Standards that help converge Open source

By Rigo Wenning, W3C Legal counsel
Things in Common

Why Software needs standards
John von Neumann

was the last man to know every detail from the CPU to the application programming and he died in 1957
Application Interfaces (API)

- Different areas are dominated by sectoral experts (CPU, Graphics cards, Network, Applications and now Middleware).
- As they do not understand the layer below or above, they have to rely on the API provided by the other layers.
- The network added a layer for interoperability between devices.
ICT needs more Standardisation

ICT needs more cooperation
Open Source is about cooperation too

- Cooperation on APIs
- Cooperation on code
- Cooperation on architecture
- Uses similar mechanisms to standardisation

Cooperation mainly done via the Internet
The differences

Why Open source does not replace standards
**Comparing standards to Open source**

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<th>Standardisation</th>
<th>Open source</th>
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<td>Maintainer</td>
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<td>Copyright important</td>
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Can Open Source without Standards?
Yes!

Can Standards without Open source?
Yes!
So why bother?
Distributed Systems tend to be complex
Open Source cooperation
Open source needs guidance

- Open source has a culture of re-use
- OS - Devs often use the API from the standard instead of re-inventing their own
- Doing the own API would mean to establish the consensus again within the project (waste of time)
Why does Open source like W3C?

- Royalty Free Patent Policy with defensive suspension
- Liberal copyright allowing for maximum re-use
- Specifications with comprehensive documentation
Is Open source replacing standards?
No!

Open source is about the freedom of tinkering
Are standards still needed?
Yes!

Standards are about interoperability
Standards are done to avoid lock-in
Thank you!

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