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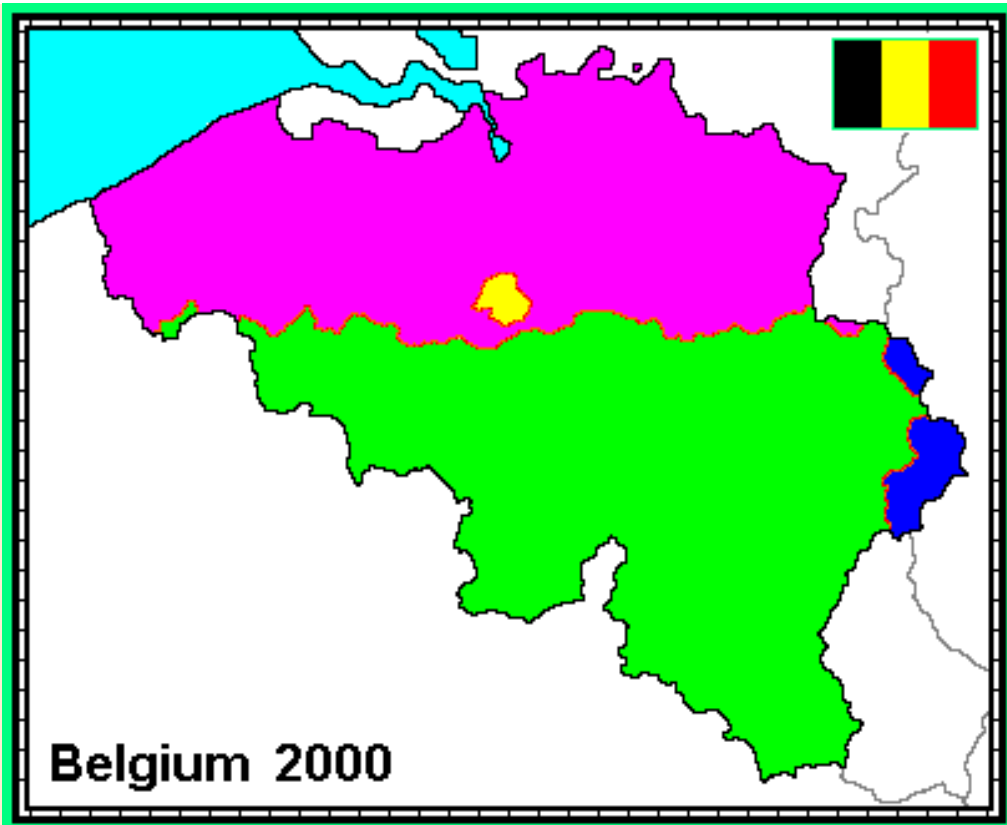*Open standards and ODF in Belgium*

Peter Strickx
ITAPA - Bratislava 12/11/2007

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▶ Context

▶ Interoperability

▶ Open Standards

▶ ODF Directive

▶ Implementation

▶ Summary

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The Belgium Context

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Belgium Administrative
since 1993

Flemish-speaking Community

French-speaking Community

German-speaking Community

Region Flanders
Region Wallonia
Capital Region of Brussels

Belgium 2000

for more information :
http://belgium.fgov.be/

Federal/Communities/Regions/10 Provinces/589 municipalities

Federal Government has little direct interaction with its customers (citizens, enterprises) except for Social Security, Finance (Taxes) and Justice/Police

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> Total Solution requires interoperability
  - information exchange between federal agencies
  - information exchange between governments (federal/regional/local)
> Technical interoperability
  - via single-vendor solution
    - Lock-in situation (no competition/less flexibility)
    - Gov. can not impose products on its customers
  - Via de facto standard
    - Strong dependencies on market leader
  - Via open standards

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> Cost reduction and open standards
  - TCO (purchase+operational+exit cost)
    - no vendor lock-in (cost-based pricing)
    - skills/competencies widely available
    - lower barriers to exit

