

# Bridges to cross: Philosophical and procedural gaps between SDOs and open source communities

*Jory Burson, VP of Standards*

*Mirko Boehm, Senior Director, Community Development*



# Building On Success

# The Rise of OS Community Specifications

- Many of our OSS projects are collaborating on spec development projects and understand the value standardization provides.
- They want to produce their spec documents as agilely as they would a code base, using familiar tools like git for version control & publication. They don't want to have to learn new tools or processes that don't provide clear benefits.
- Our projects have successfully adopted governance and patterns from standards-making best practices, and incorporated them into software development workflows using procedures we provide at the Joint Development Foundation.

# From Community Specifications to Standardization

- A source code license alone may be insufficient for a community specification project's goals. Developer communities are becoming more educated about IPR beyond OSI licenses, and adapting their governance to suit.
- The Community Specification License ([communityspec.dev](https://communityspec.dev)), created in 2020, incorporates the terms and processes required for standards and specification development, including legal terms, intellectual property issues, due process, and governance, allowing these projects to be brought to other SDOs.

# Collaborating with SDOs & Consortia

- Our projects want to drive impact for things like the SDGs; they want to work with other organizations who can help them measure/assess that impact
  - See the [Open Source for Sustainability Report](#)
- Our projects have liaison agreements or MoUs with dozens of standards developing organizations and their technical committees (ETSI, ISO/IEC JTC1, IETF, ITU, Ecma International, SMPTE, IPTC, etc.)

# Finding the Right Partners and Stakeholders

- Open Source projects can be really excellent lead-gen for standards activities (and vice-versa) - we are finding that an increase in engagement in one area is leading to a rise in interest in the other.
- Our projects are looking for organizations that provide a different dimension to their activities - helping them connect to broader impact & benefit, greater interoperability with other efforts, providing greater insight to challenges/opportunities

Building bridges

# Cost of change versus pace of innovation

- What's the goal? Wide adoption of solutions for economies of scale, regulability
- How to get there? Apply standardisation instruments to achieve standardising effects
- Phases: Ideation, specification, implementation, diffusion
- In what sequence? Influenced by cost of change:
  - Implementation-first: e.g., Open Source
  - Specification-first: e.g., SDO



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# Joint implementation in code-first organizations

- Open source participants engage in *continuous non-differentiating cooperation*: long-term collaborations focusing on implementation
- SDOs operate in a pre-competitive collaboration framework: When collaboration ends, participants to back to competition
- For continuous non-differentiating cooperation, there is no motivation to going back to competing



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# Open governance vs openly licensed outcomes

- Open governance: The R&D process is open to all interested stakeholders to contribute as equals
- Open source: The outcomes are licensed so that they can be used, studied, modified and redistributed
- SDOs commonly refer only to governance when they say “open”
- Open source community position: An “open standard” must be openly *licensed* (ex-ante agreements, no negotiations, ...)



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# Contests of philosophies

- Careful spec'ing versus wild experimentation
- Regional industrial politics versus "raise the boats for everyone"
- Spec'ing as occasional part of the development process versus as a career
- Process standards (more commonalities) versus technical specs (more procedural differences)

Let the standardization instruments compete...



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Conclusion

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- There is overall a high degree of cautious excitement, optimism, good will and interest among practitioners of standards development and practitioners of open source.
- Where appropriate, we should encourage/foster more dialogue, liaising, cooperative projects, etc between SDO and OSS organizations
- High Opportunity to improve all kinds of collaborative projects by working with and learning from each other. Inviting experts from these domains to talk/demonstrate is always additive.
- Cross training will be key to unlocking the potential for the next decade of open innovation



Thank you!