order accepting four amicus curiae briefs filed in connection with its own action against Rambus. The order also notes that the record under examination now includes hundreds of thousands of pages of exhibits, trial transcripts, proposed findings of fact and reply findings of fact, post-trial briefs and reply briefs, decisions, and appellate and Amicus briefs.

14: The W3C invites Atom supporters to form a working group under its process rather than within the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

15: In its annual "Best of the Best" issue, *Software Development Times* includes 6 consortia and open source collaboratives in its top ten list of those that had the "greatest influence in raising the bar." Those groups are: OASIS, W3C, Apache Software Foundation, Eclipse Foundation, Open Source development Labs, Inc., and the Web Services Interoperability Organization (WS-I).

17: An ITU survey indicates "overwhelming support" for declaring the Internet a "resource to be shared by all for the global public good." The survey relates to the ongoing United Nations-initiated Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which will make recommendations involving the "governance of the Internet."

18: Yahoo proposes an anti-spam specification it calls "DomainKeys," which would embed outgoing messages with an encrypted digital signature, matched to a signature on the server computer that sends the message, allowing ISPs to block those that don't match up.

18: The EU votes to rescind 2003 European Parliament-imposed limitations on the patentability of software. The revised directive is sent back to the European Parliament for further action.

18: United States Secretary of Commerce Don Evans releases a report intended to reduce standards-related trade barriers and calling for "broader collaboration across government and with U.S. industry to prevent technical obstacles that impede U.S. exports".

19: Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge emphasizes the importance of standards in achieving emergency preparedness and crisis response before the 9-11 Commission.

31: Microsoft Explorer rivals Mozilla Foundation and Opera Software submit a joint recommendation to the W3C on standards for Web Applications and Compound Documents.

June

7: The formation of the Compliance Consortium is announced, with the goal of developing standards and promoting best practices in governance, risk and compliance management in response to legislation such as Sarbanes-Oxley, the USA Patriot Act, and Basel II.

11: The DVD Forum approves the latest version of its high definition DVD specification. The HD-DVD specification is locked in a struggle with the rival standard being developed by the Blu-ray Group. The DVD Forum is led by NEC and Toshiba.

11: Release of ANSI white paper highlighting the use of restrictive intellectual property rights policies to erect trade barriers.

14: Sun, Dell, Intel and others launch the OpenIB Alliance, intended to make the InfiniBand input/output architecture more Linux-friendly.

16: The formation of the Trusted Electronic Communications Forum is announced, with the goal of setting standards to combat phishing, spoofing and other types of online identity fraud.

18: Open Source Development Labs announces that its Carrier Grade Linux working group is close to completing a Linux standard that will meet telecommunications industry requirements.

July

1: Nokia and STMicroelectronics bypass a slow-moving initiative within the Mobile Industry Processor Interface (MIPI) group, and announce their own specification to define camera phone features.

2: The Consumer Electronics Association announces that it will develop a standard to help make safe use of cell phones on aircraft possible.

2: A NIST study finds that inventory, scheduling and accounting information management issues cost the automotive and electronics industries almost $9 billion annually. A key problem is a "lack of universally accepted and implemented standards for the format and content of messages that flow between supply chain partners."

8: The U.S. and China announce settlement of a dispute over Chinese taxes on semiconductors, four months after the U.S. filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization. The U.S. contended that the taxes favored Chinese manufacturers.

9: ITU WSIS meeting on countering spam closes. The Chair of the meeting states the surprising belief that "We can curb spam within the next two years if we act on a number of fronts simultaneously and make sure that there are no havens for spammers anywhere in the world."

15: NIST researchers announce a performance standard to facilitate use of new "across-the-road" radar speed trap equipment.

20: IEEE begins work on a standard to facilitate broadband-over-power-line (BPL) systems, targeted for completion in mid-2006.

