

# KEEPING THE INTERNET OPEN

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**ECIS** European Committee  
for Interoperable Systems



Because the internet is **open**, it has become the lifeblood of industry, government and society around the world, and the primary platform for information technology product and service innovation.

### **OPEN STANDARDS ARE THE GUARANTORS OF TODAY'S INTERNET**

Today's open internet is based on open standards, notably TCP, IP and http. These standards give any and all users both internet access and the ability to create innovative content and offer innovative services on the internet.

Moreover and crucially, the most important internet standards are not just open, they are also non-proprietary. Neither prior permission nor royalties are required to implement them. This means that all hardware, software and service vendors can freely create products which interoperate perfectly with others across the internet.

This ability of different software applications to access and exchange data via the internet, to read and write the same file formats and to use the same protocols and open standards is the vital condition for the continued development and dynamism of our increasingly networked world.



### **THE ECIS COMMITMENT TO AN OPEN INTERNET**

Members of the European Committee for Interoperable Systems (ECIS) share a commitment to the interoperability of our software products with those of other vendors, based on open, non-proprietary standards - the very foundation of the internet. And, we believe it is the responsibility of every other company in our industries to make the same commitment.

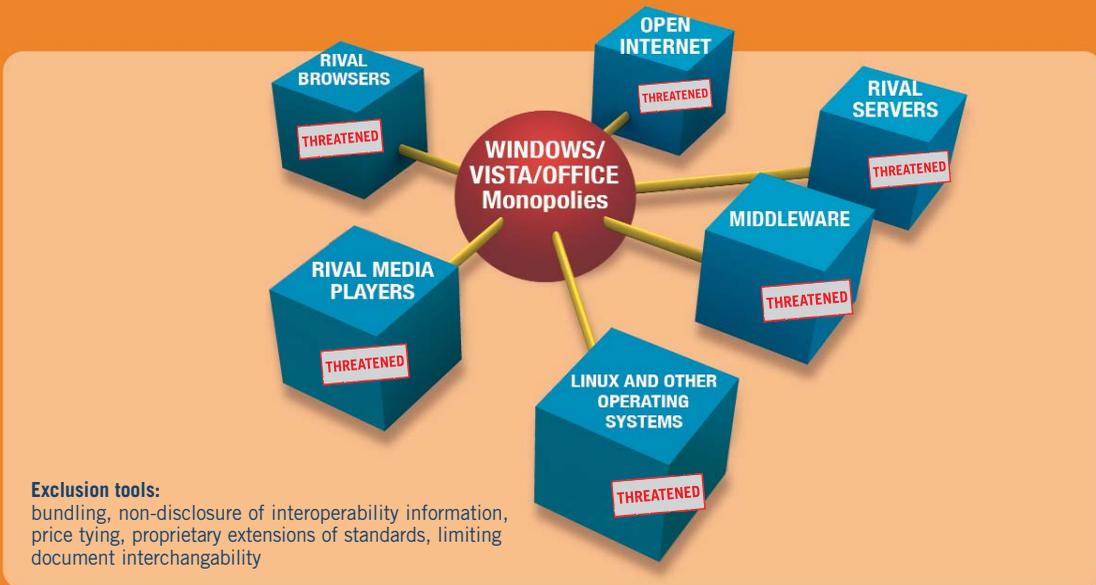
## OUR CONCERN

ECIS wants to prevent open standards, interoperability and the internet from coming under threat from closed standards built on proprietary technologies, protocols, formats and programming technologies in the service of commercial lock-in strategies.

### A CASE IN POINT

Microsoft has made no secret of its intent to leverage its interlocking Windows monopolies to extend its proprietary, closed Windows standards to the internet, not only through products such as Vista/Windows Server 2008 but also through embedded technologies such as the Windows Presentation Foundation, Silverlight and XAML, which threaten to make application development

tools and web applications themselves Windows-dependent. If this strategy succeeds, it will progressively and inevitably undermine today's open, non-proprietary internet standards and the open competition and vibrant internet-based innovation they enable. Large portions of the internet would then become a Microsoft-dependent platform.



## Concerned? We are. Take action!

### **FACED WITH THESE CONCERNS, AND TO MAINTAIN AN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE INTERNET, ECIS:**

#### **Seeks on-going dialogue with the global community of stakeholders in an open internet**

Only through raising awareness and the continuous exchange of experience can we further strengthen the inclusive character of the internet based on open standards.

#### **Encourages the use of open standards in public services**

ECIS supports paragraph 90j of the Tunis Agenda's commitment to "developing and implementing e-government applications based on open standards in order to enhance the growth and interoperability of e-government systems, at all levels, furthering access to government information .... thereby furthering access to government information and services and contributing to building ICT networks and developing services that are available anywhere and anytime, to anyone and on any device..."

In 2001, an EU Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment first expressed broad European official concern "about dependence on single ICT service-providers and producers" and instructed the European Commission "to stimulate the development of open-source alternatives," emphasising the importance of open standards.

The EU's Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens. (IDABC) promotes the use of online communication technologies to foster the exchange of information between administrations and the online delivery of public services to citizens.

In this context, ECIS supports a revision of the European Interoperability Framework (EIF, v2.0) that contributes to further promoting the use of non-proprietary standards in government procurement.

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#### **Opposes recognition of OOXML as an open standard**

Microsoft's OOXML is an XML-based file format specification for electronic documents such as spreadsheets, charts, presentations and word processing documents. The primary purpose of XML is to facilitate the sharing of structured data across different information systems, particularly via the Internet.

technology and gateway proprietary standard for Microsoft to control information from the desktop to the server and finally the internet.

#### **Urges continued anti-trust enforcement against monopoly abuse**

The recent judgment by the European Court of First Instance upholding the European Commission's 2004 decision requiring unbundling and the provision of interoperability information is a reminder that competition authorities have an important role to play in promoting competition in the face of monopoly abuse. The Commission's case was itself based on well-established case-law involving abuses by other dominant companies with regard to interoperability and tying. It is, moreover, consistent with anti-trust law in the US, Korea and elsewhere. ECIS believes that anti-trust authorities should not hesitate to rely on this body of established anti-trust law to intervene in the future when market forces alone cannot ensure the essential conditions for an open internet in the face of monopoly abuse. This precedent is particularly relevant with regard to developments in the internet.



ECIS considers that OOXML is an immature and incomplete documentation of Microsoft's proprietary document format. Full implementation of OOXML requires a Windows-based platform, and is therefore another lock-in

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**"You could say 1995 to 2000 was about us winning on the desktop. Then 2000 to 2005 we won and drove the server market. And the next five years is all about driving and winning the Web"**

Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO in Forbes, September 13, 2005

**Concerned?**

**We are.**

**Take action!**

## **About ECIS:**

The European Committee for Interoperable Systems (ECIS) is an international non-profit association founded in 1989 that endeavours to promote a favourable environment for interoperable ICT solutions. It actively represents its member companies regarding issues related to interoperability and competition before European, international and national fora, including the EU institutions and WIPO.

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