D6.5 Use of open standards and collaboration tools

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Executive summary

One of the objectives of WP6 is to "*assure the **dissemination of the Project results** under free licenses and open standard formats, and its raw data as Open Data.*"

Within WP6 there is one task dedicated to this and two deliverables. **Task 6.3. Policies for open dissemination of DiDIY Project results** (M2-M26) (Leader: FKI) This Task will formulate a set of policies for the Consortium with respect to the development and publication of results of the Project. In line with various guidelines and recommendations of the Commission, the Consortium considers that the results should be equally accessible and reusable by all European citizens and organisations. Therefore the Project work will be published under free/open licenses and its raw data as Open Data, conforming to the EU directive on reuse of PSI information (Directive 2003/98/EC), thus facilitating the reuse and distribution by any interested party. This WP will develop a set of internal guidelines for effective collaboration, respecting a diverse group of participants with a range of different computer software and practices. Therefore open standard formats would be encouraged as to ensure the diversity of applications used.

The two related deliverables are the following:

- **D6.4 : Legal aspects of dissemination of the project results** [26] *Policy on legal aspects of dissemination of the project results*
- **D6.5 : Use of open standards and collaboration tools** [26] G*uidelines to encourage the use of open standards and collaboration tools*

In this document the second of the two deliverables is reported.

Revision history			
Version	**Date**	**Created / modified by**	**Comments**
0.0	23/02/2015	Wouter Tebbens	First incomplete draft for internal circulation (through hackpad & TB list)
0.1	27/02/2015	Wouter Tebbens	Extensions, fixes, etc; first distribution to TB

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1. Background

The FKI has developed a set of best practices to maximise the dissemination and reuse of project results, which has evolved and has been tested in previous projects such as the SELF Project (FP6-IST), the Free Technology Academy (FTA) project (LLP) and the openSE project. SELF included policies to encourage the collaborative construction of free educational materials and open educational resources. The FTA published all its educational materials under free licenses and was heavily dowloaded and reused by various universities. The openSE project included the development of an open content framework to encourage the Seeding, Evolutionary Growth and Reseeding cycle as propsed in the SER model by Fischer and Ostwald [1] to enrich participatory design with informed participation.

2. Open Standards Policy

This section describes the issues we have taken into account in order to choose and define the different standards which will be supported by the project. First of all, we must provide with an appropriate definition of the term “open standard” which will be basic for the selection of acceptable standards.

Definition of Open Standards

The following are the minimal characteristics that a specification and its attendant documents must have in order to be considered an open standard (see definitions[1]):

- The standard is adopted and will be maintained by a not-for-profit organisation, and its ongoing development occurs on the basis of an open decision-making procedure available to all interested parties (consensus protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector or majority decision etc.).
- The standard has been published and the standard specification document is available either freely or at a nominal charge. It must be permissible to all to copy, distribute and use it for no fee or at a nominal fee.
- The intellectual property - i.e. patents possibly present - of (parts of) the standard is made irrevocably available on a royalty-free basis.
- There are no constraints on the re-use of the standard.
- However, the first condition does not have to be fulfilled in the case that a complete reference implementation of the specification exists in Free Software (a.k.a Open Source or Libre Software), i.e. under a license approved by either the FSF or OSI.

1 http://freeknowledge.eu/definitions/openstandards

Arguments for Open Standards

In line with this definition the need for the use of Open Standards is based in the following main reasons:

- Open Standards guarantee interoperability, in other words, they allow the exchange of information independent of the software that is used. Therefore, Open Standards are a precondition for technological neutrality.
- Open Standards guarantee that the information digitally generated in a certain moment in time will be readible and reusable in the next milleniums. This is independent of the fact whether the programs used for its generation will be still available or not in the future. Thus, public and open specifications guarantee the preservation, durability, integrity and reusability of the information without restrictions.
- Open Standards allow for a level playing field for all software developers, which favours competition in the market, stimulates innovation, while at the same time drives costs down.
- Open Standards facilitate the interaction of citizens with public administrations and private entities, as they don't impose any particular software vendor. A company or citizen who uses a software based on Open Standards will never find itself forced to acquire a competing software of the one the are already using, to exercise the right to communicate with their public administration.
- Free Software tends to use and help define Open Standards, since it consists by definition of publicly available specifications, and the availability of its source code promotes an open, democratic debate around the specifications, making them both more robust and interoperable.

Agreed formats and protocols

During the kick-off meeting the following initial agreement has been reached:

- For editable office documents, the ISO approved Open Document Format (ODF) shall be used, i.e. as source file. ODF[2].
- For static, non-editable office documents the ISO approved Portable Document Format (PDF) shall be used. PDF[3].
- Microsoft Office format should only be used in exceptional cases, as this is no Open Standard format and can therefore not be implemented in other office suites with full guaranteed compatibility. Using this format may require additional formatting and validations, as it cannot be guaranteed that all partners and receivers of these documents have the same software.

2http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OpenDocument

3http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portable_Document_Format

Appendix

Open standards that have been selected for their compliance with the Open Standards definition as part of the SELF Project (2008) are the following (they may require updating).

7z

ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange)

Dirac / Schrodinger

DocBook

Free Lossless Audio Codec (FLAC)

GZIP

HTML 4.01

IMS Learning Design (IMS LD)

ISO/IEC 8859

Joint Pictures Expert Group (JPEG)

LaTeX

Learning Object Metadata (LOM)

Ogg Theora (with warning, see: Free Video Formats)

Ogg Vorbis

Open Document Format (ODF)

Open Document Format for Office Applications (OpenDocument) v1.1

Open Document Format for Office Applications (OpenDocument) v1.0

OpenEXR

Portable Document Format (PDF), version 1.2

PostScript (PS)

PBM, PPM, PGM, PNM

Portable Network Graphics (PNG)

RIFF Windows Audio (WAV)

Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG)

Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM)

Tape Archive (tar)

Unicode

W3C eXtensible Hypertext Markup Language (XHTML)

W3C MathML

W3C Extensible Markup Language (XML)

W3C XHTML 1.0

Windows Bitmap (BMP)