> Technical Interoperability + IT cost reduction via open standards
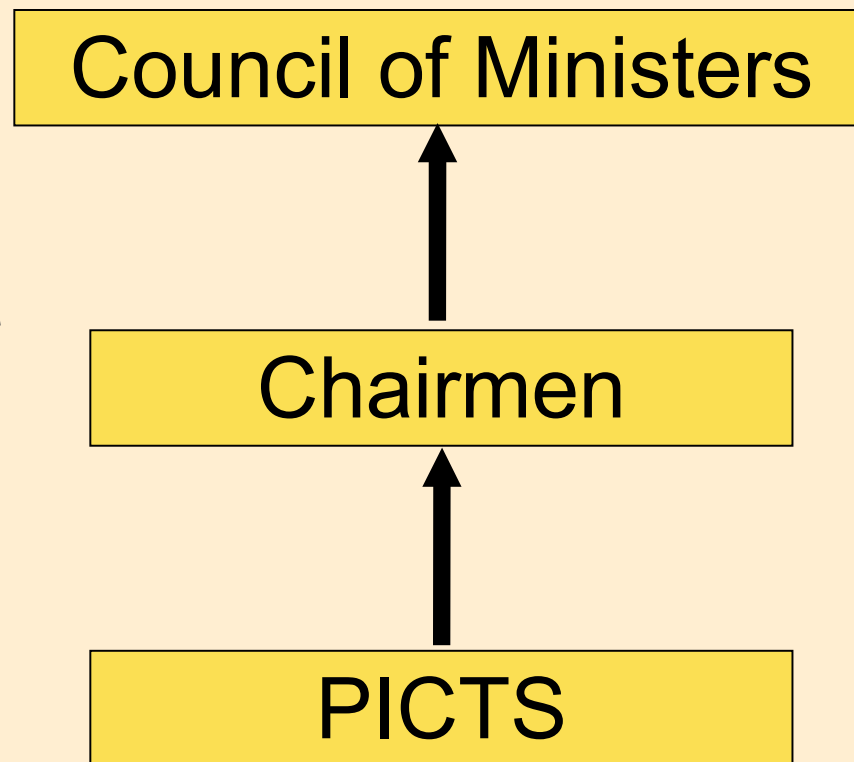
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Open Specification/Open Standards fed**ict** e-gov

> ## Framework (Foundation for BELGIF)
> ## Council of Ministers (June 2004)
> ## Open Specification
>> - publicly available at no or nominal cost
>> - Detailed enough to create full implementation
> ## Free Specification
>> - license should not inhibit commercial or open-source implementations (no preference stated !)
> ## Open Standard
>> - recognized by international standards body (implying "open" process to adopt/change, without exclusion of parties)

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> Exchanging documents between Belgian federal government agencies (June 2006)
  - Scope: exchanging "editable"/"revisable" documents (collaboration)
  - ODF is chosen standard (not exclusive)
    - read ODF documents (September 2007)
    - exchange ODF documents (September 2008)
  - Other standards possible BUT requirements are:
    - ISO standard
    - multiple implementations (avoid vendor lock-in)
    - compatibility with previous standard(s) (ie. ODF)

- unanimous agreement with all federal administrations and federal government
- limited to what we control (federal admin.)
- only document exchange format is standardized (not internal processing)
- implementation left to local administrations
- quality interaction with MS Office required
- no "big-bang" approach
- first everyone must be able to read
- next, everyone must exchange in standard

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The Decision Path

> bottom-up
> buy-in
> consensus
> Not forced by Fedict

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Council of Ministers     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
                ▲
                │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          Chairmen            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
                ▲
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│           PICTS              │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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PICTS = Permanent ICT Steering Group
(ICT managers of federal departments)

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Implementing the Directive

> MS Office plug-in

> OpenOffice (or other suites that have "native" ODF support)

> Central conversion server

> Others ?

OO.o to implement ODF

> "just works"
> CIBG (all Brussels cabinets on OO.o)
> 10,000 seats at Finance department
> Justice department (some on Novell Linux)
> 3,000 seats at Economic Affairs (on Windows XP)
> more and more administrations do a "double installation" (MS Office + OO.o)

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MS Office Plug-ins to implement ODF

> ## March 2007
> - quality insufficient: pressure (both Sun and Microsoft)

> ## June 2007
> - demo Sun plug-in 1.0 (acceptable quality)
> - No change in Clever Age plug-in

> ## Sep 2007
> - Sun plug-in 1.1 (beta)
> - No change in Clever Age plug-in

> ## Oct 2007
> - Sun plug-in 1.1 (General Availability – quality good)
> - Update Clever Age plug-in (not tested yet)

