OGC®
Making location count.
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The OGC® – A Unique Organization Offering Unique Benefits

With more than 440 member organizations worldwide, the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) is the leading organization for developing and maintaining international geospatial and location standards. The OGC is a not for profit voluntary consensus standards organization whose standards enable interoperability and seamless integration of location information, geoprocessing software, and geospatial services. OGC's work encompasses location based services, geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing, surveying and mapping, navigation, geospatial databases, sensor webs, and other geospatial technologies, information sources and applications.

Geospatial technologies play an important role in business, government, and research applications and workflows. However, the benefits of using these technologies are often limited by the inability to effectively share information. To address this problem, government, private sector, and academic organizations use the OGC consensus process to cooperatively define, develop, test, document, validate and approve interface and encoding standards and best practices that solve interoperability problems.

Benefits for Technology and Content Providers

Technology and content providers collaborate in the OGC because they recognize that lack of interoperability is a bottleneck that slows market expansion. They know that interoperability enabled by open standards positions them to both compete more effectively in the marketplace and to seek new market opportunities.

In the OGC, technology and content provider members:

☐ Position themselves early to **influence definition of new open standards**.

☐ **Reduce costs** through cooperative standards development with other OGC members.

☐ **Shorten time to market** by using OGC standards rather than custom interfaces.

☐ Develop standards that help them **enter new markets and find new customers** because of "plug and play". Because OGC standards are widely used international standards, this means that companies can easily reach international markets.

☐ Have a convenient **forum for discussing industry issues** and solving shared problems.

☐ **Form customer relationships and business partnerships**.

☐ **Deliver solutions more quickly and at lower cost**.

☐ Develop standards that help them **mobilize a range of products across open interfaces,** rather than performing resource intensive custom integration.

☐ **Provide precise solutions** to meet specific needs, solutions that plug and play.

The development of these standards does not require members to give up intellectual property or trade secrets. The use of open standards to connect components, applications, and content – allowing a "white box" view on the components' functionality and interfaces without revealing implementation details – fulfills the industry requirement for protection of intellectual property and the user requirement for transparency. Such transparency supports both interoperability and the credibility of the enterprise, or federated, solution.

Benefits for Technology Consumers

OGC members have broad, legal and convenient access to representatives from over 440 OGC industry, government, research and academic organizations. Joining this network – and participating in it, *along with all interested staff in your organization* – provides a unique range of benefits.

Technology consumer members can:

- *Voice their interoperability needs* and standards ideas directly in OGC committees and working groups to key members of the global geospatial industry, academic and government community. In the OGC's Specification Program and Interoperability Program, vendors, integrators and platform providers build interoperability interfaces and encodings far faster than is possible with traditional system integration contracting. And the benefits are shared globally.

- *Leverage the common interests of other OGC members* to prioritize and influence industry standards development programs.

- *Learn from other OGC user community members* about their OGC implementation experiences and about the business value and return on investment they have realized from their work with OGC standards.

- Improve the *reusability of software*. This is often cited as the single greatest benefit anticipated from complying with standards or helping to establish them.

- *Work with other users* in the OGC process to demonstrate the need for and potential market appeal of new requirements for specifications.

- *Address urgent standards requirements* by sponsoring OGC testbeds and pilot projects, introducing real world use cases and scenarios that can be used to guide OGC standards development, testing and demonstration.

- Employ OGC programs as a form of *technology risk reduction*. Small resource investments by technology users in the OGC's consensus processes often result in vendors' willingness to address and then broadly implement OGC standards in their products. Standards help users maximize the return on their current and future technology investments, while reducing the time and cost of integration.

- *Mobilize new technology solutions quickly* and adapt easily to the rapidly changing information technology world, policy changes, and new and emerging user requirements.

- *Leverage existing investments in legacy content and applications*. Standards help companies and agencies leverage IT investments and create liquidity. Put another way, a critical benefit of using standards is revenue enhancement over direct cost savings. Standards provide a platform for realizing opportunities that would otherwise remain hidden.

- Use the OGC process for *procurement reform*. Users benefit first by expressing their interoperability requirements in the OGC standards development process, and then by adopting procurement language that calls for OGC standards in the geospatial and location based services products to be considered for purchase and deployment.

An additional value of OGC membership for government members is that membership gives them the opportunity to boost national competitiveness. That is, they are able to help technology provider companies and universities in their countries stay abreast of current technologies, research agendas and market situations, thus enabling them to participate in global markets and research activities. Government members accomplish this not only by encouraging companies and universities to join, but also through national standards strategies that bring national geospatial communities forward together in their knowledge of standards.

Policy on Intellectual Property

The OGC offers its standards free of charge to all and adheres to a rigorous process to ensure that the standards remain free of royalties for use. The OGC strongly supports royalty-free standards, a position also taken by the World Wide Web Consortium. The OGC believes that standards consortia play a major role in maintaining a free and open Web, and that open geoprocessing standards are an important part of the free and open Web.

Visit the OGC website at http://www.opengeospatial.org/contact.