

Liberty Alliance Commitment to Open Standards

The Liberty Alliance is committed to creating technical standards that solve global identity management needs and can be easily implemented by the widest possible audience. We believe that technical standards must be interoperable and open in order to be most useful and to promote further innovation. Interoperable and open standards are particularly important to digital identity technology and processes as they influence business conduct and social interactions online.

Open standards are important to the marketplace, governments, enterprises and ultimately end consumers for many reasons, including their ability to enable:

- Choice [Disrupt Lock-In, Enable Substitutability]
- Access [to Technology and Intellectual Property]
- Control [Lowers or Eliminates Switching Costs]
- Efficiency [Lower Cost of Implementation through Reduced Customization]
- Innovation [Enhance Interoperability]
- Growth [Drive Competition and Lower Prices]

A growing global consensus among government officials, industry and academic and non-profit leaders on the key characteristics that define an Open Standard was articulated in the Berkman Center for Internet and Society's "Roadmap for Open ICT Ecosystems"¹, which considers a standard to be open when it complies with all these elements:

- cannot be controlled by any single person or entity with any vested interests;
- evolved and managed in a transparent process open to all interested parties;
- platform independent, vendor neutral and usable for multiple implementations;
- openly published (including availability of specifications and supporting material);
- available royalty free or at minimal cost, with other restrictions (such as field of use and defensive suspension) offered on reasonable and non-discriminatory terms; and
- approved through due process by rough consensus among participants.

The Liberty Alliance is firmly committed to the development of open, interoperable standards that bring greater capabilities, opportunities and protection to the marketplace. The Liberty Alliance operates in such a way as to ensure that its technical specifications meet these needs:

- Open and transparent process to apply formal and binding commitments for the disclosure and licensing of intellectual property.
- Usage model driven MRD (Market Requirements Document) development process, which assures focus on agreed-upon conventions

¹ <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/epolicy/>

- Liberty Interoperable Conformance testing program, which assures that commercially available products really *do* interoperate in a standard, predictable way
- Open public review of specifications before final release, with comments duly discussed and acted upon as required
- Acceptance and encouragement of public feedback after release to allow continued refinement and development of the standards