

# **Driving Open Government: The Essential Role of Standards**

John Borrás  
Chair  
OASIS eGov Member Section

*Open Government Webinar  
26 May 2010*

**OASIS**  **eGov**

# Agenda

- Brief introduction to OASIS and the eGov Member Section
- What is Open Government
- What are the policy drivers
- What are the current initiatives
- What role can standards play

# OASIS Overview

- OASIS is a member consortium dedicated to building systems' interoperability specifications
- Focus is on applications of structured information standards (eg XML, SGML)
- Members of OASIS are providers, users and specialists of standards-based technologies
  - Includes organisations, individuals, industry groups and governments
  - More than 500 member organisations, 1000s individual members
- Global, Not-for-profit, Open, Independent
- Successful through industry and government wide collaboration
- MOUs and Liaison Agreements with all major standardisation bodies, eg ISO, UN/CEFACT, CEN, W3C, etc.

# eGOV Member Section Overview

A Member Section is created when a collection of OASIS Members recognize a particular need or common goal and are willing to commit to work on that need over an extended period. This marks the difference from Technical Committees which are set-up to deliver a specific piece of work and then, usually, close down.

The eGovernment Member Section serves as a focal point for discussions of government and public administration requirements for e-business standardisation.

Bringing together representatives from global, regional, national and local government agencies, the eGov MS provides a platform for those who share a common interest in directing and understanding the impact of open standards on the public sector.

# What is Open Government?

**A concept with a range of definitions:**

- **Wikipedia (2010):**

“Open government is the political doctrine which holds that the business of government and state administration should be opened at all levels to effective public scrutiny and oversight.”

- **President Obama’s Policy (2009):**

“My Administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government.”

- **EC’s PSI Directive (2003):**

“Making public all generally available documents held by the public sector - concerning not only the political process but also the legal and administrative process - is a fundamental instrument for extending the right to knowledge, which is a basic principle of democracy. This objective is applicable to institutions at every level, be it local, national or international.”

# Policy Drivers

- Not a new phenomenon, origins centred on **Freedom of Information**, various FOI laws passed since 1960s/70s
- Current upsurge of interest started in last few years
  - Obama's policy
  - Open Data for mash-ups
  - Data.gov websites
  - eDemocracy/eParticipation
- Various political drivers:
  - Transparency
  - Accountability
  - Participation
  - Collaboration
  - Re-use

# Current Initiatives

- USA – <http://www.wri.org/stories/2009/01/president-obamas-open-government-welcome-first-steps>
- EU - [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/policy/psi/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/index_en.htm)
- UK - <http://data.gov.uk/>
- Australia - <http://data.australia.gov.au/>
- NZ - [www.data.govt.nz/](http://www.data.govt.nz/)
- COE - [http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/democracy/Activities/GGIS/CAHDE/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/democracy/Activities/GGIS/CAHDE/Default_en.asp)

# The Role of Standards

- Delivering Open Government presents challenges at many levels:
  - Process
  - Semantic
  - Technical
  - Usability
  - Accessibility
  
- Standards can/should be determined and applied at all these levels
  
- OASIS eGov Member Section is ready to help, but where to start?
  
- Dale will talk about some of the technical challenges and that may be our starting point.....



**John Borrás**

**johnaborras@yahoo.co.uk**

**OASIS eGov Member Section**

**<http://www.oasis-egov.org/>**