

What 'Open' Means to You: Innovation, Interoperability, Independence

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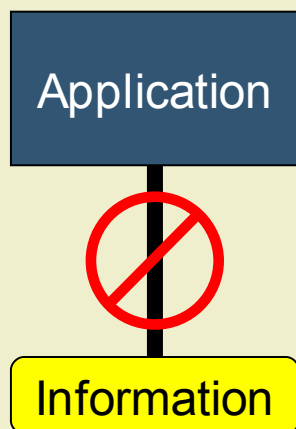
What have we learned from free and open source?

- Thousands of smart people will collaborate in communities to share knowledge and create technology for the common good.
- Innovation from FOSS takes place in technology but also in economics: better software is more widely and cheaply available and creates markets and businesses that did not exist before.
- FOSS drives competition, lowers prices, and forces market leaders to innovate, clone, or find new businesses.
- Wide use of FOSS enables interoperability and builds reusable, global skills.
- FOSS gives consumers choice, control, and independence from any particular software provider.
- What about information? What about SOA?

Open standards vs. open source

- Many people who have not done software development are confused between “open standards” and “open source”: they don’t know what code looks like and what you do with it.
- *A standard is like a blueprint*: it tells you what you must do if you actually get around to building something.
- An open standard is one that is developed and maintained in a particularly transparent way with community involvement, and is “freely” available and implementable.
- Open source is code, actual concrete software, and it may implement open standards.
- *Open source is built* and maintained in a particularly transparent way with community involvement, and is “freely” available.

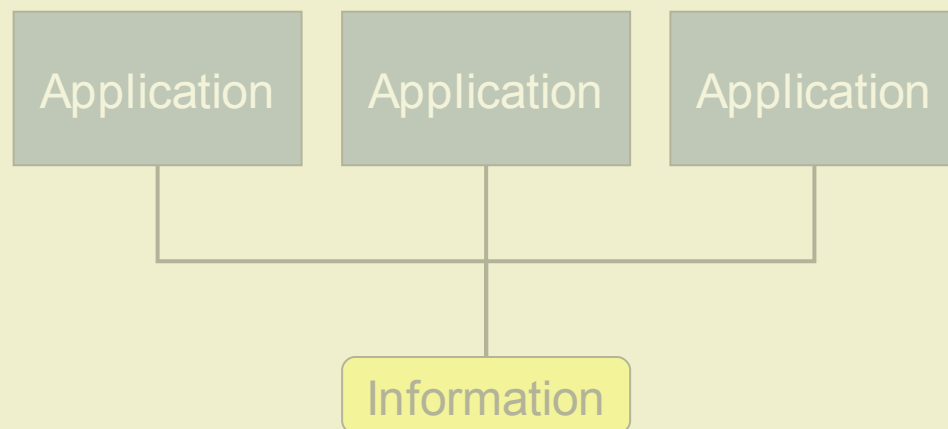
In the old days, SW providers controlled the data



Old Style

Information is closely linked to the application that created it.

Control is with the software developer *not* the customer.

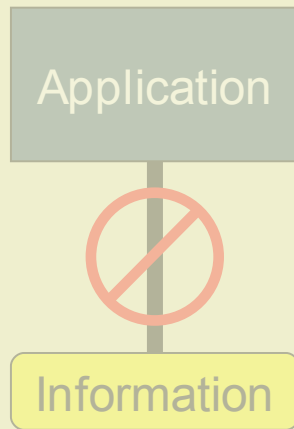


New Style

Information is represented using open standards not under the control of a single vendor, and multiple applications can create and access it interchangeably.

Control is with the customer *not* the software provider.

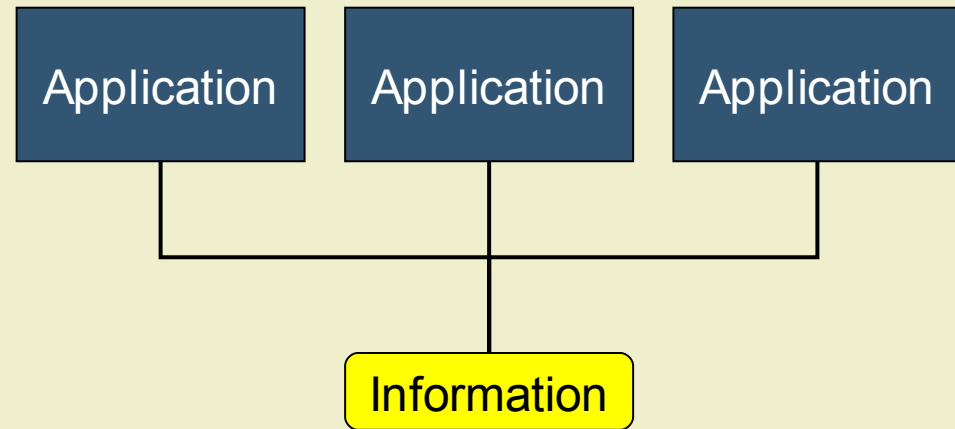
We're seeing a strong demand for open standards



