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News | 21.03.2012

Open Standards

Document Freedom Day, transparency and the eBook market



Document Freedom Day is coming to the European Parliament on the 28th March with the Greens and free software community organising an event to highlight the importance of Open Standards. With a topical focus on the eBook market, the event will highlight how Open Standards impact both business opportunities and universal access to the Public Domain. Open Standards allow for the sharing of all kinds of data freely. They prevent lock-in to one particular company or system and other artificial barriers to use, and promote choice for consumers. They also allow citizens greater access to information and promote truly transparent government practice. Interoperability and open systems is a longlasting fight of the Greens/EFA in the European Parliament. It has particualr resonance as the EP's own own rules of procedure demand that its activities be conducted with "*the utmost transparency*". Together with a NGO coalition the Greens/EFA group fought a vanguard action in the European Parliament against the 'software patent' directive which would have devastating consequences for smaller, open source software developers and would undermine innovation. At the time, the Greens succeeded in having the law rejected by the European Parliament in June 2005, bringing an end to a 3-year legislative process. They also asked the European Parliament to switch to free and open software. The Greens/EFA group continues to criticise the dominant position of one vendor and proprietary system. Can we really claim to be honouring our own rules with these systems? We feel there is plenty of room for improvement from within. Everyone should be able to access public information, anytime, anywhere, without being forced to use a closed system. Open Standards are the key to making this a reality. The e-publishing sector has been developing rapidly and offers several business opportunities as well as comfortable solutions for the reader. However the question remains-to what extent will readers be able to really *own* their ebooks? And does the ebook

market really offer freedom of choice? The answer relies on Open Standards which are essential for interoperability, users' freedom of choice and in addition help to avoid consumers being stuck with a specific vendor. Once we buy or write a book it's natural to expect that we fully possess it, can enjoy its content anytime and anywhere and of course pass it to someone else if we feel like. Unfortunately, in the digital environment this is less clear. This openness doesn't mean however that there are no business opportunities in the ebook market for Open Standards. There are currently several existing business models which recognise the needs of a wider public, and try to ensure that ebooks are enjoyable regardless of file format or publisher. There does not need to be a conflict between the rights of the consumer and the rights of the publisher, and this event will show how Open Standards provide an answer. We are particularly happy that Dr. Carl-Christian BUHR, Member of the Cabinet of Ms Neelie Kroes, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda, will give the Commission's views on European policies on standards & interoperability, and that representatives from the French eBook manufacturer Bokeen and the software platform Calibre will talk about their experiences in the eBook market.
Document Freedomn Day falls on the 28th March this year

- http://documentfreedom.org/
- http://documentfreedom.org/2012/events/events.en.html

What are Open Standards, and what do they mean for you?

- http://documentfreedom.org/openstandards.en.html

See the full programme and register for our event here:

- http://www.greens-efa.eu/document-freedom-day-5297.html

- S.O.S. Save Our Software Campaign leaflet (.pdf)

Find out more about just two of the questions that eBook technology raise (FR/EN):

- http://paigrain.debatpublic.net/?p=4351&lang=en

Recommended

Press release

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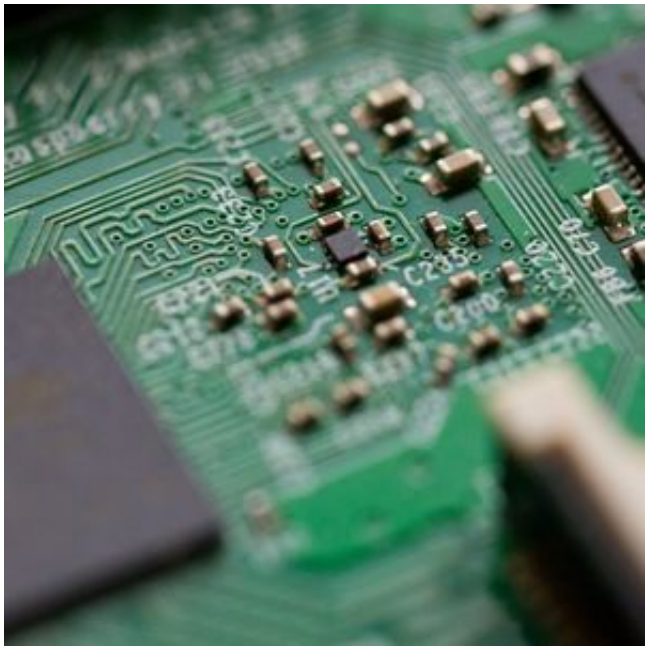


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