22: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announces the Study Data Tabulation Model (SDTM), developed by the Clinical Data Interchange Standards Consortium, (CDISC), for use in submitting human drug clinical trials data.

27: The U.S. FDA begins final review of subcutaneous human implantation of RFID tags by hospitals for patent identification.

29: Toshiba and others announce that they will begin to sell HD-DVD compliant DVD recorders "next year," and Japan's largest distributor of DVD movies announces that it will utilize the same format. Microsoft Japan says that Longhorn, its next operation system, will also support the standard.

29: Bill Gates announces that Microsoft will file 3,000 patent applications this year, and will continue to do so at a similar pace in the future.

30: NIST releases Standard Reference Material (SRM) 1946, which is a set of five bottles of frozen, homogenized Lake Superior trout.

August

2: The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) announces the formation of a working group to create compatibility standards for micro fuel-cells for use in handheld electronic devices.

2: The Yankee Group reports that Web services adoption is beginning to rise, in part due to strong support from Microsoft and IBM.

3: The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) begins evaluation of accepting voluntary supplemental filings of financial data using the XML-based Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL).

4: Sony announces that the next version of its popular games console will adopt the Blu-ray disc format.

4: A Deloitte Research study reports that China will be a key player in shaping global technology standards, and will seek to "break the hold of developed economies on standards."

4: The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) is reported to be ready to nominate anti-spoofing specification Sender ID (including Microsoft's Caller ID) as an Internet standard.

5: ANSI announces formation of a panel to coordinate nanotechnology standards development.

10: The People's Daily reports that a senior government official has denied China wishes to develop an "Asian Linux."

11: VUNet reports that the Jericho Forum, a group comprising 40 multinational companies, will develop a roadmap telling IT vendors what kind of standards-based IT security systems they want vendors to offer to them. Asks VUNet, "will the Jericho Forum be the first significant manifestation of IT user buying power?"

11: BEA Systems Inc, IBM Corp, Microsoft Corp, SAP AG, and Sun Microsystems submit WS-Addressing Web services specification to the W3C.

12: A new coalition calling itself the Wise consortium offers a proposal for an 802.11n standard that is intended to enable "next generation" Wi-Fi products that will offer 100 times faster transmission speeds in 2006 or 2007. The proposal competes with an earlier proposal submitted by a group of companies led by Freescale Semiconductor.

18: The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office invalidates the Eolas browser patent.

20: Life sciences researchers agree that "the standards-making process is painful and arduous, but…a standards project could foster efficiency and perhaps even reverse the rapid fragmentation of life sciences."

24: WS-I, announces publication of its Basic Profile 1.1, Attachments Profile 1.0 and Simple SOAP Binding Profile 1.0 to Final Material status. "Web services are finally growing up," observes Zap Think analyst Ronald Schmeltzer.

27: President Bush issues a directive calling for a mandatory, government-wide standard for government ID badges. The standard will include cryptographic, biometric and card reader specifications.

27: The Network Centric Operations Industry Consortium is formed by 28 major defense contractors, with the ambitious goal of creating an interoperable ICT environment from the field up through the command chain, and across the defense and security forces of the U.S. and its allies.

30: A study commissioned by NIST reports that inadequate software interoperability in the capital facilities industry cost the commercial, institutional and industrial building sectors $15.8 billion in lost efficiency in 2002.

September

1: ETSI announces that its on-line database now displays more than 12,500 patents and patent applications identified by their owners as including "essential claims" under ETSI standards.

3: In an open letter to the IETF, the Apache Software Foundation says that it will not support Sender ID under Microsoft's required patent license, saying, "no company should be permitted IP rights over core Internet infrastructure." The letter urges the IETF to "revamp its IPR policies to ensure that the core Internet infrastructure remains unencumbered."

6: The Debian open source operating system project announces that it will not implement Sender ID licensing terms that it says are not compatible with open-source licenses.

6: In a startling move, Bluetooth developer Ericsson announces that it will discontinue Bluetooth design and manufacturing.

