



Attorneys at Law

Consortium Standards Bulletin

A ConsortiumInfo.org publication

JANUARY 2006

Vol V, No. 1

AWARDS

STANDARDS NEWS SOURCES OF THE YEAR

Andrew Updegrove

For the second year in a row, I would like to recognize those news sources that I believe did the best job of bringing standards-relevant information and analysis to the on-line world. As I stated in last year's awards article:

To state the obvious, standards news reportage does not receive the type of attention and awards that movies and Broadway shows (or even advertisements) attract. While the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) annually bestows its President's Award for Journalism to an individual reporter, we are aware of no official recognition given to those standards organizations that release the most noteworthy news, or the media that provide the most thorough and discriminating specific coverage of the standards world.

This year, I am expanding the categories of news providers I would like to recognize to include not only news services and standards organizations, but also individual journalists, bloggers and community site editors as well.

Methodology: The awards that appear below are of two types.

Statistical Awards: As was the case last year, this set of awards was determined solely by reviewing and tabulating those articles and press releases that I selected to present and link to at the ConsortiumInfo.org [News Portal](#) during 2005 – more than 700 items in all, out of the thousands of articles and press releases I reviewed in the course of the year.

The larger sample set from which these 700 plus items were chosen was harvested through three methods:

1. Use of a series of standards and open source focused Google Alerts, most of which were in place throughout the year, but some of which were added in response to new stories as they developed as the year progressed
2. Press releases sent directly to ConsortiumInfo.org by many of the 455 standards organizations and open source projects listed at the ConsortiumInfo.org [Consortium and Standards List](#) (if your organization does not currently send press releases to ConsortiumInfo.org, please find out how to do so [here](#)).
3. My own use of the Web and all it has to offer.

Special Awards: Because the database used above does not include some of the other sources of information upon which many of us rely (e.g., blogs are under-represented at the News Portal – something I plan to correct this year), the second set of awards is more subjective, in that it is limited to those sources of which I have become aware by various means, and which I personally found to be most useful in finding, understanding, and presenting the news this year.

Sample Set: During the measuring period, I included news received from hundreds of sources based in many countries around the world that in most instances fell into one of the following three groupings:

1. Standard setting organizations, open source projects and other non-profit sources.
2. News portals, on-line journals, on-line versions of magazines and newspapers, and other for-profit media outlets.
3. Blogs and community sites.

Selection Criteria: In order to be chosen for posting at the News Portal, a news item must fall into one or more of the 22 categories of news I cover at the News Portal shown at left.

Standards News

[Intellectual Property Issues](#)
[New Initiatives](#)
[New Standards etc.](#)
[Open Source](#)

In one single category (New Consortia) inclusion is automatic, but in all others, a story must also have additional qualities that I believe make it not only newsworthy, but relevant and interesting to the ConsortiumInfo.org audience as well.

Topics We're Following

[China](#)
[Europe](#)
[Not Here but There: A Wilderness Journal](#)
[Open Source/Open Standards](#)
[OpenDocument](#)
[Security](#)
[Semantic & NextGen Web](#)
[Web Services](#)
[Wireless](#)
[WSIS/Internet Governance](#)

What makes a standards story relevant and interesting (at least to me)? The following are some of the criteria I look for in a story and/or in its presentation:

- o Does it recognize the role of a standards or open source organization, or of a standard or of open source software, in the story?
- o Does it relate to information or communications technology; if not, does it relate to some other standards area that has more than purely commercial relevance?
- o Does it relate to how we live, work or transact business?
- o Does it illustrate the importance of standards or open source to society?
- o Does it help a reader understand what standards or open source are all about?
- o Will the standard, open source software, or event in question have a major impact beyond its purely technical ramifications?

Standards Business News

[Miscellaneous](#)
[Standards and Your Business](#)
[Story Updates](#)
[Who's Doing What to Whom](#)

Additional criteria for certain categories appear below.

Policy and Impact News

[Legislation & Advocacy](#)
[Standards and Society](#)
[Standards in Action](#)

My particular thanks go to the individuals that have chosen to write such stories, and to the media that have agreed that these stories deserve to be made available to the world (please keep up the good work).

Consortium News

[Mergers, Dissolutions, etc.](#)
[New Consortia](#)

Without further ado, here are the 2005 ConsortiumInfo.org News Sources of the Year Awards.

Quotes of the Day

I. Statistical Awards

1? Award: Most Newsworthy Standard Setting Organization

(Consortium, Accredited Standards Developer or Open Source Project)

The following awards do not indicate which standards organizations were most prolific in generating new (or amended) standards, but rather which ones received the most attention in the media as a result of the work that they performed during the year. The items counted included both press releases issued by the organization as well as inclusions in the title or lead sentences of on-line articles.

- **First Place: Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Systems (OASIS)** - 47 Items [Last year: Third Place]
- **Second Place: World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)** - 31 Items [Last year: Second Place]
- **Third Place: European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI)** - 9 items [Last year: Did not Place]

Each of these organizations not only performed much good work in 2005, but was also the focus of stories that highlighted the impact that standards have on society, or which reflected other forces acting in the marketplace, such as the difficulty of reconciling the rights of patent holders with the standard setting process.