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Virtual team across agencies

> Social Security/Fedict/Police (Quality aspect of plug-in)
> Finance (deployment aspect)
> Justice & Economic Affairs

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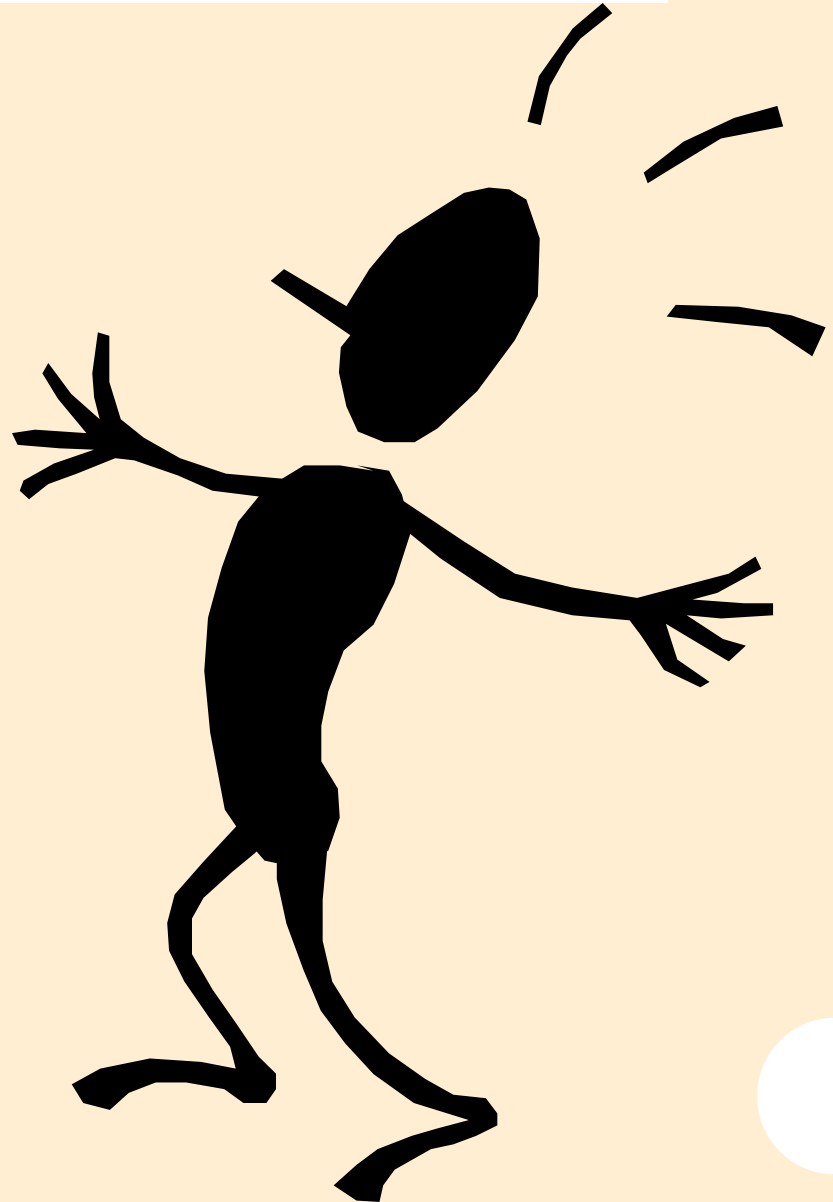
> Sun plug-in 1.1
> OO.o 2.x
> Central conversion server (tests not completed)

> Guideline: Only upgrade to MS Office 2007 if/when better ODF support (or agree with feasibility of meeting Sep. 2008 deadline)

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> Document format wars move to collaborative environments
  - Portal
  - (W)CMS

> What about ODF support in those applications ?

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> Goal : improve interoperability
> Focus on format NOT product
> Pragmatic approach
  - Start with one format (*)
> (Enough) time to implement is CSF (Critical Success Factor)

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Th@nk you !

Rue Marie-Thérèse 1/3
Maria-Theresiastraat 1/3
Bruxelles 1000 Brussel
Tel. +32 2 212 96 00
Fax +32 2 212 96 99
info@fedict.be

www.belgium.be/fedict

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