7: An article by David Becker on ZDNet, and a growing number of stories by others that follow, begin to ask whether XML dialect proliferation has gone too far. Other's disagree, saying that 'the explosion of schemas is a testament to the format's success."

10: The IETF's Mail Transfer Agent Authorization Records in Domain Name System (DNS) working group, also known as MARID, votes to discontinue work on Sender IDF.

10: BEA Systems, IBM, Microsoft, SAP AG, and Sun Microsystems submit Web Services Addressing specification to the W3C.

14: IBM announces contribution of speech software to the Eclipse Foundation and the Apache Software Foundation in an effort to "spur the availability of speech-enabled applications."

15: AOL announces that it is abandoning active support for Sender ID.

17: BEA Systems, Computer Associates, Microsoft, Sonic Software, and Sistine release two new Web Services messaging specifications.

19: Sony and partners announce purchase of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, giving Sony (and the Blu-ray Group) control over a vast library of films that can be offered on (and not on) whatever DVD format Sony wishes.

20: Information Handling Services, Inc., a major reseller of standards, codes and product specifications, announces acquisition of USA Information Systems, Inc., a competitor.

22: The Free Standards Group (FSG) and Open Source Development Labs (OSDL) announce a collaboration to "accelerate enterprise adoption of the Linux Standards Base."

23: OASIS announces formation of an International Health Continuum Technical Committee as a "forum for companies on the Healthcare continuum internationally to voice their needs and requirements with respect to XML and Web Services."

23: IEEE announces completion of IEEE 1616(TM), a standard for "motor vehicle event data recorders (MVEDR) much like those that monitor crashes on aircraft and trains."

30: The ZigBee Alliance, which develops specifications on top of IEEE 802 standards and certifies wireless products, chastises vendors "guilty of creating "market confusion" in their launch of pre-standard products."

October

3: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp announces that it will adopt the Blu-ray disc format.

4: InformationWeek reports that IBM has staffed a new unit with "some of its most senior executives" in order to develop a strategy to "more precisely define the role the company will play in an IT market in which big business customers increasingly look to open-source and industry standards-based software to build their next-generation computing networks."

5: Reports reach the press that EPCGlobal, a core RFID standard setting consortium, is mired in an internal dispute over whether it can maintain a royalty free intellectual property rights policy. The dispute delays release of standards in process.

7: The W3C charters a new working group to produce a W3C Recommendation for Web Services Addressing based on the earlier submission by BEA, IBM, Microsoft, SAP AG, and Sun Microsystems.

8: Microsoft and its partners introduce what Gartner Group calls "yet another standard definition for management that will overlap with Hewlett-Packard's and IBM's work with OASIS."

11: Wi-Fi Alliance announces that it will not certify IEEE 802.11n-based products until the standard is ratified.

12: Novell announces that it will use its patent portfolio to protect its open-source software offerings.

12: IEEE announces a working group to develop a standard to tap open channels in the television spectrum for wireless broadband applications and services, to be called 802.22.

13: In an article in InfoWorld, Paul Krill says, "Once again, I have to ask, does the world need anymore Web services standards? Aren't there too many already?"

19: ChinaDaily.com reports that "Chinese companies are being urged to play a greater role in drafting standards for radio-tag technology."

25: After concessions by Microsoft on licensing terms, AOL announces that it will support a new version of Sender ID that is to be submitted to the IETF.

November

1: Samsung, Philips and other companies launch the Universal Home Application Programmer Interface (UHAPI) Forum to develop standard hardware-independent application programming interfaces (APIs) for next-generation analog and digital consumer audio, video and home server devices.

5: Concerns are voiced that Microsoft may be asserting patent rights involving vital Internet protocols.

8: OASIS announces approval of Universal Business Language (UBL) Version 1.0 as an OASIS Standard. UBL defines a common XML library of royalty-free business documents.