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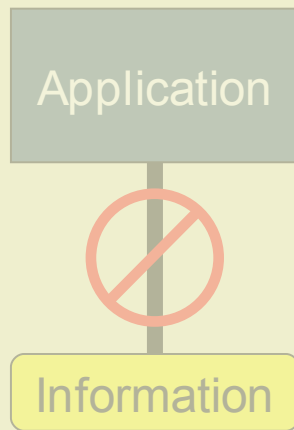


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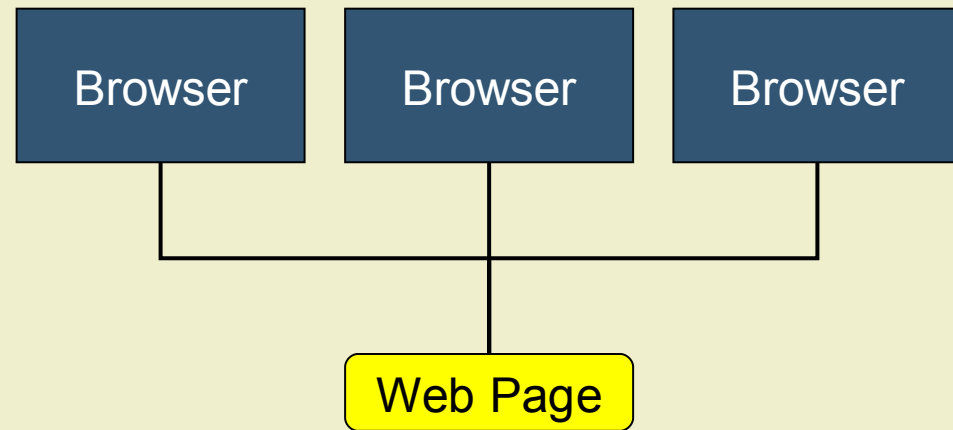
This is a continuation of an unstoppable trend



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An example: ODF, the OpenDocument Format

- ODF is ...
 - An XML-based specification describing the content and formatting of a document, spreadsheet, or presentation.
 - The open standard developed by an open technical committee at OASIS and an ISO standard.
 - The standard that is being broadly implemented in open source and proprietary software.
 - The standard that is being adopted or getting drafted into national, regional, or departmental policies in the US/Massachusetts, Belgium, France, Denmark, UK/Bristol, Australia, India, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Spain, and Croatia.



Open source is not enough

- Open source won't give you ...
 - Sovereignty over your information.
 - Control over industry data, message, and document formats.
- No government entity should have to ask permission of a commercial entity to get software-to-software interoperability.
- Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), the leading trend in building efficient, flexible, economical and distributed computing systems, can be significantly *enhanced* by the use of open source software and significantly *harm*ed by the absence of open standards.
- Any attempt to write open source policies without the concurrent or prior creation of open standards policies is likely to fail, in my opinion.

Recommendations

1. Assure e-government initiatives are interoperable and part of a larger vision of “openness”
 - Work with industry, academia and a broad set of stakeholders to set the vision.
 - Formulate a strategy that has explicit milestones and owners, with cross-agency buy-in and responsibilities.
 - Build systems that work across borders, from the largest to the smallest units of government.
 - Insist on open standards as the key method for obtaining interoperability.
 - Define a clear usage policy that is updated as good examples and best practices emerge.
 - Tell people about it!

Recommendations

2. Address any IP policies that do not support all types of technical innovation
 - Ensure that new, open collaborative innovation can take place alongside traditional proprietary innovation.
 - Take steps so that local innovations and technologies are available for use globally.
 - Balance intellectual property rights with a realistic view of how open source and open standards are developing and helping society, along with the needs of such areas as standards for healthcare and education.
 - For governments: take measures to improve patent quality by working with, not against, the open source and open standards communities.

Recommendations

3. Adopt open source policies that are balanced

- Correctly distinguish between open source and open standards in all policies and publications.
- “Open” is a relative term: be explicit about what it means in terms of development, maintenance, implementability, acquisition, and re-use.
- Do not discriminate against either open source or proprietary software.
- Get as educated about open source and its implementations as you are about proprietary software.
- Base procurement decisions on objective and measurable criteria such as degree of openness, interoperability, functionality, security, innovation, and support for open standards and adaptability to future technologies.