

FSFE's work on Open Standards

We increasingly entrust our information and communication to electronic storage and transmission. Open Standards are essential for your records and communication to outlive the application you are currently using. Lack of Open Standards quickly leads to data lock-in, generally followed by product and vendor lock-in. FSFE is promoting Open Standards in order to ensure equal freedom of data, competition, and innovation for everyone.

Open Standards and Democracy

Electronic records and communication include those of your government, such as tax and legal records or minutes of parliamentary proceedings. Making sure that such records remain in the control of the government is essential for a functioning democracy. The same is true for all interactions between citizens and their government, which should never depend on monopolies or the proprietary product of a single company.

Open Standards and Your Wallet

Open Standards are essential for a free market and competition between various solutions because users can choose freely. Such competition results in better functionality and prices for everyone, you included.

Open Standards and Innovation

All innovation stands on the shoulders of giants. Open Standards ensure that everyone can climb on those shoulders and innovate. Lack of Open Standards can stifle innovation by allowing the innovator of the last layer to claim everything that came before and control everything that follows.

Open Standards in court

Our work on Open Standards is closely linked with various areas of activity. This includes the Freedom Task

Force and in particular the antitrust case against Microsoft where FSFE and Samba worked to free the workgroup server protocol layer.

Open Standards at the IGF

In the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) we helped launch the Dynamic Coalition on Open Standards (DCOS). The coalition brings together governments, industry and NGOs to discuss the role and impact of Open Standards on a global level.

Open Standards at ISO

International Standards of the ISO are not Open Standards in general. An example of this are the MPEG standards or the proprietary versions of PDF. When Microsoft pushed its MS-OOXML for ISO approval, FSFE was among the first to highlight the issues. Our intensive work on MS-OOXML helped to demonstrate the problems in the ISO process.

Open Standards tomorrow

Since the traditional standardisation system is failing to deliver Open Standards, we also seek new ways. One such initiative is "Certified Open" in which we aim to boost Open Standards.