9: Announcement of formation of The Applications Security Consortium, which will seek to establish "minimum criteria" for protecting Web-based applications.

9: In a move to differentiate its operating system products from Linux, Microsoft Corp. announces that its small as well as its large customers will be protected under its intellectual property (IP) protection policy.

10: Cisco, HP, Microsoft and Intel announce the formation of a working group to develop integrated implementation plans under the new Electronics Industry Code of Conduct (EICC), which was created to establish and promote unified industry expectations for socially responsible practices across the electronics industry's global supply chain.

12: Ferret.com.au reports that "an Ultrawideband (UWB) vendor group has bypassed a standards-setting quagmire and struck out in its own, confirming what has been lately increasingly evident: that there will now not be a universal UWB standard." The two factions are the Multi-Band OFDM Alliance (MBOA), with Intel and Texas Instruments as important members, and the UWB Forum, which includes Motorola and XtremeSpectrum.

15: OASIS ratifies Web Services-Reliability version 1.1

29: The formation of a patent pool is announced in relation to standards to be created by Near Field Communication Forum (NFC). NFC standards enable information transfers between devices such as cell phones and other devices.

30: The Formation of UK-based Open Source Consortium is announced, with 60 member companies representing 400 open source software specialists. The new group will represent the open source business community, and seek to establish a quality standard certification based on a framework for self-assessment and performance improvement.

30: CompTIA and AIM Global announce that they will jointly develop a certification program for RFID technology. The certification initiative will help address an industry-wide shortage of professionals knowledgeable about RFID technology.

December

1: W3C celebrates its 10th anniversary with an extravaganza held at Boston's Fairmont Copley Plaza hotel.

2: In a move to open up its Power microprocessor architecture, IBM announces formation of Power.org, consortium to support further development of Power processors (ten years earlier, the same architecture was promoted by the PowerOpen Consortium).

3: Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures, New Line Cinema and Warner Bros. Studios announce support for HD-DVD disc format.

6: In response to an article in ComputerWire, OASIS says that BPMI.org's plan to develop BPXL is complementary to its BPEL standard rather then competitive. BPMI.org says that BPXL will enable interoperability between process modeling tools and process management engines.

7: Formation of Nanoprint Lithography Consortium (NILCom) announced, to facilitate commercialization of nanoimprint lithography (NIL) technologies in the semiconductor industry, an alternative method permitted under the most recent update of the International Technology Roadmap for Semiconductors.

8: Disney and Buena Vista Home Entertainment, its home-video division, announce that they will release movies on the Blu-ray format in North America and Japan.

8: The EU Council announces that it will postpone its decision to make software patentable--a possible sign of mounting political pressure against the decision.

13: The formation of the iWARP Consortium is announced, with the goal of refining new and interoperable remote data memory access (RDMA)-over-Ethernet products.

14: The formation of the Calendaring and Scheduling Consortium is announced, with the goal of achieving interoperability of calendaring and scheduling.

15: The W3C announces the publication of Architecture of the World Wide Web, Volume One as a W3C Recommendation. The document "emphasizes what characteristics of the Web must be preserved when

inventing new technology, [taking] notice where the current systems don't work well, and as a result show weakness."

15: The Government Electronics and Information Technology Association (GEIA) announces that it will help develop a Border and Transportation (BTS) Security Data Exchange standard in collaboration with the Homeland Security Department's Science and Technology Directorate. The new standard will enable border and transportation agents to access and share threat-related information.

15: IDC forecasts that Linux PC sales will reach 17 million Linux PCs in 2008, and that Linux will be used on 7 percent of all desktops in that year.

20: A panel of distinguished scholars names The International Telecommunications Union (ITU), founded in 1865, as "one of the world's top ten most enduring institutions", sharing the honor with the United States Constitution.

20: Germany's research ministry announces that it will help fund a three-year research project aimed at developing a car-to-car communications system based on wireless LAN (WLAN) technology.

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