



Raising the Quality Threshold of Standards Development

Dr. Bob Sutor
Vice President, Open Source and Standards
www.sutor.com/blog

Threshold of a new standards era?

- I believe that we are about to see major changes in standards setting around the world, from top to bottom.
- “Global Standards Development Organizations” like IETF, W3C and OASIS have assumed very prominent positions by their development of Internet, web, web services, Web 2.0, and SOA standards.
- Events of the last couple of years have brought greater knowledge and scrutiny of international standards processes to many citizens and government officials.
- People will start addressing “standards quality” in the broadest possible senses.

Where do we need to examine quality?

- Technology
- Accessibility
- Procedural completeness and consistency
- Transparency
- Community involvement and democratic process
- Intellectual property policies and practices
- Appropriate geographic applicability
- Implementability by independent parties
- Use of existing standards and non-redundancy with other standards
- SDO Reputation

These are not all mutually exclusive.

*“If it is important enough to do,
it is important enough to measure.”*

Some boss of mine

What are the best standards organizations?



Worst

Ambiguous processes that can be abused

Improper vendor influence

Poor, redundant standards using product-specific rather than best technology

...

Best

Fair, consistent processes

Democratic, open, transparent

Excellent, non-redundant standards using the best technology

...

What are the best standards?



Worst

Product-specific format

Minimal re-use of existing good standards

Sloppily and hastily created

...

Best

Designed using best modern principles

Reuses and integrates with other standards

Developed by multiple independent experts from around the world

...

Questions to consider

- What are the exact criteria?
- What are the metrics associated with them?
- How do we weight the metrics?
- Who decides?
- How will this lead to improvements?
- What is the timescale?
- Who will step forward to drive this?
- Should this be a grass roots or institutional effort?
- Who will fight this, and why?