While the W3C was not the focus of much controversy in 2005, OASIS was more than usually in the news in 2005 as a result of two events. The first was its adoption of a new intellectual property rights policy early in the year, which was intended to be more "open source friendly," but which was not as warmly welcomed in that community as hoped (see our March 2005 issue, [What Does "Open" Mean?](#)). The second event was a story that is continuing into 2006, and involves a struggle over the proposed adoption by the Massachusetts Executive Agencies of the OpenDocument OASIS Format standard for archival purposes (see our September issue, [Massachusetts and OpenDocument: the Commonwealth Leads the Way](#) and the many Standards Blog posts that are collected [here](#)).

[Disclosure: OASIS is a client of the author and his law firm]

2? Award: Best On-Line Coverage of ICT Standards by an On-Line News Service

- **First Place:** [eWeek.com](#) 55 stories Items *[Last year: Third Place]*
- **Second Place:** [ZDNet.com](#) - 50 stories (includes ZDNet U.S., U.K and Australia) Items *[Last year: Did not Place]*
- **Third Place:** [CNET.com](#) 36 Items *[Last year: Second Place]*

Immediate runners-up include InfoWorld (25), BusinessWire (20) and TechWorld (17). The rankings also appear to reflect in part the number of journalists published by each news service (eWeek: 21; ZDNet: 19; and CNET: 20) that appreciate the role of standards.

The relative level of awareness of standards by some news agencies in comparison to others is made more obvious by the names and numbers of some of those services that did not rate highly, as follows: Computerworld (13), InformationWeek (12), and IDG News Service (10).

To an extent, when more than one news service reported on the same story (as was often the case), the rankings also reflect which article appeared most quickly. However, where two reports on the same story appeared on the same day, the item i chose to list was selected on a random basis (with the result that the effect should roughly cancel out over time – at least among those news services that got to the Web with their stories first).

3? Award: Best Coverage of ICT Standards by an On-Line Journalist

This year I would also like to recognize the individual journalists that were most aware of the role of standards, open source software and the organizations that create them, and that took the time to present that role to their readers. As was the case with news services, while the same story was often reported by more than one journalist, only one report was usually included at the News portal.

- **First Place:** [Martin LaMonica](#)- [CNET.News.com](#) - 15 Stories
- **Second Place:** [Matthew Broersma](#)- [ZDNet UK](#) - 14 Stories
- **Third Place (tie):** [Ingrid Marson](#) [ZDNet UK](#) and [Steven Vaughn-Nichols](#) [eWeek.com](#) - 10 Stories each

II. Special Awards

1? Award: Best Columnist/Blogger (Commercial)

Online journalism has become increasing brief and stylized, with attendant loss of value. Not only are most on-line stories limited to one to two screens of text (using whatever space is left between the advertising), but prevailing rules of journalism dictate that a good deal of what space is available will be spent in a very predictable way: headline, subtitle, opening sentences, expansion of theme, quote from source consistent with story line, statement of counter position, closing quote from source counter to story line or "good closing quote".

The result is that while print journals abound with longer, more analytical pieces, in-depth on-line analysis is increasingly becoming the province of bloggers and those specialty sites that place fewer constraints on their authors.

It will be no surprise to many that as the recipient of this first award I have selected:

David Berlind (ZDNet.com)

David has previously been honored by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which presented him with its Presidents Award for Journalism in 2003. Unlike most journalists, he was an IT professional before becoming a professional writer. His [Between the Lines](#) blog (a venue shared with co-author Dan Farber) has consistently covered not only open standards and open source, but more recently the interplay, and sometimes clash, between those two disciplines. I haven't agreed with David on every position that he has taken (the opposite is also true), but his commitment and passion for covering open standards and open source is unquestioned, as has been his contribution towards bringing important issues to light and into public dialogue.

2? Award: Best Community Site or Blog (Non-Profit)

Blogs and community sites that focus on particular domains or issues have become an increasingly important route by which news can reach the public that would otherwise be neglected by, or unknown to, the formal media. In addition, many provide skilled analysis, as well as an opportunity for additional facts and opinion to be aggregated and consolidated.

It will (again) be no surprise to many that I would like to honor, as the recipient of the first award in this category:

Pamela Jones - [Groklaw.net](#)

Almost immediately following her first posting on May 16, 2003, Pamela has had an enormous and loyal following. Her ongoing dedication to investigative journalism in defense of Free and Open Source Software is well-known to friend and foe (most notably, SCO) alike. More recently she has supported a variety of open standards-related causes as well, including by championing the efforts of Peter Quinn and the Information Technology Division of Massachusetts to mandate use of the OpenDocument format by the Executive Agencies of the Commonwealth for archival purposes. Pamela's indefatigable work at Groklaw – and her less visible but equally tireless and substantial efforts behind the scenes to marshal data, develop sources and influence outcomes – have earned her the well-deserved respect and trust of the entire open source community.

Conclusion: This year saw what I believe to be a noticeable increase in standards awareness in ICT news coverage, as well as in the number of news outlets (both general as well as technical) reporting on open source topics. I hope that this trend will continue, and take pleasure in bringing some small measure of recognition to those services and individuals that have taken it upon themselves to acquaint their readers with the role that these important tools play in the modern world.

Comments? updegrove@consortiuminfo.org

Copyright 2006 Andrew Updegrove