

10 Corrections for Open XML

This is a simple list of 10 general corrections to Open XML. (In each case, a national body would have to include a specific example however I do not believe it is necessary to enumerate every specimen of a problem in the editor's instructions: the general principle, a specific example, a proposed fix, and an instruction that other similar cases should be located and treated similarly should be adequate.) Of course, apart from these 10 general corrections, there will be specific examples of unclear text that will need correction too.

Rick Jelliffe 2007-07-16

Organization

1. The requirement that conformance is based on objectively verifiable syntactic requirements (e.g. the ZIP format, XML, the schemas, the various notations) and not behaviours should be strictly followed: text notations should be defined using formal syntaxes, layout and other algorithms should not be specified (or specified non-normative text in functional or general terms only), and implementation examples, samples and exemplars should be clearly marked as non-normative text.
2. Where a standard data notation exists, it should be available. In particular, this relates to ISO8601 dates in spreadsheet values.
3. Obsolescent technologies should be removed to informative annexes. In particular this is VML.
4. Platform-dependent or binary technology references should be removed to informative annexes. In particular, this relates to clipboard formats and printer drivers.
5. Hints concerning legacy behaviours should be partitioned using the extension mechanism. However, as before, particular algorithms must not be given in normative text. If the element or attribute name is descriptive enough to allow an expert to understand the general function, no text explanation of a value is needed.

Editorial

6. For maintenance, the standard should be organized on ISO arrangement, and conform more to ISO styles: for example, 10 point text. Fragments of schemas and other code must not have line numbers.
7. For maintenance, the standard should be edited so that shall, should and must words accord with ISO usage. This may mean that large sections of the text that is currently phrased normatively should be either reduced in strength (from shall to should, for example) or be made informative.
8. All repeated definitions of types should be removed, so that a type is only normatively defined once in the text (and once in the schema).
9. The scope section should be clarified to distinguish Open XML from ISO DSSSL, ISO HTML, ISO PDF and ISO ODF. This may be in informative text.
10. All schema and document examples should be well-formed at the delimiter and element name level, and double checked for conformance with the schemas.